HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 16, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

REPORT OF CANADA–EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Madam 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 parliamentary visit.

This visit was held in Ukraine from April 28 to May 9, 1992.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons.

This report presents the results of our consideration of the government's decision to cancel the Court Challenges Program.

This report is also available in audio cassette format from the clerk of the committee.

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

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–86, an Act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Valcourt moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

• (1010)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

NORTHWEST CANADA CONFERENCE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Madam Speaker, I rise to seek leave of the House to adopt the following motion.

That, notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, the petition for a private bill from the Northwest Canada Conference Evangelical Church presented on Thursday, May 14, 1992 and reported on by the clerk of petitions on Friday, May 15, 1992 be deemed to have been filed within the required time limit and received by this House.

Motion agreed to.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 35 residents of the south shore of Nova Scotia.

The petitioners note that the new firearms regulations now before the House leave many questions unanswered with respect to firearm storage and transportation, the

capacity and alteration of firearm magazines and the need for increased fees payable on application for a firearms acquisition certificate.

Therefore, they humbly pray and request that the proposed regulations under Bill C-17 be referred to the standing committee on justice for further review, reconsideration, consultation with recreational firearms organizations before they come into force.

Since this petition was initially circulated, there has been a meeting with the officials of the Minister of Justice and the Lunenburg and Bridgewater Firearms Associations. Nevertheless I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

VIOLENT CRIME

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions, the first one coming from various parts of my riding from people who perceive a great weakness in our justice system. I think this petition was initiated on the basis of the death of Nina de Villiers some time ago.

The petitioners are asking the government to protect these vulnerable people and to do it by amending the Criminal Code, the Bail Reform Act 1972 and the Parole Act.

In their opinion it would help prevent murders such as the one that occurred to an innocent victim, Nina de Villiers, some time ago.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, the second petition is the same as other petitions coming I notice from all corners of the House. It asks the government to make sure, before any constitutional amendments are made, that the people of Canada are given an opportunity to react to any changes.

I notice the very same wording is being presented by all parties. Perhaps it suggests something to this government. There is a feeling out there that any change in their Constitution should reflect the feelings of the Canadian people.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 285 and 311.

[*Text*]

Question No. 285—**Mr. Whittaker:**

Since January 1, 1989, has any funding been provided to the Daishowa company, directly or indirectly, for the Forestville, Que., pulp and paper facility and, if so, (*a*) in what amount (*b*) in what form (loans, grants, contributions or guarantees)?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): To our knowledge, Daishowa does not have a plant at Forestville but rather a logging area. Its plant is located in Quebec City.

(*a*) Environment Canada, through the St. Lawrence Centre, provided $190,000 in funding to test the use of the bicarbone process for treating effluent from the Daishowa plant in Quebec City. The total cost of the testing is estimated at $996,000.

(*b*) The funding was provided by the St. Lawrence Centre under a Department of Supply and Services contract in exchange for which we would obtain the test results.

Question No. 311—**Mr. Milliken:**

Did the government provide funding, directly or indirectly, for the preparation and showing of "ParticipACTION" advertisements during the America's Cup races and, if so, (*a*) what were the costs of production, (*b*) what were the amounts paid to run the advertisements?

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): ParticipACTION received $1,000,000 from Fitness and Amateur Branch of Health and Welfare in the 1991-92 fiscal year. The portion of that contribution allocated to the television public service announcements amounted to roughly $365,000. These funds represent a partial contribution toward the full production costs of television, radio and print media advertisements. Since ParticipACTION uses public service announcements, there is no cost associated with the "airtime". Consequently, the $365,000 federal government contribution in effect leads to a considerably sized contribution in-kind

from radio, television and print media and corporate sponsors.

[*English*]

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

CONCURRENCE IN MAIN ESTIMATES, 1992–93

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, laid upon the table on Thursday, February 27, 1992, less the amounts voted in Interim Supply, be concurred in.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period, ending June 23, 1992, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bill. In view of recent practices do hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am honoured today to speak about full supply for the Main Estimates for the fiscal year 1992–93.

This year the Main Estimates total $160.5 billion and through these estimates the government is seeking Parliament's approval for $48.8 billion in new spending authority. The remaining $111.7 billion represents statutory payments that have received previous parliamentary approval.

These Main Estimates reflect this government's continuing commitment to eliminating waste and inefficiency, as well as divesting itself of activities and organizations that no longer serve a vital public need in order to reduce costs and strike a proper balance between Canada's demands for federal services and their ability as taxpayers to pay for them. In this regard much has been achieved over the past seven years.

Program spending now represents only 16.7 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product as compared to 20 per cent in 1984.

During the period the annual growth in program spending, including Public Service salaries, has averaged only 4 per cent as compared to an average inflation rate of 4.3 per cent.

These achievements show the government's commitment to increased efficiency through the rigorous control of expenditures as well as the implementation of innovative management practices. They also reflect our commitment to good management and to the careful stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars. Our record is one of success.

The year-over-year increase in the Main Estimates is the outcome of a number of decisions and factors affecting the budgets of all 135 programs delivered by 116 departments, agencies and Crown corporations appearing in the estimates.

This increase can be divided into two broad categories: adjustments to statutory items, which amount to a net increase of $1.3 billion, and changes to voted items which amount to $1.7 billion.

Statutory spending is $112.1 billion or 70 per cent of total estimates. Spending in this category includes such things as: major federal transfers to Canadians in respect of Old Age Security, guaranteed income supplements, family allowances and unemployment insurance benefits; transfers to the provinces under the equalization program for health, education, and social assistance; general Public Service programs; and public debt charges.

It is important to note that the major factor underlying the growth in the voted portion of the Main Estimates is the continuing requirements of items funded initially through 1991–92 Supplementary Estimates. Items approved through 1991–92 Supplementary Estimates and included in the 1992–93 Main Estimates reflect the incorporation of new policy and workload increases

announced or identified after tabling of the previous Main Estimates.

• (1020)

On a consolidated basis, the budgetary Main Estimates will increase by only 1.9 per cent over the level of the 1991–92 Main Estimates. However, within the 1992–93 Main Estimates there are four areas which account for more than 80 per cent of the total allocated budgetary spending. Public debt charges take up to 25 per cent of the total, social programs account for 36.1 per cent of the total, and fiscal arrangements account for close to 11 per cent of the total.

Social programs are the largest component of over–all spending. During 1992–93, the federal government will direct over $60 billion, which is 36 per cent of its allocated Main Estimates, in continuation of its efforts to ensure the health and well–being of all Canadians. Help is directed to those in greatest need through programs of assistance to the economically and socially disadvantaged, including the jobless, unskilled persons with disabilities, seniors and immigrants, as well as aboriginal people, veterans and children.

The departments of Employment and Immigration, National Health and Welfare, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Veterans Affairs account for over 90 per cent of the spending in this sector.

[*Translation*]

The government has acted on its commitment to legislate expenditure controls that will limit spending over the next five years to the amounts set in the budget brought down by my colleague, the Minister of Finance. The expenditure plan for 1992–93 remains within the limits set in the 1991 budget and the legislation approved by the House of Commons.

Expenditure control has obliged departments and agencies to respond to increased demand with fewer resources. Furthermore, cuts and a freeze on operating and maintenance budgets have been part of the restraint measures announced in every budget since 1985, and since then, the result has been a 30 per cent reduction in the value, in terms of purchasing power, of operating and maintenance budgets for current programs.

Canadians would like the government to spend less and spend smarter, and to be more efficient. To that end officials responsible for resource allocation have carefully examined spending levels to ensure that public money is spent exclusively on services that respond to the needs and desires of Canadians.

The Minister of Finance announced a number of measures that will enable the government to achieve durable savings and be more effective, which means that fewer resources will be available for the government's internal operations.

Programs, including grants and contributions, have been cut back in many areas, while in others growth will continue but be restrained. We remain committed to green plan funding of $3 billion over the next six years, but certain expenditures have been reprofiled to the latter half of this period. We will also improve the operations of the Canada Student Loans Program which should result in savings totalling $530 million in 1992–93 and $3.4 billion over the longer term, that is, over a five–year period.

Costs associated with government operations will be further reduced. Departmental non–wage budgets have been cut by 3 per cent, while a review of spending related to communications will cut departmental budgets by an additional $75 million in 1992–93.

[*English*]

Also, in keeping with the 1991 budget statement and the Public Sector Compensation Act, the government limited salary increases to zero for 1991–92 and 3 per cent for 1992–93. The number of management layers below the level of deputy minister has also been reduced to three.

This causes the management structure of the federal Public Service to resemble that of many large organizations in the private sector which have been forced to restructure in order to reduce costs. In this initiative, we are at the end of a schedule of a commitment made in the 1991 budget to reduce the number of senior managers in the federal Public Service by 10 per cent within two years. At last count, the number of members in the executive group has been reduced by 320 since January 1991.

Because of the continuing restraint measures introduced by this government, the level of program spending contained in the 1992 Main Estimates has fallen to 16.7 per cent of gross domestic product from a level of almost 20 per cent in 1984.

As you will see, the reduced levels of expenditures have not only come from reducing transfer payments to individuals and to provinces. The most severe reductions have been made in government operating expenditures.

Expenditure control initiatives are not limited solely to cutting ongoing operations. We are also restructuring. To this end 46 separate organizations and advisory bodies will be wound up, privatized or consolidated with other organizations. This figure includes three new agencies which will be put on hold.

In today's difficult fiscal environment, there are not enough tax dollars to meet all the financial demands of government programs. Accordingly, the government is placing a priority on using the tax dollars available to finance the higher priority programs that benefit all Canadians.

Through user fees and cost recovery, the government is providing and improving services that it might not otherwise be able to afford and ensure that the best use is made of scarce resources. This gives paying clients more influence on the level of optional services provided by the program. Paying clients have a right to expect and demand a quality product or service at a reasonable price. User fees foster such a service-oriented operation and one that is more attentive to clients' needs.

In 1992, annual revenues from cost recovery and user fees are expected to exceed $3.3 billion, which is a 5 per cent increase over 1991–92 and nearly double from 1984–85 levels. Departments and agencies are attempting to identify areas where the application of user fees or cost recovery is appropriate, resulting in a continuation of the rising trend in revenue generation.

In December 1989, the Prime Minister announced a major renewal exercise for the Public Service. It is what we call PS 2000. The aim of this exercise is to benefit the taxpayer and client by making more of the scarce tax dollars available for service delivery and for internal administration.

As an interim step in this process, a number of special operating agencies have been or soon will be established. The establishment of these agencies enables managers to run their organizations more like a business, with greater focus on results and service. They have greater freedom to serve the Canadian taxpayer better, and managers can adapt more rapidly to changing clients' needs.

Also beginning in 1993–94, operating budgets will be introduced, which are expected to benefit both clients and taxpayers. Operating budgets are intended to give managers more flexibility to decide the most efficient use of their allocated resources. It also allows them to make the most economical use of scarce tax dollars to deliver services better on a timely basis.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

These changes are merely a sample of the measures the government is prepared to take as part of its reform to offer Canadians better service at reasonable cost.

The Main Estimates before the House today reflect the government's firm commitment to reducing spending and introducing fiscal reform in the interests of Canadian taxpayers. Considering our achievements so far, I am sure we are on the right track.

I am convinced that Canadians will react favourably to the changes we have made in the areas of spending restraint and improving program operations. We will continue our efforts to structure and administer government programs so as to serve the best interests of all Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, first of all I want to thank my friend from Beauharnois—Salaberry for his remarks.

He is the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. The point to be made of course is that as competent as he is, he is not either the minister responsible for the Treasury Board or indeed the parliamentary secretary for the Treasury Board.

I understand his dilemma. He was told to do a job this morning and he did it reasonably well, given the facts he had to work with. The sadness of course is that the one responsible for this motion, the gentleman in whose name the motion stands, does not see fit to rise and defend it. I understand that. I say to him that it is a fairly indefensible request that he puts to the House, that we at this point in time ought to give yet another *carte blanche* for an amount approaching $49 billion, $48.8 billion.

Before we get that generous there are a few things we would like to say to the gentleman from Beauharnois—Salaberry and the group he is obliged to represent here this morning.

For at least a couple of years, and indeed more than that, this country has been facing twin crises. Our economy faces very serious problems, problems that transcend even the current lingering recession and, of course, second and important also, national unity continues to be uncertain.

My friend from Simcoe Centre interjects that the national unity issue has been with us since 1982. She is almost right. She is right except for the date. She is slightly off on the date. She was not here at that time, so she can be excused for slipping on the date slightly.

The issue was put to bed in 1982, except there was a separatist from Quebec who would not have signed anything anyway. Everybody knows that including the Prime Minister right now who said in 1982 that was the case, who congratulated the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, for his leadership. He has since tried to rewrite history a bit, so she is almost right. She had a slight slippage, but I am sure she meant, in kindness to her, 1984. That is when the damage on this one was done.

There is an old rule, and it is worth following even in this Chamber, even in the government of a country. It is: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. If she is interested in knowing why we are in the constitutional mess that we are in today a good part of the reason is because in 1982 and 1984 somebody tried to fix something that was not really broke.

She interjects again: "Quebec was left out". A separatist premier from Quebec elected to be left out. No matter what the offer was in 1982 that would have been the case. I appeal to her good sense to not be rewriting history. Her own leader in 1982 said essentially what I am saying at this particular point.

[*Translation*]

As for the Constitution, it seems that the parliamentary committee, several provincial commissions and half a dozen constitutional conferences, including the one in Toronto in late May and more recently the one held here in Ottawa, last week I think, moved the constitutional reform project forward. I hope that the governments will use the opportunities to continue to seek a solution.

As I will explain later, the sooner we complete this constitutional reform, the better for our economy.

[*English*]

There are those who say that they are fed up with the Constitution, and I am one who says that from time to time, and that we should just stop talking about it. However, we cannot set the Constitution to one side for the moment because we cannot have an economy, strong or otherwise, if we do not have a country.

That uncertainty must be resolved, though the debate on that issue is for another time. However, in speaking to this motion I wanted to put the economy in the context of the national unity issue because they go hand in hand. It is difficult to intelligently debate one without being at least cognizant of the other.

Having said that, let me come to the issue immediately at hand, which is the request of the government that we kiss and make up, that we let bygones by bygones, that we give it another $48.4 billion so it can go out and spend some more like drunken sailors.

Let us review, let us go back as recently as the latest budget by the latest Minister of Finance, the gentleman from Alberta. He presented his first budget in February of this year.

We might return to the words of the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of my party. Last November he laid out a five-point plan that would guide a future Liberal government in restoring Canada's long-term industrial strength.

His plan, which we stand by today and will stand by as a government, included a call for policies to promote economic growth and a better balance between inflation fighting and other economic goals.

In January of this year my party unveiled a further five-point emergency economic recovery program. Let us examine the elements of that program announced in January. It included a 5 per cent down payment for first time home buyers, it would allow the use of RRSP moneys to purchase homes, and set up a national shared cost infrastructure program that would include projects already on the shelf at the municipal level across this country. It included more basic skills training and emergency federal funding for food banks.

• (1040)

In his budget a month or so after we announced that emergency plan the Minister of Finance, to his credit, did adopt two of our points, those two which relate to housing. As he will know, there has been a strong response from the housing sector, a response that impresses even the most optimistic supporters then and now of measures concerning housing.

However, while we welcomed those initiatives, the budget as a whole lacked a very clear strategy oriented toward economic growth. The minister himself admitted in that budget that the recovery will be "weak by historical standards".

The question is, now that the budget has been in effect for a full quarter, did he expect the recovery to be this weak? If not, then what is he going to do about it in light of the even more dismal figures that we see from day to day?

This government's track record is nothing to get excited about when it comes to making projections. If we look at the 1989 budget, the 1990 budget, the 1991 budget or this year's budget we will find that in terms of gross domestic product, inflation, deficit reduction and unemployment both finance ministers—the current minister and his predecessor, the present Minister for International Trade—in the last four budgets have been painting a very rosy picture, one that has not been borne out by reality.

Take 1990, for example, when the then Minister of Finance projected gross domestic product growth of 1.3 per cent. He was off by a country mile. It was only about a half of one per cent. Other figures for those four years will illustrate a similar picture.

That is the broad brush approach to this issue. That is generally why we in this party cannot stomach the idea of giving another *carte blanche* to this government, because of its track record to date.

Generalities by themselves, whether in this Chamber or in the country at large, do not really convey the agony and the human pain that is out there as a result of the terrible leadership of this administration.

Mr. Boudria: Lack of leadership.

Mr. Simmons: To put a human face on it, let us look at some of the realities as they relate to a particular part of the country.

My friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell says: "Lack of leadership". As usual, my friend is being his generous self. If it were only a lack of leadership, if only the Conservatives had not led at all we would not be in as bad shape as we are. However, I say to him, and I know he means well, that not only has there sometimes been a lack of leadership but there has also been some terrible leadership in the absolutely wrong direction.

We saw an example of it in the last few days when the Prime Minister pounded his chest for taking this great brave step in signing the biodiversity agreement. He became the champion because he had taken on the United States. Of course, the reality is somewhat different. Mr. Bush needed a favour.

He needed to appeal to the right wing that Ross Perot is appealing to in the United States. He picked up the phone and he called the man who has, without fail, delivered for him over the last few years. He said to him: "Prime Minister, pretend you are painting me into a corner because every time you attack me on this issue of biodiversity you get me votes down here in the United States".

Is it not more than passing strange that the two statements, the American President saying he would not sign the biodiversity agreement and the Prime Minister of Canada saying that he was going to sign it and lead the charge, synchronized almost within minutes, certainly within hours?

An hon. member: Coincidence.

Mr. Simmons: They were orchestrated to be done exactly that way.

We have heard from this Prime Minister before. Whether he is rolling the dice on constitutional matters or strutting the international stage, the script is the same. He tries to hoodwink as many people as he can at any point in time.

It so happens that the people he attempts to hoodwink have been hoodwinked once too often. He is transparent. They see through him.

Let me talk about some of those people, because I want to put a human face on this situation. I have the privilege to represent about 90,000 people in 158 communities in rural Newfoundland, on the southwest coast and a bit of the west coast of Newfoundland.

Since I came to this House I have talked about the plight of the fishermen. Some of the time I have been talking about the deep sea fishery and the impact of the pillaging by ships from Spain and Portugal. That has had a very serious and devastating impact. As recently as yesterday in Question Period, and on other occasions, I raised that issue and will continue to do so.

There is another set of circumstances that is also pulverizing a group of people in my riding. It is not the deep sea fishery per se, although it is an aspect of the fishery. I am thinking about the southwest coast of Newfoundland, the communities that start with Hermitage, Gaultois, McCallum, François, Grey River, Ramea, Burgeo, Grand Bruit, La Poile, Petites, Rose Blanche, Burnt Islands, Isle aux Morts, Fox Roost and Margaree, and Port au Bras. Those communities traditionally have had two fisheries, a winter fishery and a summer fishery.

For the purposes of simplicity I want to talk about the winter fishery, which takes place from January to March. That fishery traditionally has been a very lucrative fishery for those people but the bottom has gone out of it, not just this year but for the last four years. For example, people in the community of McCallum caught 178,000 pounds last year during the winter fishery and caught 61,000 this year, one-third of last year's catches. People in François caught 62,000 last year and caught 10,000 this year, one-sixth.

In the 1987 winter fishery people in Rose Blanche caught four million pounds. This year they caught a little over 1,000 or 2,000 pounds. The bottom has gone out. People did not look to unemployment because they fished winter and summer. They fished 30, 40 or 45 weeks a year. There are people on that coast who never drew any unemployment until this year because it was not worth their while. They fished 45 weeks a year and by the time they got their forms filled out it was time to go back fishing again.

I talked to such a man in the last few weeks. When I asked him whether he had enough stamps, as we call it, to get his unemployment he nearly poked me out. He took it as an insult because he had never even thought of fishing in that context. He told me that if his pride allowed him to draw UI this year, it would be the first time he had ever bothered to do so.

• (1050)

Those people in Rose Blanche, Burnt Islands and Isle aux Morts are in dire circumstances. I see from your signal, Madam Speaker, that my time is running out. There were other things I wanted to say but I understand I just have a minute left.

I would like to comment very quickly to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I greatly admire him in some respects but he puzzles me on this one. Why has he been so stubborn? Why has he obviously set out to punish those people in those communities I have mentioned? Why has he turned his back completely on the people in dire straits in those communities who, through no fault of their own, are hurting?

Those people went to St. John's as recently as a month ago. They met with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He made a commitment that he would have an interim solution to their problem by May 15.

May 15 has come and gone. I wrote the minister about this issue two weeks ago and I am still waiting for an answer. I know he is a busy person but these people are hurting. They need some answers. I think they have waited long enough for those answers.

Those are the human reasons we are not going to support this motion because to give this government another $48 billion without knowing whether a few shekels of it are going to be given to my fishermen and plant workers would be to betray those people.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans may betray them, but I would like him to assure me that he is not going to. I can tell him that I will not betray them. I invite him to join me in doing something worth while for those people while there is still some time.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague from Burin—St. George's. He talked a lot about the deep economic pain existing in his community and right across the country.

I am not sure if he mentioned the fact that the interest rates are at the lowest they have ever been in 20 years and inflation is practically non-existent. We on this side of the House in debate would not want to exclude some of the good things that are happening in this country right now.

However, I am having a difficult time in figuring out how we can rekindle the confidence in this country again. I am feeling in my community in downtown Toronto a sense of no confidence. People with jobs seem to be lacking in confidence more than those without jobs. One

of the reasons this lack of confidence is there is that the banking institutions of this country are not really providing the necessary service to the small and medium sized businesses.

There are many reasons, but I would like to ask my colleague, who is an experienced member in this House, what steps does he think we should take in order to ignite the confidence in this country again? When that confidence is ignited it will lead to people taking risks again. That will ultimately lead to people creating more jobs. Could the member explain to the House some of things we should be doing to try to get this economy going again?

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Broadview—Greenwood. He is right. He puts his finger right on the nub of the issue. The issue is one of confidence. People are despairing, even people who hold jobs are talking a much less optimistic line than one would expect. It can be demoralizing when travelling around this country.

The first challenge is one of inspiration. It is a challenge to send out to the people of Canada the message that there is some reason to hope. We do live in a great country. It is not the country that is at fault; it is the government. It is the government that has brought us to a point in time where all people can do is despair. Take the example I was on as my time ran out, of fishermen who through no fault of their own find themselves in very desperate straits. They cannot even get the time of day from the people in the administration they look to. We have a regional minister, a minister from Newfoundland, in the cabinet. He hardly gives them the time of day on this particular issue.

My friend the parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries takes exception. I understand he was unavoidably detained a moment ago when I was speaking but I invite him to read the transcript of what I said in the last five minutes. I am talking about a very particular incident.

I said that in general I have great admiration for his minister. But I said on the issue of the southwest coast he has turned his back on them. He has been given opportunities. He is making wild statements to people, including the press that he did not know they had a problem. I have been badgering him in this Chamber for a year, telling him about the problem. He has turned his back. I use this as an example of why there is a crisis of confidence.

What can be expected when all sectors of society are being pulverized. The fishermen, the plant workers on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, the industrial worker in southern Ontario, and the small businesses in border towns between the United States and Canada are lacking the signal that this government cares.

We are asked what needs to be done. The first thing that needs to be done is to restore some confidence, to re-establish a linkage with the people who put the government there in the first place.

There is the crux of the problem. If a government is only supported by 15 per cent or 17 per cent of the people, how can it reflect the wishes and aspirations of those people? I suppose without being too simplistic, I say the answer to the question of my friend from Broadview—Greenwood is to call an election.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I listened very attentively to the comments from my colleague and I want to congratulate him. I am sure that the electors of Burin—St. George's will be very proud of the profound statement he made today on behalf of his constituents who are suffering through these very difficult economic times.

Both he and I represent rural ridings. I have not yet had the opportunity to visit his riding, although I thank him for the invitation he has extended. I hope to take him up on it very shortly.

I can imagine just how difficult it must be.

In many communities in rural Canada some of the few federal government jobs that exist are with the post office. It pains me to see in so many communities in rural Canada that we have lost that institution, that the flag of Canada, which was in many instances the only flag in the community, has been removed and replaced with a pigeon wing, that the word Canada has been taken off the Canada Post mail box and replaced with the profound words "mail—poste".

I want to ask my colleague if his riding has been affected as mine has with such closures. How do his constituents feel about the loss of this national institution? I think only rural members can understand how profound it is in rural communities to see the loss of sometimes the only federal government building, the only federal presence in rural Canada that we have. I

want to ask him to share the experience of his constituents in that regard with all of us.

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

There are two Canadas out there: the American Express gold card Canada and the Canada that buys its money orders at the post office.

That first Canada as represented by the cabinet over there—I am sure they all have gold cards—will not be found in François, in Belleoram, in Point May, in North Harbour, in Cape St. George, in Grand-Le-Pierre, communities in my riding. Not many of them have a gold card. But until recently, they had the option of walking down the gravel road, along the shore to the post office to get their gold cards or their postal money orders to send money to Nellie who has gone to Alberta to get a job, to send money to Joe who is off in Dalhousie doing his degree, to send money to Mary who is taking a cooking course in St. John's, to make the car payment, or to make the payment on the motor for the boat.

• (1100)

They could do all those things, until members of the gold card clique connived their latest strategy. Take away from Nellie's mother and Joe's father in that community their gold cards and their postal money orders. Shut down the post office. If they want their mail, they can go down with a key in one hand and a blowtorch in the other and if they can get the mail box open in the dead of winter and the mail is not too soggy, they can retrieve it. But they must close the door fast because the snow might get in and tomorrow's mail will be wet.

Or, they may want money orders. They go over to the window in the dead of winter and blow on the glass making a hole in the frost so they can peep out. They have to watch for the car coming down the road from the community 40 miles away because the lady in that car is going to sell them the money order, if they have the right change and if they do not miss her when she goes by.

An hon. member: Great system.

Mr. Simmons: What a system. The gold carders of this country are unnecessarily pulverizing the money order people, and why? The champions of national unity are pulverizing national unity by removing from those little communities the very symbols of national unity which keep this country together.

I ask them to get out of their drunken stupor. If they want to do something for national unity, they should just go back to basics and give those people in those communities some service. They have as much right to it as those living in Toronto or Montreal or those with a gold card.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to follow the hon. member for Burin—St. George's. I particularly enjoyed his comments about postal service.

I did not enjoy them in the sense that I regret the conditions he was describing. I think he would want to agree with me and certainly other of his colleagues would want to agree with me that it is not just rural Canada that has had its post office service curtailed. The national symbol that the post office represents has been removed from other communities as well.

I have recently been involved in struggles with Canada Post over the closing of the traditional post offices in my riding, in Elmwood for instance which is part of my riding, and also the removal of services that existed in private outlets in longstanding businesses, for example, drugstores. Those services have been put in the 7-Elevens and other chains. It is not just in rural Canada that this is happening.

The member makes a good point and one which I have made before. That is, the government wants to talk about Canadian unity and holding Canada together. It is not a coincidence that we are having this problem when we have just come through a period of eight years where almost every national institution that we have as perceived by the people, not necessarily by the Conservatives, has been under attack.

Those include the privatization of Petro-Canada and Air Canada, the cutbacks to passenger rail service and VIA Rail, the downsizing of the CBC, the elimination of rural post offices and the reorganization of postal services in cities and suburbs. I am sure I could think of a few more things, but that is not what I got up on my feet to talk about.

The point is well made and Conservatives of all people should know it, real Conservatives that is to say; not this fraudulent bunch of 19th century capitalists we have over there. They should know the importance of institutions and the importance of maintaining institutions. But that insight has long since been buried somewhere in the republican mentality of the group over yonder.

We are talking about the estimates today and of course the estimates have to do with spending. I asked a question with respect to government spending and taxation revenue policy in the House on Friday, June 5. It was a question I had asked before and to which I keep getting a non-answer. It is like I am speaking a different language. It is the dialogue of the deaf. My leader has raised this question as well.

It has to do with the intention of the government to bring in legislation with respect to trusts on which we were protected from taxation in 1972 by the Liberals, by what is called the 21-year rule.

What happened is that in the Liberal tax reform of 1972 when the inheritance tax was removed and a partial tax on capital gains was introduced, the Liberals introduced a measure which had the effect of saying that these trusts would not be taxed until January 1, 1993. Now we all know how close January 1, 1993 is getting to be.

These are private trusts so one is able to say just exactly how much money is involved here. Estimates run as high as $70 billion, but certainly several billions of dollars are involved. Many of these trusts are the trusts of some of Canada's wealthiest families. We are not talking about ordinary Canadian families here.

This would be money, if it were to be taxed as it was intended to be taxed for the last 21 years, that could go toward the deficit, if the government were serious about fighting the deficit or if the government were serious about having everyone share equitably in deficit reduction.

We have asked this question repeatedly of the government: why is it bringing in draft legislation to further protect these trusts? We cannot even get the government to acknowledge the substance of our question.

I asked the minister of June 5 why he was bringing in this particular legislation. I mentioned the legislation by name. I described it so that there could not be any confusion as to what I was actually talking about. He said: "Mr. Speaker, I know the position of the New Democratic Party has always been to tax Canadians into submission. What is important is that we have a competitive tax system". No mention of the question I actually asked, and certainly no answer.

The same thing happened in the next exchange between myself and the minister. Here we had the Minister of Finance of the government which was responsible for bringing in the GST, chastizing me as a New Democrat for wanting to tax people to death. The difference is: who is being taxed to death here?

The middle class is being taxed to death, yes, but not by the NDP. It is by this government that has brought in a form of tax reform over the last eight years which has seen the burden on the middle class go up and up and the burden on the very wealthy minority at the top of the tax structure actually reduced.

I was asking the minister if they are serious about equitable sharing of deficit reduction, allowing this 21-year rule to run out and tax that money in the trust. If some special consideration needs to be given to certain kinds of trusts that exist for disabled children or something like that, it could be done some other way. We do not have to do it in a way to hit a certain minority of these trusts that may have to do with disabled children. We are going to exempt them all.

• (1110)

There are ways to do it. It seems to me that a couple of very well placed calls from high places have been made to the Minister of Finance. He gets up and says: "We must not tax Canadians to death". We must not tax the Bronfmans to death. We must not tax the Reichmanns to death. We must not tax other wealthy Canadian families to death who no doubt have some part to play in some ownership of these trusts".

Why is there concern for this group and no equal show of concern for the many Canadians who are not only being taxed to death but do not have the money to be taxed to death with in the first place.

This is the sure sign, the government bringing in this legislation, that it is not serious about real tax reform, that is not tax reform as Canadians understand it. Tax reform as Canadians understand it is tax reform that is fair. It is tax reform that makes Canada's tax system more progressive, not less progressive, as has been the case with the Tory tax reform since 1984.

There are many other loopholes we have been asking them to close from the business and entertainment tax deductions to many others. We get the same answer all the time, that we have to be competitive. Even on that argument which I reject, even if we take the government at its own word for a while, there are other countries with which we compete that do not have as generous business and entertainment tax deductions. There are other countries with which we compete including the United States that have much more severe inheritance taxes.

It is not a question of having to do what others do. It is a question of some strange power that the corporate elite has over this particular government at this particular time.

Mr. Angus: They own it.

Mr. Blaikie: "They own it", says the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I think he is right.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): They owned the previous Liberal government.

Mr. Blaikie: As the hon. member for Edmonton East says: "They owned the previous Liberal government".

It is very strange. I am waiting for someone from the Liberal caucus one of these days to ask a question of the government as to why it is doing this and to urge it not to. Has there been a Liberal member who has stood up and urged the government not to bring in this particular measure?

Mr. Boudria: Yes. George Baker did this.

Mr. Blaikie: The member says that one Liberal member has done this. It was certainly not the official tax critic for their party. We await that question. I can understand the hon. member referred to that because he has a history of sticking up for the little guy and therefore being a minority within his own party. Has it been done officially on behalf of the Liberal Party? We await that with bated breath.

Going back just a minute to the business and entertainment tax deduction, we are always talking about there being a great deal of emphasis in right wing circles about making sure that ordinary Canadians do not rip off the system, that they do not get any UI that they do not especially deserve or qualify for or that people do not get any more welfare than they absolutely must get. All these things are legitimate concerns. No one wants to see any system ripped off.

Why is there not the same concern about, as Neil Brooks, an expert from York University once said, the fact that there is more fraud going on at a Blue Jays game than there is anywhere else. There are all these season tickets that belong to corporations, the cost of which is being deducted as a business expense, when in fact they are simply tickets that are being given out to family and friends and have very little to do with any sort of business expense whatsoever.

Why is it that certain groups of people in this country can deduct those kinds of expenses when ordinary working folks cannot deduct the cost of the tools they have to buy or teachers cannot deduct certain things they have to purchase as a part of doing their job? There are many other examples of people who are doing a lot more than simply shuffling paper around making money through mergers and other trickery who cannot deduct these kinds of things. Yet a very small minority of people are able to make these enormous deductions related to buying season tickets at baseball games or hockey games or whatever. It is this kind of thing that frankly I wish Canadians would get more upset about.

People get upset if they hear there has been some welfare fraud or something like that. The phone starts to ring off the hook in the constituency office. I wish we could just get Canadians as excited about the way they are being ripped off from the top of the sociological ladder. It seems to me that those ways of ripping off the system deserve more attention and involve an incredible amount of money.

One other thing I would like to cover, because there is a supplementary estimate related to it, is the question of the money spent in this country on the nuclear option through the money the government spends on Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the Atomic Energy Control Board. I see a supplementary estimate here for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited of $177,605,000 and $37,934,000 having to do with the Atomic Energy Control Board.

Without getting into the larger debate about the appropriateness of nuclear energy as an energy option for Canada, which I reject and which I made obvious in my private member's bill that was debated and defeated in this House not so long ago, I wanted to say that we have a particular concern which I may raise in the House

later on in Question Period about reports this morning of a study done in New Brunswick on possible dangers that may exist at the Point Lepreau plant in New Brunswick. Apparently the Atomic Energy Control Board has issued warnings to New Brunswick Power which do not appear to have been taken seriously.

There has been concern about the Point Lepreau reactor going back some time. I can remember being in New Brunswick in 1987.

Mr. Merrithew: It is the most efficient in the world.

Mr. Blaikie: The Minister of Veterans Affairs who is from New Brunswick says it is the most efficient in the world.

Mr. Merrithew: It is.

Mr. Blaikie: It may well be. That is not the point. We could have a perfectly efficient nuclear power plant that is efficient right up until the day it melts down.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Blaikie: The minister says something about Greenpeace. I know for some people, if we just say the word Greenpeace, immediately the eyes close and the ears seal up. It may well be that there is a real problem here. I do not think the minister should simply write it off the way he has. Neither should New Brunswick Power.

Certainly the AECB should not write it off because, if this report is true, it has issued these memorandums of concern to New Brunswick Power. Unless the minister maintains that AECB has been infiltrated by Greenpeace, which is not something I would not want to maintain at this particular point, then it would seem to me the minister, as someone from New Brunswick, ought to take these warnings seriously and at the very least inquire as to their validity.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Pinawa, the Whiteshell nuclear research establishment, and to meet with the union people there. I have met with management before in another context. One of the things that I would like to put on the record is that if today as a country we were to decide that we were no longer going to pursue nuclear energy as an energy option, it would not mean that the Whiteshell nuclear research establishment or Chalk River or any of these other places would shut down. There would continue to be important work that would have to be done related to everything nuclear that we have done so far. It is not a question of if the NDP were to implement its policy, everyone who has anything to do with the nuclear industry would automatically be out of work, or something like that.

• (1120)

We will continue to have to find out what to do with all the high level and low level radioactive waste that we have accumulated so far. That is a problem we will have for generations. Even if we had made a decision against nuclear energy yesterday, we would continue to have to devise decommissioning technologies for the reactors that we already have. We would continue exploring other ways of applying nuclear technologies, in medicine and a variety of other ways that may be appropriate, although not all of them will be. For instance, food irradiation I would not be in favour of, but there may be other appropriate applications of nuclear technology.

There are all these things, not to mention what we may feel called upon to do as a country with respect to the existing nuclear plants in the rest of the world which, whether we like it or not, are there and in the absence of some other alternative may need to be made less dangerous than they are.

There would be no shortage of work for a Canada that is committed to making its expertise available to a world that, quite frankly, still lives at the edge of the nuclear abyss, only it is not a weapons abyss any more. It is a reactor abyss, when you consider how many Chernobyls there are out there. I am not talking about Canadian reactors here, I am talking about reactors that exist mostly in the former Soviet Union and in eastern Europe about which there is a great deal of concern, and appropriate concern.

It seems to me that Canada could make a contribution there, short of being able in the short term to develop alternative energy sources for these countries, in helping to make sure that these reactors do not become one Chernobyl after another.

There is a lot of work for the nuclear industry to do in this country. We do not need a minister going around trying to market reactors and firing people who are not good at marketing them. We need a minister who is willing to put Canadian expertise at the disposal of the world to ensure that we do not have the kind of

radioactive poisoning that we got out of the Chernobyl incident over and over and over again as these reactors in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, each one of them eventually, come to some unhappy end.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I was amazed at the evidence of new dinosaurism in the member's comments today, particularly when it deals with Atomic Energy of Canada and our nuclear expertise; known throughout the world, leaders in the world in science and medicine. He complains about food irradiation because he does not understand it. He says, my gosh, if you irradiate those potatoes so that they won't grow on the shelf and develop bugs in them and will be safe for people to consume, there is something terribly wrong about that because you have stopped the normal decay process.

That is new dinosaur activity from a new dinosaur party. Surely to goodness, when we have developed the safest and soundest reactor system in the world to produce electricity, where we have been in the forefront of nuclear medicine, where we have been in the forefront of learning how to preserve fruits and vegetables with irradiation, why should we abandon this because it is not within the understanding of the New Democratic Party, formerly the CCF which developed its philosophy in 1935.

The member comes from Winnipeg, a progressive city. I am just amazed how he could all of a sudden pull in these horror stories and worry about a Chernobyl when he knows that our reactors are safe and he knows that our reactors are efficient, when he know our nuclear medicine plays a leadership role in the world, and complain about the program. He says: "Well, we can always keep the nuclear industry around just to clean up the messes of others". This is such drivel. I make that comment because it surprises me that the New Democratic Party is such a dinosaur party.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Mississauga South has done it again. I do not know how many times I speak in this House and he comes in at a certain point, not having heard everything that I said, and attacks me for saying things that I did not say. I never put down the medicinal dimension of nuclear technology. I complimented Canadian expertise and said it ought to be put at the disposal of the world.

The member says that there is something wrong with our party because we devised our philosophy in 1935. It was actually 1932 and 1933. However, he makes no apology for the fact that his party quotes Adam Smith who formed his policies in the 1700s. If we just want to talk chronologically, it is not very debatable about who is more up to date. The fact is that neither Adam Smith nor anything said in 1932 or 1933 are applicable to today's situation. It is a question of trying to figure out what is applicable to today's situation.

I was simply making the argument that jobs in the nuclear industry do not depend on us pursuing a nuclear energy option. There are jobs in the nuclear industry in this country that would continue and would continue to be important even if we made that choice and we would still have an international role to play.

The member is not really interested in genuine debate. He wants to get up and caricature what I had to say. What I do find interesting, and this relates to what I said earlier in my speech, is that he did not get up and say anything about the trust tax exemption.

Some hon. members: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Blaikie: You cannot even get them to acknowledge that this is happening. You get up and ask a question about apples and they get up and throw oranges back at you. Why does the member not address that particular issue? He will not because it is embarrassing. It embarrasses all of them, what we over here call the Upper Canada clause. It embarrasses them that they are such toadies for the corporate elite in this country that they would do something that is so absolutely contrary to all their rhetoric about deficit reduction.

Mr. Blenkarn: A quick supplementary, Madam Speaker. Perhaps the member could tell me the bill that is going to abolish this great tax loophole that is before the House. Maybe he could tell me what the bill is so I can refer to it and read it. I am as interested as he is in the bill that we are going to have to vote on to abolish these tax loopholes.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the draft regulation number is 91-018.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I listened attentively, particularly to the last remarks. I am a little puzzled by this so-called Upper Canada clause that the member referred to.

As a member of Parliament from so-called Upper Canada, as a matter of fact the community where Upper Canada was founded, namely Glengarry where the United Empire Loyalists arrived after 1776, I am a little curious as to what is meant by this clause.

I represent, of course, those people with great pride. I consider it the birthplace of our province, as it is in my opinion. Obviously you know, Madam Speaker, that Simon Fraser, Alexander Mackenzie and Sir John Johnson came with those people to Williamstown in Glengarry shortly after the War of Independence in the United States and after they were chased out of that country, so many of them with just the shirts on their back, and came to found the province of Upper Canada in this land of trees, of the great pine forests of eastern Ontario.

I am a little curious as to what the comments of the member mean. Perhaps he could clarify them for the benefit of my constituents.

• (1130)

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would be more than pleased to clarify. I left out a word. I should have said the Upper Canada College clause.

I certainly withdraw any unintended implications that might exist for the entirety of Upper Canada, an area which includes a lot of people who never make it to Upper Canada College, including the hon. member. A very small minority go to Upper Canada College and actually develop a social conscience. They make it into the NDP, but the rest of them go on to bleed the country to death in a variety of ways.

I just want to say to the hon. member for Mississauga South that he should check the finance department press release. I called it a regulation but I was mistaken. It is number 91-018 in which the finance department on February 11 announced its intention to bring in the legislation I am talking about.

I would think a former chairman of the finance committee would be able to do that, and substantiate what I had to say today. In fact, he knew about it all along. He is just playing ignorant.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hogue: Madam Speaker, today I would like to repeat an important announcement made yesterday—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows that we are still in the period for questions and comments. Are there any more questions or comments?

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

TABLING OF 13TH REPORT

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, on a point of order I apologize for rising at this time but I arrived in the House one hour late exactly to table a NATO report. I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the members here to table it at this time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If we are to seek unanimous consent, we should know what we are consenting to.

Mr. Hicks: Madam Speaker, it is the 13th report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association presented in both official languages.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

CONCURRENCE IN MAIN ESTIMATES, 1992-93

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle for concurrence (p. 12117).

Supply

Mr. Jean–Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Madam Speaker, today I would like to repeat an important announcement that our government made yesterday on the future of the greater Montreal area.

To begin, I think it is appropriate to recall that our government has always kept up with the situation in Montreal in recent years and has always taken the required action so that Montreal and its people can regain their prosperity.

As you know, the past 10 years or so have been difficult for Montreal. However, we can now say that better days have arrived. The metropolis of Quebec has defined its vocation and is now at work achieving its objectives. Montreal is further strengthening its position and its economy is now undergoing a most interesting transformation.

That is why it is important to support this renewal in every possible way, in order to provide the greatest benefit to the whole Montreal community.

With this purpose in mind, the hon. minister responsible for regional development in Quebec announced yesterday that our government would give $150 million more to promote Montreal's economic development.

I would like to state right away that these funds are in addition to the large amounts that the Canadian government is already investing in the Montreal region in projects affecting all areas of Montreal's economy.

The $150 million announced yesterday will be used mainly to help carry out projects in the most promising sectors for the city's development, especially the seven areas of development recognized by our government as most likely to make Montreal prosperous.

I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that our government has long been interested in Montreal's development.

In 1985, the government created the Ministerial Committee on the Development of the Montreal Region, supported by an advisory board from the private sector. In 1986, it proposed policies and initiatives to develop the region.

In the wake of the recommendations of this advisory board, our government in 1987 adopted a strategy highlighting Montreal's assets and emphasizing seven areas of development: international activities, high technology, finance and international trade, design, cultural industries, tourism and transportation.

Since 1987, the Government of Canada, together with its partners, has invested considerably in strategic planning for the industrial and cultural sectors of Montreal and its surrounding area. For example, let me remind you that the government helped establish the Canadian Space Agency, create the technological initiative centre, expand the Museum of Fine Arts, develop the Old Port and carry out many other projects that I will not mention now.

This kind of achievement, together with those of the other levels of government and of course the private sector, help define Montreal's true vocation and strengthen its competitiveness on international markets.

As you know, today more than ever, the Montreal area has resources and assets to realize its true calling as an international industrial and technological centre.

This $150 million will be invested with Montreal's partners in the sectors targeted for development. These new resources will help pursue the efforts in support of the strategy the federal government has been following since 1987 and support initiatives to innovate and consolidate strategic infrastructure.

The fund will make it possible to act in a complementary and/or joint fashion with the Government of Quebec and the Innovatech Corporation of Greater Montreal, which the Quebec government set up a few weeks ago. It will also help establish partnerships with private enterprise, corporations and groups that promote Montreal's economic development in order to launch projects, conduct analyses and equip Montreal with key facilities or infrastructure.

I would not like to conclude without saying that Montreal's development and prosperity require the concerted action of governments, educational institutions, municipalities and the private sector. We must all work together and keep working harder to meet this challenge.

Of course, the investment of $150 million more is part of this spirit of co–operation and partnership. But even more, this decision shows the Canadian government's firm intention to give all the players on the Montreal scene the resources they need to make the recovery of Quebec's metropolis the best possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak about the government's estimates because an important part of parliamentary life is reviewing the government's spending estimates. Having them in committee has some advantages because it gives members an opportunity to go into quite a bit more detail.

I think we lost something by the move back in 1969 to have the estimates removed from the House so this is a good opportunity today for members to talk about the government's spending estimates.

• (1140)

I want to talk about agriculture and the situation which faces Canadian farmers today. 1990 and 1991 were perhaps the most difficult years for the grain and oilseed industry because of two factors; the government made drastic reductions in their payments and at the same time the world price for grains was dropping dramatically from something like $137 a tonne for grain and wheat to $95 a tonne.

The government at that time was involved in negotiations for the establishment of the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account. Farmers at the same time were being really stiffed or stonewalled as to financial support at a time when world prices were dropping through the floor. In fact, they were the lowest last fall that we have seen since the Great Depression. Prices were as low as $2 a bushel when you removed the handling charges and so on.

The government steadfastly throughout that period dropped the government support programs drastically. The kinds of rallies we saw across Canada last fall have not been seen in the country in recent times. I had an opportunity to attend a rally in Weyburn, Saskatchewan which was attended by some 3,000 people. I also had an opportunity to attend a rally in Regina where some 7,500 farmers were pleading with the government to provide assistance.

Ultimately the government did provide something, about two-thirds of the funds that farmers were shortfalled in 1990 after a wild and woolly scene last fall in which farmers pleaded with the government to come through with some financial assistance. At the end of the day it provided something like two-thirds of the amount the farmers had been cut back in the 1990-91 crop year.

The government does a masterful job of orchestrating things to appear as if it is the great saviour of Canadian agriculture. When the estimates came out this spring the government announced that they were up some $800 million or $900 million. In fact, those estimates were just reflecting the funds the government had shortfalled the farmers two years previously.

We tried to go into the details of what was actually being provided in the agriculture committee when the estimates were there. The minister was there with his whole panoply of 15 or 20 experts and specialists, but nobody could actually explain where the extra funds were.

We got out the Part III Estimates and it showed that the additional funding for this calendar year 1992-93 was barely up, when the Wheat Board deficit of 1990-91 was added in, by some $500 million or $600 million, even though the press release and so on showed quite an increase for this year.

The government is really masterful at smoke and mirrors and it is also a master at trying to orchestrate funds to come just the year before an election or during an election year.

It is very interesting to look at the government's own farm income financial conditions and expenditures. Since 1986 farmers have been through the worst financial crisis since the 1930s. However, government support programs only increased dramatically in 1987-88. Surprise, surprise, there was a general election in 1988.

At that time the financial support from the federal government was $2.6 billion across western Canada because it is the grain and oilseeds sector, which of course operates in other provinces, where there has been a great deal of havoc.

Then in 1990, with no chance for a federal election, support dropped by 50 per cent from $2.6 billion to $1.2 billion. The same thing happened in 1991. Those were the years when the world price of grain was dropping from $135 a tonne to $95 a tonne, yet the government was just totally stonewalling Canadian farmers. They did not do much better in 1991.

Finally, after mass rallies right across the country, the government came through with some funding but none of that was paid in the 1991 calendar year. In fact, most of it will be paid in 1992. That is where we get the higher payments in the Main Estimates this year.

Even with all the minister's specialists and bean counters, they still were not able to explain to the agriculture committee who was actually provided with this additional assistance or when it was going to be provided.

The government will say that things are going to be much better now it has the Gross Revenue Insurance Program in place. This program is designed to provide producers with a guaranteed gross revenue from a certain area of land; so much per acre.

There are a great many flaws in that system. The trigger mechanism is not as sure as it should be and the government has already made some adjustments. The neutrality of the system with regard to markets, production, and international obligations through GATT are very much in question.

The important thing is that the government has gone through a massive off-loading program where it has loaded much of the cost of these programs on to the provinces and producers. For instance, let us look at those massive payments the government made in 1987 and 1988. This was leading up to the 1988 general election when the government wanted to look good and essentially it was on the buying end of activity.

If we look at those years, 1987-88, the total program payments in Canada were some $2.8 billion or $2.6 billion in 1988. During those years the producers' contribution was some $250 million in 1987 and $313 million in 1988; most of that would be their crop insurance premiums.

Let us look over the estimated payments for 1993. This will be the first year there are no additional payments under some of the programs that were announced last year. We see that the program payments in the entire country are estimated to be $1.6 billion with the federal government making contributions of $900 million and the province making payments of $732 million. The producers' contributions are double what they were in 1988 and 1987 and are as high as $650 million. What we have seen here is a tremendous off-loading and the sharp reduction in benefits from what they were in 1987 and 1988.

• (1150)

The government is putting in place a system that will be mainly funded by provincial governments and by farmers. In fact the benefits coming out of the system will be pretty well covered, at the least in the calculations of the department, by payments made by the provincial governments and by the producers themselves.

Some farmers may think that they have put in place a program that is going to have massive payments and guarantees, but if we look at the government's own estimates they do not look very tremendous. In fact, even with this program in place in western Canada the realized farm income in the government's own projections for 1993 dropped back below what they were in 1986. They are lower by another 11 per cent in 1994, and lower again in 1995, 1996 and 1997.

This is a government that is projecting extremely low realized net farm income in those years ahead in spite of having put in place a program that is going to cost producers and provincial governments hundreds of millions of dollars, resulting from an off-loading of these responsibilities.

For some provinces, like Saskatchewan, in which a very high proportion of their income comes from agriculture and there is a relatively low population and massive debt, those payments by the province are going to be extremely onerous.

While this scenario has been going on during the past year, with the government off-loading its responsibility on to provincial governments and producers and causing perhaps the greatest uncertainty in the history of western Canada, at the same time we have had that going on in the grains and oilseeds sector there has been the greatest uncertainty in our history going on in the supply managed sector.

This came to a final, calamitous rally on Parliament Hill on February 21 at which there were some 30,000 to 40,000 producers from all over the country—from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, to Ontario, Quebec and the maritimes, every province—who were concerned that they were going to be sold out in the GATT negotiations.

When the interim report came out from the Secretary General of GATT on December 13 recommending a tariffication program, which is very much in line with the government's recommendations on every other commodity except for supply management, the Tory caucus started to sell that idea. It did not get very far.

Within the matter of a month it had turned tail and the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office were having second thoughts about it. The political egos were figuring out what the new strategy should be. The new strategy was that it was going to oppose tariffication even though it initially agreed to it. The Prime Minister's Office is orchestrating meetings and sending groups off to Europe to make representations even though many producers and many Canadians believe it did not really struggle that hard in the negotiations that have been going forward.

Farmers do not trust the Tories because of the free trade deal with the United States. In that deal, back in 1985, 1986 and 1987, people like the then Minister of Agriculture were telling the House of Commons to have no fear about the supply management system, which is a system that provides producers with a reasonable return on their investment, their capital investment, their labour and their know-how. The Minister of Agriculture and the then minister of external affairs at that time said not to fear because they had put together a deal ensuring that the supply management system could continue.

The Minister of Agriculture told the Canadian dairy producers in January 1988 that he was going to put all the supply management items on the import control list. That was about a week after the government had initialled the original deal.

As soon as he said that the chairman of the finance committee of the United States Senate, Lloyd Bentsen, immediately challenged it. He said if those items were put on the import control list the Americans would take it to GATT and ensure that it did not happen.

In fact the government did put them on the import control list in late December 1988 after the general election and after the government had hammered through the FTA deal, despite the fact that 57 per cent of Canadians opposed it in that election. It felt that the support of 43 per cent of Canadians was adequate to hammer it through.

When it put those items on the import control list the United States took us to GATT and said that Canada's action was not part of the free trade deal and it did not meet Canada's GATT obligations. In November 1989 it succeeded, and ultimately the government capitulated in December of that year. In that case—which involved processed dairy products, ice cream, and yogurt, which is a processed dairy product—the Government of the United States had an excellent demonstration of its ability to export processed dairy products into Canada.

Processed dairy products represent some 63 per cent of our dairy production in this country.

At the same time the United States kept its own GATT waiver, which it got in 1954–55 in negotiations. This government was going into those GATT negotiations that have been going on for the last several years with one arm tied behind its back. It has already lost to the United States. If GATT comes to naught the United States will have access for ice cream and yogurt, and ultimately for other processed dairy and poultry products.

It is little wonder that some 40,000 Canadian farmers in the supply management sector rallied on the Hill to show the government that they do not trust it and they want it to fight for them in GATT.

We hope that they will continue to keep that pressure on the government because it is the only thing that is going to make it fight for farmers in those international negotiations.

• (1200)

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague and seatmate on his speech today, particularly as it related to his own portfolio in the opposition as agriculture critic.

I would like to ask a question about the Tory government and its actual policy toward farmers in Canada, which we have seen since the free trade agreement. Farmers were left hanging to go it on their own. We saw that as it related to the yogurt and ice cream decision, and now we are seeing it in the GATT, in terms of the supply management sector.

I would expect that under the NAFTA farmers in Canada will again be left to go it alone. This government seems to have a great propensity to say to groups that have been very healthy and very much a part of our communities: "You can do it on your own. From here on in we are not going to support you. You are dispensable under these agreements".

I would like to know whether he thinks the government has done enough research and development in terms of trying to find alternatives for our farmers who have been sacrificed in these areas. There are abandoned farms in Annapolis County, an area that used to be a very thriving agricultural community. The farms are either not used or have a very limited use for the farmers who are left, namely dairy. They are slowly closing or selling their quota because of policies that have been put forward by both the provincial and federal governments.

If we as Canadians are abandoning farms and our communities, the farmers, the people and all the spinoffs that we have had across Canada, this government should come clean to the farmers and say: "We have to find other jobs for you", rather than letting them close one farm this week, another farm another week, and allow the slow dying of the rural farmers.

I have not seen research and development from this government to instil a new drive or a new desire for farms to be active or continue. I have not seen any offsets to the free trade agreement or to what is coming under NAFTA. We cannot compete with the cheap labour. Although we have low interest rates and a comparably low inflation rate, none of our farming communities seem to be able to come up with new programs in response to these three particular areas, the FTA, GATT and the proposed NAFTA.

Has the government failed this community? Has the government not done research and development? I do not feel that the government has done enough to support the small farmers in rural Canada who have been so much a part of the vitality of Canada.

What does the critic for the Liberal Party think that this government should be doing to offset the free trade agreement, the potential disastrous effect on supply management under GATT, and, even worse, the NAFTA, which would eliminate most of the rural farming communities that are still existing?

Mr. Foster: I want to thank the member for South West Nova because she has outlined the malaise and concern that exists in the country as a result of the government's failure in the FTA.

When it left this gaping hole in the FTA, which the Americans immediately seized on and made use of, it was obvious that the government had no intention of maintaining supply management as we know it. I believe supply management has given us greater diversity in agriculture than any other single act. I believe, for instance in Atlantic Canada and the maritimes, it is probably the most important economic diversification tool.

I recall attending a meeting with co-operatives and agricultural producers during the free trade debate in New Brunswick. People were saying: "Look, if you want to see what free trade will do for Atlantic Canada and for the maritimes, go over and see what agriculture is like in Maine where most of its dairy and poultry industries are non-functional". It has had free trade for the last 50 years.

The free trade deal has to be renegotiated. The vast majority of Canadians want to see it renegotiated. We need a subsidy code. Our pork and hog industry is being ravaged because under our tripartite stabilization program we end up with a massive countervail which goes on year after year. Clearly the FTA has been extremely harmful, but nothing like it could be or will be if the GATT negotiations go the way that we are afraid they will.

If the GATT fails, the Americans have total access or will have pretty well complete access to ice cream and yogurt. They have already won that in a GATT panel decision. It will simply open the floodgates for challenges on cheese, butter, powder and other dairy commodities.

Nobody knows exactly, but we hear that the FTA will be a separate negotiation. There are press reports this morning that there is some kind of an agreement. Our concern under the free trade deal was that the snap-back provision we had for fresh fruits and vegetables, especially those coming in during the growing season of June and July, was simply not adequate. That snap-back provision is simply not a functional mechanism. That is the kind of thing that has to be renegotiated, and 67 per cent of Canadians favour renegotiation.

Diversification and research and development application are very important. I noticed this year for instance that the agricultural research and development application budget has been cut by 4 per cent. If we have an inflation rate of another 4 per cent, we have got a 9 per cent effective cut in R and D. The economic competitiveness council called on the government one week before the budget came out to increase the capital cost allowance for the food processing industry, to double it from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. What did the government do? It increased it by 5 per cent, which is about the inflation rate.

We need the diversification that supply management has brought us. We had a resolution by one of our caucus members yesterday about ethanol, the member for Lambton—Middlesex. It really called on the government, but what did we get? We had Tory members from southwestern Ontario standing and saying they were the representatives of the Ethyl Corporation. I thought members of Parliament represented people, farmers. He said: "No, no. I am the representative for the Ethyl Corporation so I do not want to see ethanol opened up and used". It is one of the greatest diversification tools. It is a good environmental improvement. Yet we had Tory members saying they were going to oppose mechanisms for increasing the use of ethanol for our transportation fuels.

There certainly is a lot to be done. The estimates before us today cut R and D, which is not helpful to Canadian farmers. It is not helpful to rural Canadian agriculture.

• (1210)

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I am honoured today to request on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board supply for the 1992–93 Main Estimates.

These Main Estimates reflect our continuing commitment to eliminate waste and inefficiency, control spending and contain the costs of government, the need for significant changes in the way government operates, and our commitment to deliver services to Canadians in the most efficient manner.

This year the Main Estimates total $160.5 billion. Through these estimates the government seeks Parliament's approval for $48 billion in new spending authority of which some $13 billion of interim supply was granted earlier through Appropriation Act No. 1, 1992–93. The remaining $111.7 billion represent statutory payments that have already been granted previously with parliamentary approval.

Growth in the Main Estimates is the outcome of a number of decisions and factors affecting the budgets of all 135 programs delivered by the 116 departments, agencies and Crown corporations that appear in the estimates. This growth can be divided into two broad categories: adjustments to statutory items which amount to a net increase of $1.3 billion and changes to voted items which amount of $1.7 billion.

These Main Estimates fully reflect the government's continuing attempts to eliminate waste and inefficiency. This includes divesting itself of activities and organizations that no longer serve a vital public need in order to reduce costs and strike a proper balance between Canadians' demands for federal services and their ability as taxpayers to pay for those services.

In this regard much has been achieved over the past seven years. Program spending now represents only 16.7 per cent of Canada's Gross National Product as compared to 20 per cent in fiscal year 1984–85. During the same period the annual growth in program spending including Public Service salaries has averaged only 4 per cent as compared to an average inflation rate of 4.3 per cent.

In the 1991 budget a commitment was made to introduce legislation that would limit spending for the next five years. The Spending Control Act has been approved by this House and the spending plans outlined in the Main Estimates are well within the limits set out in that legislation.

These achievements clearly demonstrate the government's commitment to restraint and improved efficiency through the rigorous control of expenditures as well as the implementation of innovative management practices. They also reflect our commitment to good management and careful stewardship of the taxpayer's dollar.

The government's record since taking office in 1984 has been one of success. We are confident we are on the right track. Canadians have indicated that they want governments to spend less, to spend smarter and to be more efficient. To this end the government continues to scrutinize carefully resource requests by federal government agencies.

My colleague, the Minister of Finance in his latest budget, announced a series of initiatives intended to bring about immediate reductions in expenditures and contribute to lasting efficiencies in government programs and services.

First, a number of programs including grants and contributions is being reduced. Defence spending is being scaled back further. Expenditures on social housing will continue to grow but the rate of increase will be slower.

This government remains committed to the green plan and plans to spend $3 billion over the next six years. However some expenditures have been rescheduled for later years.

Second, the cost of government operations, that is the non-salary operating budgets, is being reduced a further 3 per cent. An additional $75 million in communications related expenditures is to be removed from the appropriations.

In addition to the expenditure reduction and reprofiling announced in the budget and in addition to the more than 20 Crown corporations that have been sold or dissolved since 1984, 46 separate organizations and advisory bodies will be wound up, privatized or consolidated with other organizations.

Cost recovery will also be extended to a number of additional areas with a view to moving the costs of providing specific services to the beneficiaries and away from the general taxpayer.

In today's difficult fiscal environment there are not enough tax dollars to meet all the financial demands of government programs. Cost recovery ensures that the best use is made of scarce resources. Through user fees and cost recovery the government is providing and improving services we might not otherwise be able to afford in order to ensure that the best use is made of scarce resources.

Ongoing restraints mean that the Public Service managers and organizations have to deal with increased demands for services on the one hand and ever decreasing resources on the other hand. The managers have to seek the balance in a creative, sensitive and constructive manner.

We also believe that an innovative, competent and dedicated Public Service is the key asset in supporting Canada's ability to compete. Dedicated and competent federal employees working across the country and in missions abroad are working to serve Canadians in many areas such as health and safety, protection of consumer interests, support of industry regions, aboriginal people, science and technology, foreign aid, representing and protection of interests abroad, protection of persons and property, protection of taxpayers through effective and fair administration of the Income Tax Act and the Customs and Excise Acts, and delivery of social programs.

The government as the employer wishes to inform Canadians that its employees are doing many things to serve them better and to bring the government closer to them. To improve efficiency in the Public Service, innovation management practices remain a priority for this government.

Since taking office in 1984 we have introduced a wide range of initiatives to improve the management of operations. Many of the recent initiatives are the result of the major renewal exercise PS 2000 announced by the Prime Minister in 1989.

In support of this initiative a number of special operating agencies have been or are in the process of being established. Managers of special operating agencies have been given the ability and the flexibility to run their organizations more like a business with greater focus on results and service. This gives them greater freedom of action to serve Canadian taxpayers better and to respond quickly to changes in client needs.

Also, in the context of PS 2000, a system of operating budgets is currently being introduced which will be used to provide a far more realistic measure of the administrative costs of delivering programs and services. It too will give managers more flexibility to decide what is the most efficient distribution of their allocated resources.

Operating budgets will also allow managers to make the most economical use of scarce tax dollars in order to deliver services better and on a more timely basis. Operating budgets are expected to be in place government-wide by the beginning of 1993-94.

In conclusion, this government is committed to providing Canadians with the best service possible within the resources available. It is committed to a Public Service where employees focus first on the public they serve. To this end we must make it easier for our clients to deal with the government by providing simple and accessible services and we must make it easier for our managers to move in this direction.

We will do this by continuing to restructure government operations and provide training to our employees. To achieve these goals, federal government organizations will work together to make government services available at common points of delivery service. They will develop, where possible, standards of service based on consultation with clients. They provide more flexible and client oriented hours of service. They will reduce the number of forms to make them easier to complete. They will move to electronic procurement and invest in new technologies and training.

• (1220)

The message is clear. This government is serious about restraint. It is responding to the desire of Canadians that we reduce spending wherever possible. We are serious about reform and the need for new organizational approaches with which to operate the government in a manner that suits the needs of Canadians.

The measures that have been announced in the budget and reflected in these Main Estimates clearly indicate our commitment to sound fiscal management and to reduce the demands on the Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I was interested in the speech of the hon. member for Burlington.

I know that he is very interested in science and technology, industrial diversification and the whole area of science and industrial design and so on. He talked about the government doing a slashing job on groups like the Economic Council of Canada and the Science Council of Canada. I know the government is saving some $22 million with the wholesale destruction of those agencies.

In view of the member's interest in long term science policy and economic policy, I am wondering whether the government's move to slash all those agencies is out of concern or because of the politics of it, especially in western Canada and in other parts of the country with the Reform Party, and spending all of that money which I believe was $22 million on the 'feel good agenda' where we are trying to make people be happy and be satisfied and so on.

Does he feel that is a good trade-off. Should the Government of Canada be destroying long term agencies like the Economic Council of Canada and the Science Council of Canada? Politicians by their very nature, with a mandate of only for four or five years, have to look at the short term. The Science Council of Canada and the Economic Council of Canada can take a broader view, perhaps a 10 year, 15 year or 20 year horizon as to what needs to be done in terms of retraining, education, science, specialities, direction, innovations or design that is good.

I am interested to know whether the hon. member feels that it is in the best interests of the country to slash agencies like the Science Council of Canada and the Economic Council of Canada, to cut off that opportunity for a window on the wider world and, more important, on the horizon of those special areas of education, university and design and new perspectives on where we need to be going as a country for our industries.

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, the member poses an interesting question because the government has closed the two agencies to which he referred.

The question is: Is the information they supplied available from other sources? We are constantly being pushed by the academic world, in particular the universities, to help them in their research and development programs. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology has introduced and put in operations centres of excellence in our universities across the country.

We find that we can get much of the information that we want, much of the research that we want through those universities. Take the drug program that we introduced through the extension of the Patent Act under Bill C-22. Most of that research and many of the companies involved in it came to Canada because they felt that we have a good university program where they could tap into and get much of the research done for the new drugs and processes that they were putting forward in biotechnology and so forth to help our medical services across the country. It is the same with our industrial research. The member I know is aware of the disastrous programs that were introduced by previous governments in research and development that cost us billions of dollars in the final analysis, fraudulent schemes that

were put in place. I am not blaming the government for it. I am just blaming the way it was administered. There were fraudulent schemes that were put in place and exercised by many companies which came into the country, got research and development grants from the government and then disappeared out of the country again. There was no control over them. We have had a bad history in that regard.

I think what we have done is the right thing. The services that are available to us from our university communities are good. What we are doing with industry in research and development will continue to sustain our industry in the future. Certainly, in many of our industries we are leaders in the field and we will continue to be that way in the future.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Madam Speaker, as I have just returned from the earth summit in Rio, my questions for the parliamentary secretary will focus on the issues that flow out of that experience.

In Rio the government reaffirmed its commitment to give .7 per cent of GNP for foreign aid. Regrettably there was no timetable attached to that commitment. Over the last five years that commitment has in real terms actually decreased.

My first question is whether or not this is more than just nice words and no action, the usual strategy of this government, or whether there are some real dollar figures that are planned from Treasury Board.

My second question also concerns my experience in Rio. I was horrified to come back to Canada and hear that there was a proposal to spend $4.3 billion on military helicopters. When one considers the kind of priorities there are, there has to be a fundamental rethinking about what is valued and what environmental security means. I would ask the parliamentary secretary whether or not there is some concern in cabinet for what environmental security is and what is going to happen with that planned expenditure.

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, if the Prime Minister of Canada made a commitment that he was going to propose to cabinet and to put through in government spending a certain amount of money for foreign aid, it will be done. There is no doubt about that in my mind.

With regard to the helicopter acquisition, it has not come to cabinet yet. It is still being considered. The newspapers got hold of a story and they played it pretty well. Members, like the member who asked the question, have played on it.

The matter has not come before cabinet. It will be coming before cabinet. Much of that will be used for search and rescue. The condition of the 35-year-old helicopters that we have and the number of accidents they have had certainly indicate to me, at any rate, that these helicopters have to be replaced.

I would just say that the first time there is a need for search and rescue helicopters on either the west coast or the east coast and we do not have helicopters that are capable of going out and getting into that rescue operation, the hon. member will be on her feet, as will others, saying why are we not doing something about it.

We have equipment. Equipment wears out. These are 35 years old. There is talk of revitalizing them, putting new engines in them and so forth, but I do not know if that is such a good idea. We are going to have to replace those. Part of the replacement will come from the program that the government is going to be looking at in the very near future.

• (1230)

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I have a very short question. Having seen the budget, there were many reductions. My colleague has talked about the different councils: the Economic Council, the Science Council, and the Law Reform Commission which in my opinion were worth-while. The hon. member said there were other places they could go for that expertise.

Has the parliamentary secretary seen any studies that might have recommended that the ministers' offices should be cut back?

I cannot see most of them being very cost-effective because they now have a chief of staff who is paid almost at the level of a deputy minister. It seems to me this cost is an ineffective use of Parliament.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary would like to comment on that because I think there are an excessive number of ministries. Possibly some of them could be cut out altogether or doubled up.

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, ministerial staff is the prerogative of the minister.

I can recall when I was in opposition one of the members of her party who sits in the front row had an exempt staff of over 125 people. I have never seen a parallel of that in our government. People on ministerial staff can be shuffled into various areas.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Name it.

Mr. Kempling: I am not going to name it. The hon. member knows better than to ask that question.

The shuffling of staff from one side to the other goes on quite a little bit. If the ministers need the staff to carry out the programs they are engaged in then they should have the staff to do so.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Madam Speaker, there is a motion before this House that asks us to concur in the Main Estimates of the spending of the Government of Canada through to the end of the year, March 31, 1993.

As we look at these estimates we can talk about all that things that are happening and are not happening in the country. We can talk about financial matters and those other matters that concern the country very deeply.

There are certainly many problems that face this country today that are of a very serious nature. However, that is no reason for anyone in the House or any Canadian to go around being deeply concerned about how we are going to handle it, whether we are going to handle it, and what is going to happen to the future of our country.

If we have the determination and the insight, if we have learned something from past history in this country and from the past leaders of this country, from the people in the past who put this nation together over the years, then we will look at the past to get an answer to the present. If we have any vision in this country, any vision in ourselves, we will be able to look to the future and put it together.

I do not fear that Canadians today cannot meet the challenges that are facing us right now. However it is going to take leadership in this country and it is going to take serious dedication on the part of every member of Parliament, every senator, and every Canadian from coast to coast to coast in this country.

I want to go on the premise of our forefathers, of the sound foundation that has been built in this country over the years by people who had faith in themselves, faith in their country, faith in their fellow human beings, their comrades, and faith in God.

God has given us a great gift. It is called Canada. How we as generations of Canadians manage this Canada of ours is our gift to God, and I suggest that we not let our Maker down.

One thing that is bothering me greatly, as we have this last day for the study of the estimates for this fiscal year, is that the federal government is unloading its burdens on to other levels of government in this country, namely the provinces, the municipalities and right through to the very doorsteps of every individual taxpaying Canadian.

The estimates for this fiscal year are $160.5 billion. A new financial structure is going to be needed in this country and it is going to be needed now because the financial structure is all out of whack as a result of the niggling process of trying to pass the buck to somebody else.

With all my heart and every inch of my sincerity I maintain that the buck stops right here in the House of Commons of Canada. This is where the leadership has got to come from if we are going to manage this nation well.

Yes, we have a farm crisis in this country. It has been very well outlined by the hon. member for Algoma, who has an in-depth knowledge of the farm community and its difficulties in this country.

Supply management programs must be protected at all costs and they can only be protected if each and every one of us is determined to protect the farm community in this country. I grew up on a farm in this country. I have done all the chores that anyone could think of. I milked my two cows before I walked six and a half miles to high school because there were no school buses. I came home after school, got on the tractor, went out to the fields, drove the team of horses, milked the cows and tried to do my homework in the interim. It never hurt me and I recommend it to everybody.

There is nothing wrong with this nation today that a good dose of national spirit, personal determination, and the ability of every one of us to pull our weight would not fix. This country needs dedication. We have this great nation, this great gift that God has given us, called Canada. Let us manage it by working for it and not be afraid and back away from things in case we are going to fail.

We can never be afraid of failure because that is the first step to failure.

We must protect our farm system today because this country has been blessed with some of the greatest health standards in food anywhere in the world. I congratulate our Department of Agriculture and its officials for that, and the leaders of the past who put these programs together. Our health standards are excellent.

We need security of food in this country because any nation that cannot feed itself is in danger. That is a terrible failure. Over the beautiful farm lands and open fields of this country waves that great Canadian flag day in and day out, as it does over the small villages, towns and cities of this country. Let us get up in the morning and say how grateful we are to be Canadians. Let us go out and deliver the message to our neighbours and friends and inspire them to go on and build Canada, this Canada that cares greatly for her own people.

• (1240)

We have health care in this country that is unparalleled. If there is anything that we must do, if we think anything about our friends and neighbours at all, it must be to ensure that this is retained in the social structure of this country. I am sure every Canadian wants to see that done, but it requires determination and good management.

In my years in this House I have made some tremendous friends on both sides of this Chamber, and I have some good friends on both sides of this Chamber today. I appeal to everybody, at this moment and as they get up each morning, to say that we, the citizens of Canada, have the greatest opportunity to do things not only for ourselves in this country and not only to feel for those people who are unemployed and those people who do not have good health but we must have a heart and we must have a heart for them. National Revenue must have a heart for those people who are suffering and cannot pay their taxes because they had to feed their kids first. They have a wife and family to support.

I hope that the Minister of National Revenue will see it in his heart to back off on some of the sad cases that are coming forward. I have a number of them myself and my heart goes out to them. Our greatest resource is our people. Let us help them through this difficult time.

Our national resources are another point in question. Softwood lumber had a tremendous downturn when the Minister for International Trade signed that 15 per cent tax against softwood lumber going into the United States. We know it was not part of the free trade agreement but we also know that it was signed just before the free trade agreement was signed and the softwood lumber people in this area, and in my own Ottawa Valley which has been hurt terribly, were the sacrificial lambs of this government signing a free trade agreement with the United States. Let there be no question about that. Our lumber and natural resources have suffered ever since.

Even though it has been taken off, after many suffered as a result of it, the United States is now coming back and trying to nail us with it anyway. We will be interested to see what the report is.

The hon. member from Superior and—how could I forget? As a student I stood out on the highway in Cochrane hitch-hiking all night to get to Long Lac where I had a summer job. The member for Cochrane—Superior has brought this issue out extremely well.

Let us not say that it just happened on its own. This government has always said that we must compete. I could not agree more with it, and I do not think any member in this House could agree more. We must compete with the world if we are going to live but we are not going to compete in this world if we have a lack of commitment on the part of the government for research and development in this nation. Yes, we must talk about competing but the research and development programs of this country, or of any other country, are the engine that drives the economy. That is what answers the competition.

If it is the determination, the desire and the will of the government not to do R and D in the way that it should be done to benefit all Canadians then it is failing in its

effort to compete at the same time as it is saying we must compete.

Emergency Preparedness Canada's training centre in Arnprior is an issue I want to raise at this time. For months on end the people in that community and Canadians from both territories and all 10 provinces of Canada, 3,000 people a year, come to that Emergency Preparedness Canada training centre in Arnprior to take training courses to handle disasters in their communities across this nation. There were great rumours it was going to be moved out of that centre. We had a large rally recently. I have been asking questions and raising the matter in the House. Finally the other day the Minister of Supply and Services, who is the regional minister for eastern Ontario, gave a commitment in writing to the Mayor of Arnprior this facility would stay in Arnprior and in the Ottawa Valley, and I thank him for that. I am not vindictive about these things.

I am a fighter for things for the Ottawa Valley and I am a fighter for things for Canada. When a person makes a commitment, then I thank him for it and I want that commitment kept. I want it kept for the county of Renfrew because it was very much involved in this.

Canada has had problems over the years. Today we have many problems but these are not unnatural. Every nation has its problems. As I said in the beginning, it depends on the will and determination of Canadians generally to face up to these problems of today. That is going to tell the rest of this country whether or not we have the conviction and faith within ourselves that our ancestors had to solve these problems and carry on with this great nation called Canada.

This is Canada. I am a Canadian nationalist. I have been a Canadian nationalist from the word go. I am not a Scot, I am not Irish and I am not English. I am Canadian and I will be one until the day I die. I almost got thrown out of a history class in high school because I was fighting for our Canadian flag. I am proud of that day and I have had some great discussions with that teacher since.

What is the sense of discussing all these other great issues today and worrying about them if, first of all, we do not have a united Canada? The difficulties over Canadian history have been great. One of the greatest things that has ever been done, one of the greatest visions of this country was building the first railroad across this nation.

To put things in perspective, let us go back to 1840 in Canadian history. Lord Stanley, who was the British Colonial Secretary from England at the time, said and I quote: "I have to express the hope that the formation of the Government of Canada may have the effect of extinguishing party and national animosities and of directing the minds of men in Canada"—You know it is not our generation now, because we would say "men and women in Canada"—"of whatever origin to the advancement of the prosperity of their native or adopted country". That was in 1840 and there were problems. We are still trying to face up to those problems today.

Then there is a quote from Stephen Leacock in 1926 regarding the contribution of those two great Canadians who worked prior to Confederation, Robert Baldwin and Louis Lafontaine. Stephen Leacock had this to say:

> From now on a new path of national development is indicated in the alliance and co-operation of the two races, English and French, each contributing its distinctive share to the political life of the country, and each finding in the other a healthful stimulus and support. This is the principle, entirely contrary to the doctrines of the older school, first introduced by the alliance of Baldwin and Lafontaine, which has since governed the destinies of Canada. On the validity of this principle, the future of the country has been staked.

It is a great and well-earned tribute to Baldwin and Lafontaine because they did a lot prior to 1867 in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s to make this a great nation. George-Etienne Cartier had this to say in 1855:

> In the alliance which we have made between Upper and Lower Canada—we have not abandoned any of our positions.

• (1250)

Those are the words of great statesmen, so let us practise a little bit of that today. They had their nationhood idea and were trying to bring the races and various groups in Canada together. It is a great credit to the Fathers of Confederation after conferences in Quebec City and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, that in 1867 a nation consisting of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec and the rest of the territories of Canada was brought together.

B.C. entered in 1871 on the promise a railroad would be built across the country. We know all the little scandals and the problems of bringing that railway to pass, but in 1885 it happened and B.C. remained in Canada.

We also remember the American Civil War between 1860 and 1864 ended up with a victory for the north. The Americans had a tremendous army at their command at that time. They had a great idea they were going to become the continentalists in North America. Some wanted to go right through to the North Pole and claim all of what is Canada today.

But what happened? The Fathers of Confederation saw this happening. They had the minds of statesmen and used them. That is why they brought Canada together in 1867, so we could protect ourselves from the pushing and aggressive interests from south of the border we see today.

Continentalism was what the Americans called it then. What is it today with free trade and the lumber issue I mentioned? They are still trying to come on to Canada and push us right to the wall. We, as Canadians, have to stick together today just as we stuck together in 1867. There must be unity within this nation. That line of steel started to be built across the country and Manitoba, a great province of Canada, entered Confederation in 1870. In 1873 that beautiful island, Prince Edward Island, joined Confederation. Saskatchewan and Alberta came in 1905, carved out of the territories of western Canada. Newfoundland came in 1949, and then we had Canada and the two territories.

This was leadership, Madam Speaker.

I want to end on this great note, because I want to appeal to every Canadian in every province of Canada. I want to appeal to those who are handling our constitutional debate today.

Let us remember over in Europe, tens of thousands of young Canadians are resting row on row in those cemeteries. They went over there to defend Canada, to defend freedom and to defend other free nations of the world. There were 619,636 Canadians who participated in World War I and 66,655 died. They were Canadians and young people. If you look at those grave markers you will see how young—18, 19, 20, 23, 24 years of age. They were young people who never had an opportunity to participate in the history of their nation, but they saved this nation for us, and are an inspiration to us.

They came from all over Canada. In World War II more than one million Canadians went to war to save freedom once again. We lost 45,000 Canadians in World War II. They too are sleeping far away from their homeland, but they fought for freedom. They fought for us so we could have this great nation and participate in a free world.

Then we joined the United Nations in the Korean war in 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1953.

Five hundred and sixteen Canadians are resting in Korea as a result of having fought under the UN flag in those years. We have done a great job peacekeeping around the world.

Just remember, we do not have Remembrance Day in this nation only on November 11 each year. Today is remembrance day. Remember all those Canadians who sacrificed their lives to save Canada's freedom and fight for the free world. Let us as Canadians determine today we have the destiny within ourselves to co-operate with one another, to tone down our demands and try to get along together as good neighbours. Let us build this great nation God has given us.

If we do not, we have failed. I do not want a single member sitting in this House today to ever leave Parliament and have any of our children or our grandchildren in the future say: "My father or mother or grandmother was a member of Parliament when this country failed itself"

I want to thank hon. members from all over this House for listening very intently. I have a great feel for members on both sides of this House. I think that is the kind of spirit we have to put into building the Canadian Constitution and uniting this nation. I call for my friends from Quebec, from every province of Canada and the territories, our aboriginal peoples and everyone, to make Canada great. Let us get on with our great nation, help our fellow man and help bring peace on an ongoing basis to the world.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I just want to compliment the member for his excellent remarks and the spirit in which he made them in this House on a non-partisan basis.

I think they are the kind of remarks we do not hear enough of in this House. I think the remarks were well placed today.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I too want to share the thoughts of my former colleague from Mississauga with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who came to this House in 1965 as I did.

There was a certain celebration here last night for the class of 1968, but they are sort of young members here. Some of us are from the class of 1965 and are getting a little longer in the tooth.

I listened on television and came here to hear the end of his speech because of my personal respect for the hon. member and his generally objective view on most things, although most of us share party labels.

I obviously agree with him totally in terms of what he says about the state of the country and the fact we, as members, have a very special duty to help resolve those constitutional problems. I know how he feels sentimentally, but I would just like to ask him how he feels in terms of Parliament. We have seen all the negotiations and everything has been ticking away outside of this forum.

We have a referendum bill that already puts a three-day time limit on a referendum question if we get to that point. Does he not feel, as an experienced member, this House has to become seized of this in a real way in a very short period of time, if the negotiators in those conference halls outside of Parliament are not able to come up with some type of offer to present to Quebec?

This is the House of Commons for the country. What really bothers me about the process, although it is much better than the Meech Lake process, is the time clock is ticking. We might not be able to come up with a reasonable situation to offer to Quebec. Is it his personal opinion, as a parliamentarian with long experience, that if we can come up with the offer, that in effect, as some people have written, especially in the Quebec press, let us have the referendum in Quebec, whatever the question may be and just see how that province decides on a very precise question its relationship with Canada.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may, it is one o'clock p.m. The hon. member would have the floor after Question Period. I think it would not be fair for him to answer such a question in 20 seconds.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

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*]

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, currently the average Canadian taxpayer has absolutely no sympathy for the administrative problems of Canada's revenue department. The cross-border shopping craze is a rebellion against over-taxation, nothing more and nothing less.

The Minister of National Revenue's answer to over-taxation would be to impose some more taxes by this thing he calls harmonization of the PST and GST.

When is the minister going to quit putting measures in place at border crossings which do nothing more than cause Canadian shoppers to show more ingenuity when they are returning from their shopping sprees in the U.S.?

When is the minister going to do something positive about cross-border shopping? For example, let him lower the federal excise tax on gasoline, which is the main culprit that forces Canadians to shop in the U.S. in the first place.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, the Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Society of Canada wants the federal government to legalize the pill RU-486 for abortion purposes in Canada.

RU-486 pathologically affects the lining of the pregnant women's womb, causing the baby to undergo slow and agonizing starvation, followed by death and expulsion from the body. The drug has been known to cause fatal internal bleeding in some women.

The society is reported to have stated that: "The problem of legalizing the use of RU-486 is not with the government, but with the company itself, for fear of reaction from the pro-life people".

It is my opinion that the Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Society of Canada now considers itself the chief advocate and lobby group for Rousell Canada, the drug manufacturer, pushing for the legalization of RU-486.

I would expect that the government will remain firm and steadfast and not be swayed in any way in this decision to refuse the use of this drug for abortion use in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a message from several hundred members of the Yamaska Valley Chapter of the Canadian Club, in my riding, to their anglophone fellow citizens in the other provinces.

[*English*]

We of the Canadian Club of the Yamaska Valley, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, wish to tell you of the enrichment we feel in our lives because we have an opportunity to partake in two cultures. We consider this diversity a bonus. This province is not unique, just different. Most provinces have languages and customs which they treasure and want to keep. Quebec feels the need to preserve what it has and we accept this. We do think that a compromise can, and will be achieved, so that Canada will remain a united country.

A positive attitude recognizing that we are a privileged people is essential. These privileges were given to us as Canadians to enjoy and to share. Let us not lose sight of this.

[*Translation*]

I hope this message will be heard and understood across the country.

* * *

[*English*]

NUCLEAR POWER

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, a report prepared for a number of environmental groups in New Brunswick has called attention to the fact that there may be a serious situation developing at the Point Lepreau reactor in New Brunswick where aging high pressure steam pipes located over the control room might pose a potential hazard.

Apparently AECB has issued a warning to New Brunswick Power and this warning has so far been ignored. Also, concern has been registered over the fact that Point Lepreau or New Brunswick Power has not filed an emergency plan like they were asked to do by AECB after the Chernobyl disaster. In fact, all nuclear reactors were asked to file such plans.

I would ask the government in my statement today to get in touch with the AECB and to ask it to get tough with New Brunswick Power to make sure we do not have any kind of nuclear accident in that province.

Now is the time to do something about these things, not after the fact. This report ought not to be discredited as it was earlier in the House today simply because the person who prepared it had something to do with Greenpeace. It is groups like Greenpeace and others who have warned us before the fact about other possible hazards.

It is time we listened now rather than wait until something happens.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21 removed the government's obligation to contribute to the unemployment insurance fund.

The fund is made up of employee-employer contributions and not government money. It is to be administered by the LFDB and it requested that the spending for developmental use be increased from $1.4 billion to $1.8 billion.

In a feeble effort to make it look as if the government is actually doing something positive for the unemployed, the Minister of Finance said: "We increased worker training and adjustment funds under the unemployment insurance program".

What he failed to mention was that this is not government money but it is the unemployment insurance contributions from employers and employees that he is using.

For example, community development projects are aimed at helping remote areas adjust to the changing market needs. This includes promoting alternative markets to whatever may have once fueled the local economy and I repeat, the local economy.

The local economy of P.E.I., in particular Hillsborough, has a record high unemployment rate which is having a tremendous impact on my constituents' lives, families, and well-being.

I ask the minister not to shuffle money around at the expense of the unemployed in Canada. If he is going to shuffle money around, shuffle it in the right places to help these unfortunate Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNITED PARCEL SERVICE CANADA LIMITED

Mr. Marcel Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to draw the attention of the House to the pride and determination shown by a company in my riding, United Parcel Service Canada Limited. UPS, which provides a parcel delivery service over land across Canada, in addition to having its own air mail delivery service which also operates throughout the country, has acquired a reputation for providing quality service.

The company does 48 inspections on each aircraft before every daily departure. The company has also become a significant player in the trucking industry. UPS tries to improve its employees' knowledge of safe driving practices, and it is one of the leading companies in North America in providing safety training for its employees.

I applaud the determination of UPS to provide an outstanding mail delivery service, which confirms the feelings of pride reflected by the UPS team.

* * *

[*English*]

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the government's approach to our youth, our students, is absolutely morally scandalous. The government has a brutal consistency. It attacks those who are most vulnerable, including young people between the ages of 15 to 24.

The unemployment rate, according to Statistics Canada, for Newfoundland youth was 34 per cent last year this time and it is now 36 per cent.

Combined with full-time students, the over-all rate for these groups, youth and students, is 43 per cent according to the latest statistics.

What has the government done? It has gutted transfer payments for post-secondary education. It has cut back on Challenge funding for summer employment by nearly $1 million in Newfoundland alone. It has tampered with Canada's student loans.

Our most vulnerable and precious resource is being wilfully pillaged by this government.

I ask this government now to retrace its steps, to amend its ways and to do something for that important group of people who are our future, while there is time left to do so.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, with the break-up of Yugoslavia and the recognition of new nations such as Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, some are seeking the recognition of another new state which is referred to as Macedonia.

Whereas the Government of Canada supports the principles of self-determination and independence, we must not forget the history of this region. Archeologists and experts in ancient history will affirm that Macedonia is inherently woven into the fabric of Hellenic civilization.

On the other hand, the People's Socialist Republic of Macedonia is a post-World War II creation of Tito's Yugoslavia and is a falsification and expropriation of the concept of Macedonia. It is a deliberate and malicious attack on Hellenic history and culture.

• (1410)

I urge the Government of Canada not to recognize the so-called state of Macedonia. Another name is fine, but not the name of Macedonia. I further recommend the government work with the United Nations and the European Community to ensure that the Government of Skopje gives up its false and provocative claims to Greek culture, history and territory.

S. O. 31

CANADA POST

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers have been without a contract since the summer of 1989. Despite the appointment of a conciliation officer in October 1989, of a conciliation board in October 1990, and a mediator in September 1991, the union is still without a contract.

Canada Post negotiators have attempted to deny that agreements were reached on many major issues during and following the mediation phase. For example, on the issue of wages, the government says it was not able to reach an agreement. In fact, both parties did agree on that issue.

I call upon the government to stop procrastinating and solve this matter forthwith.

* * *

BANKS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks there was concern raised in this House that Canada's big banks would nail consumers for higher service charges to cover their mistake loans to the floundering real estate giant, Olympia & York.

In response, the Minister of Finance made it clear he would not tolerate the banks trying to recover their loan losses from small businesses or average Canadians. He contacted the Canadian Bankers' Association and spelled out his concerns. He also told this House he was standing squarely on the side of bank clients.

The man the press is now calling "Mad Maz, the consumers' friend", has got results. Last week several banks announced they are freezing their service fees for a period of time as a visible gesture that the O&Y mistake will not end up costing us all more money.

I want to congratulate the banks for their gutsy response to this public concern and of course we are all in debt to Mad Maz, the caped crusader of Canadian consumerism.

EARTH SUMMIT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, at this first opportunity to speak in the House since returning from the earth summit in Rio, I want to express my deep admiration and thanks to the Canadian negotiating team for their outstanding work on our behalf.

These women and men have given of themselves tirelessly over the past two years and in the final days and nights of negotiation in Rio worked around the clock. These 16 people are public servants in the truest sense.

Thank you John Bell, Vic Buxton, George Greene, Michael Small, Bob Applebaum, Serge April, Jerry Beausoliel, Alexandra Bezeredi, Barbara Brown, Louise Coté, Adrian DeHoog, David Drake, Fern Hurtubise, Jag Maini, John Sloan and Roger Street. You are among the heroes of the earth summit. I hope you can rest up, see your families and recharge your batteries for the crucial follow-up work.

Merci beaucoup.

* * *

BEEF INDUSTRY

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, the cattlemen and women of this country and indeed of North America are being attacked by environmentalists and animal rights groups.

Cows and bulls have existed on this planet since Adam and Eve and in fact the Lord asked Noah to preserve all species because of a big cloudburst a few years ago.

Now these brain-warped animal rights groups and environmentalists, who all gorge themselves on big Macs, blame beef for causing heart attacks. They blame the cow with its forward and backward belches, you know what I mean Mr. Speaker, for causing a hole in the ozone.

Cattlemen are now blamed for feeding grain, grass and silage to these cows while Third World children starve. Cows provide milk, butter, cheese, fat, meat, leather, protein, calcium, fertilizer, recycled, and hundreds of thousands of jobs. Cows are perfect examples of sustainable development. Take away the moo, in fact the oink or the baa, and the entire world starves.

IMMIGRATION ACT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Employment and Immigration tabled a bill with numerous and complex amendments to the Immigration Act.

In this bill he provided for extensive management and enforcement measures but virtually ignored humanitarian considerations. Most serious, he did not take any steps to provide for an appeal on the merits for refugees whose applications are rejected.

The Refugee Board is not perfect and without a fair appeal process the system is seriously flawed. As an alternative, why did the minister not clarify and provide objective criteria for the use of section 114, the admission of refugees on humanitarian and compassionate grounds? This useful provision has been virtually shut down by this minister as a means of appealing deserving cases. During the past year only four out of 889 of these applications were accepted in Quebec and only 16 out of 2,288 in Ontario.

I ask the minister of immigration to put more balance in his bill and provide for a fair appeal process.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver last week, the Quebec Federation of Labour decided to split from the Canadian Labour Congress.

This decision came as a result of the CLC's refusal to recognize the QFL's specific role in representing the workers of Quebec.

This is just one more instance that proves Quebecers must have their own institutions to become complete masters of their own destiny and become full participants in international organizations.

The QFL realizes that after many attempts, by both sides I agree, there is a total lack of compatibility between Canadian organizations and Quebec organizations. This decision will make it possible eventually to create a single labour congress in Quebec and will encourage Quebecers to take similar action in all areas.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL HEART HEALTH CONFERENCE

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the International Heart Health Conference chaired by Canadian-born Dr. John Farqhuhar was held in Victoria, British Columbia, on May 24 to 28, gathering over 700 delegates.

The Conference Advisory Board issued a declaration that clearly states that our nation has the capacity to drastically reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke.

Canadians will be able to achieve this if we reinforce our commitment to maintaining the cornerstones of good heart health, good dietary habits, tobacco-free lifestyles, regular physical activity, and a supportive psycho-social environment.

I am sure all hon. members will join me in congratulating the Conference Advisory Board, including Senator Dr. Wilbert Keon, representing the Canadian Cardiovascular Society on the board, for its efforts in improving heart health world-wide.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. Yesterday the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism said in this House he could not make a premature disclosure as to the contents of the deal between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and we will find out what is in the deal only after it is signed.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: Is it the policy of the government that the minister was representing when he said that the Canadian people and the House of Commons will not hear anything about the deal until it is signed?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the hon. Leader of the Opposition appreciates it but he is mis-stating and distorting the facts.

We have been quite open in presenting to this House various positions we have been taking in the North American free trade negotiations. There have been extensive meetings with his caucus representatives and the chief negotiators. We have also had extensive meetings with the various industry sector groups which are advising us on the negotiations.

As my hon. friend the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism has said, the final details cannot be known until the final negotiations are completed. We have been very open in a variety of ways of making sure that people do understand the clear objectives we have and some of the specific negotiating issues we are dealing with.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the minister or the Prime Minister. I would like to ask them what they are proposing at this time when they say the people are being consulted. We are talking to some premiers who are complaining bitterly because they have not heard anything from the government, let alone the people. Provincial governments have not heard anything from the government.

If this government thinks we will be faced with a *fait accompli* the government has another thought coming because we will not tolerate that.

If the government does not want to take this House into its confidence about this deal, will the government at least make the commitment that when it has signed this deal between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, that it will authorize a committee of this House to have public hearings before this House is confronted with a vote. The Canadian people are entitled at least to be heard before we vote in this House.

• (1420)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, let me direct my response to the two things that the hon. member has raised.

First of all, as far as the provinces are concerned, we have had something like 35 meetings with the provinces over the last year on the issues. My hon. friend is, I am sure, referring to statements that were made by some premiers who were not aware. They had not been briefed or they chose not to acknowledge that they had been briefed on the results of these meetings. I have seen members of the provincial governments express their deep appreciation for the way that we have consulted with them and taken into account their views.

On the question of the activities of this House prior to the signing of an agreement, there will be every opportunity for a committee of this House to take the initialled agreement, have hearings on that initialled agreement, take the advice of various interested parties, parties that have been involved in the negotiation through the sectoral advisory process, and in that way the views of Canadians will be heard before the deal would be signed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, promises of the kind the minister just made tend to be received with some scepticism by Canadians, because during the last election campaign, the Prime Minister and the government made a very firm commitment to introducing adjustment programs for Canadian workers and companies. Three and half years later, none of these programs has been implemented. My question is directed to the minister or the Prime Minister. Before making any commitments under the new agreement with the United States and Mexico, does the government intend to introduce adjustment programs for Canadian workers, and will it do so immediately, and not by way of an election promise but by introducing legislation in this House, before the government is defeated by Canadian voters?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I have to say this a second time, but my hon. friend is totally mis-stating what we have done as a government.

My hon. friend refers to what we said we would do at the time of the free trade agreement with the United States. We appointed a commission headed by Jean de Grandpré. It had representatives from the business community and the labour community. This committee made recommendations to the Government of Canada to increase the amount of training. This has been done.

My colleague has said a number of times that we have increased training from $1.4 billion to $1.8 billion. We have launched the Canadian Labour Force Development Board with representatives from labour and business to advise the government on the use of these training funds.

It was the policy of his party to delay the legislation that was going to implement the recommendations of the de Grandpré committee. If he is worried about—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Yesterday, in asking questions about what was in the agreement and what was not in it with reference to subsidies, the Minister of State for Small Businesses replied: "The government will announce what is in the agreement when it is signed".

Let me ask the Minister of International Trade, who says that is not the government's position, two questions:

In defending the existing free trade agreement with the United States, the government invariably points to the dispute settlement mechanism. Yet that mechanism, the centrepiece of the free trade agreement, is on the table in the current trilateral negotiations as the North American Free Trade Agreement supersedes the FTA.

Are United States negotiators seeking to water down the dispute settlement mechanism? Is that a price Canada will have to pay for a North American free trade agreement?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): No, Mr. Speaker, it will not be the price that Canada has to pay, to use my hon. friend's words.

I also use the words that he used before, right after the last election when he said "every sparrow that falls will be blamed on the free trade agreement". Here is another sparrow that he is throwing out into the air right now. My hon. friend should know that in this agreement, as in any trade negotiation, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

I have responded to his questions. The chief negotiator has responded to his questions in the briefings that he is receiving. The openness that this government has demonstrated to the opposition parties and others in discussing what the negotiations are designed to achieve is totally different from anything that his government or previous Liberal governments have ever done in terms of letting Canadians know about what they are planning to negotiate or not negotiate in any trade negotiations.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the minister finds my ornithological metaphors so pleasing, but they do not in fact answer the question that I am asking, nor has he answered the question that I just put to him: Is the dispute settlement being renegotiated or not? However, the minister declines to answer that so let me move on to another question.

A major omission in the existing Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement is the absence of provisions regarding financial services on the one hand and government procurement on the other. Indeed, the government justified its entry into the current North American free trade negotiations to correct those and other anomalies in the free trade agreement.

Since the minister claims that he is seeking to improve the free trade agreement in the current North American negotiations, will there be provisions in the North American free trade agreement regarding financial services and regarding government procurement?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is yes and yes.

Let me just respond to the question that my hon. friend raised about the dispute settlement mechanism. We have made it very clear right from the start of these negotiations that things that were negotiated in the free trade agreement with the United States will not be renegotiated in the NAFTA agreement unless they can be improved upon. That certainly applies to the dispute settlement mechanism which was a centrepiece of our acceptance of the free trade agreement with the United States and has been a centrepiece in the success of the free trade agreement since that time.

With regard to financial services and procurement, these matters are both under negotiation. We have made it clear in both cases what our objectives are. In the case of procurement, if we are able to get a Uruguay round success at the same time, the procurement package will be a considerably larger one and a very attractive one as far as Canadian industry is concerned.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

The minister has said that Canadians will not know what is in the deal until it is signed. We even do not know the official statistics on this government's assessment and Canadians' assessment of the Canadian–U.S. trade deal and yet the government is taking us blindly into a trade deal when all we do know is that we have lost almost a half a million jobs because of the Canada–U.S. trade deal.

The minister has said that he is going to go out to Canadian business and ask it to help sell the deal. I remind the minister that just before the Canada–U.S. trade deal was signed the same multinational corporations in their campaign said: "Okay, what's in it for me: More jobs, better jobs, more wealth to improve government services such as day care and direct personal benefits. You will find that the average food bill for a family of four will go down $100 a year".

Is that the kind of promises that the minister wants business to go out and sell? Canadians know better. Why does the minister not do the right thing and, rather than trying to sell a bad deal, pull out of these negotiations and give Canadians a real birthday present.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I guess my hon. friend is still the spokesperson for the Canadian Labour Congress, but I think she has got her figure wrong. Rather than the 500,000 jobs that she stated were lost, the Canadian Labour Congress figures it is 1.4 million. She should get her figures right. Both of these figures are wildly out of perspective.

As I have said on many occasions if we have a record level of exports to the United States, if exports are up something like 5 per cent or 6 per cent since the free trade agreement came into force, how is it that is causing us lost jobs in Canada? It is the reverse. The free trade agreement with the United States is helping this economy through a difficult period. The $5 billion or $6 billion increase in exports translates into something like 75,000 or 85,000 incremental jobs since 1988 as a result of the free trade agreement.

• (1430)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I would suggest that the minister talk to those thousands and indeed millions of Canadians who are out of work. We have 1.75 million Canadians out of work. Then he will get the straight goods. Then he will know what the economic policies and trade policies of this government have done to Canadians.

I want to say it has been clear from the beginning of the negotiations of the Canada–U.S. trade deal and now the NAFTA deal that there are parallel talks going on in other areas. This government has repeatedly said that these trade deals do not affect social policies.

We saw the generic drug bill that was passed before the Canada–U.S. trade deal. Now the immigration bill which was introduced clearly indicates that there is a move toward harmonization of immigration policies with the United States.

I want to ask the minister responsible whether it is the intention of this government to continue drawing Canada into the United States by harmonizing Canada's immigration policy with that of the United States?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would be well advised, instead of standing up and making such a statement, to read the projected bill, try to inform herself and try not to mistake the position of the government, and then maybe we can answer an intelligent question.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, all we would like is an intelligent answer.

I have a supplementary question for the minister. Last September, as the minister knows, senior officials of the Canadian government met with senior officials of the Mexican and U.S. governments to discuss harmonization of refugee and immigration policy.

I want to say to the minister that Canada has had a long and proud history of admitting immigrants and refugees to this country on the basis of need, and not on the basis of wealth. I want to ask the minister whether it this government's intention to change those principles simply to cater to the needs of the United States, or whether there is going to be some sovereignty in Canada in developing our own immigration and refugee policies?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker. This is about furthering the view of the United Nations that the problem of genuine refugees is an international problem.

By the way, that is probably why today the United Nations high commission representative in Canada issued a communiqué endorsing fully the provisions of this bill fine-tuning our refugee determination process.

These people seem to look at the refugee determination system as an immigration problem. This is not an immigration problem. This is an undertaking by Canada to the world as a signatory of the UN Geneva convention to give protection to those people who need it. We are trying to exert Canada's influence throughout the world in order to give real protection to those persons who really need protection.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

On May 11 the minister stated in this House: "If the United States does not allow the softwood issue to go to the dispute settlement mechanism panel then it will be a very serious thing".

Yesterday the U.S. Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports stated that the issue does not come under the free trade agreement and therefore is not subject to chapter 19 of the agreement.

What is the government's plan to avoid the issue being settled solely by American law?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, our plan is quite simply to file a joint request by the Government of Canada, the provinces and the industry for a hearing under chapter 19 of the dispute settlement mechanism. That has been done. We expect that the hearing will commence next month. The process will continue until we get a conclusion.

What Mr. Howlett said and what we say are totally at odds. We are a party to an action under the dispute settlement panel. Mr. Howlett is on the other side of it. Obviously he is going to say everything he can to try to disrupt that process. But the process is proceeding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. What the minister just said merely adds to the current uncertainty among softwood lumber manufacturers.

Again, I want to ask the minister whether this question will be subject to chapter 19 of the free trade agreement, and will it be referred to the dispute settlement panel, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend had his next question prepared before he heard my answer.

What I said in my response was that we have already filed an application under chapter 19. The application will start being heard next month. It will follow the process from there to a final conclusion, which as I said before we are confident we will be able to win.

What Mr. Howlett said and the facts and the process are completely at odds with each other. He obviously has an axe to grind as the chief spokesman of our opponents on this issue.

* * *

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister or acting minister of multiculturalism and citizenship.

This morning a unanimous report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons recommended that the Court Challenges Program be reinstated. I salute government members of the committee for having the courage to admit that the government made a mistake.

Will the government accept the advice of this parliamentary committee and reinstate this program?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the program was terminated because initially it was intended to provide a base for the establishment of jurisprudence in a number of cases.

The government felt that had been done and that obviously, in a period of strict budgetary restraint, if the purposes of the program had been fulfilled it might be wise to review that program and abolish it. That is what we did in the last budget.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the unanimous report from the committee does not agree with the minister.

The Court Challenges Program is being forced to close its door in September. The committee's report calls on the government to make a public statement of its intentions within the next 60 calendar days.

Will the minister agree to such a report confirming government support of this program before the program closes?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister responsible will be looking at the report very closely. Along the lines of our normal procedures the government will respond to the report in due course.

* * *

EXTRADITION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns yesterday's decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that makes a mockery of extradition treaties which have been signed by the United States.

In welcoming this decision the United States Attorney General William Barr said: "Our general policy remains co-operation where possible with foreign governments".

Will the minister now send a clear message to the United States government that this Rambo-style, vigilante kidnapping is not acceptable anywhere in the world and that it is a flagrant breach of international law?

Will she immediately seek an exclusionary amendment to the Canada-U.S. extradition treaty to ensure the United States agents can never get away with this in Canada?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Canada was an intervener in the case that led to this decision as it came before the court.

We continue to believe that the appropriate way for U.S. authorities to obtain custody of a criminal suspect is through a request to authorities of other countries, to Canadian authorities for example, under the extradition treaty that exists between our two countries.

• (1440)

Any attempt to abduct someone from Canadian territory we would continue to regard, as we have in the past, as a criminal act.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I wonder how the United States would feel if Canada ignored the treaty, sent the Mounties down to Washington, New York or Kennebunkport, seized an American citizen and brought him back to Canada for trial. I do not think it would accept that and neither should we.

My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister now stand up for Canadian sovereignty, tell George Bush that U.S. extradition requests will be put on hold and that not one FBI or DEA agent will set foot on Canadian territory until this monstrous ruling has been overturned?

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs do the right thing and seek an amendment of the treaty now?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this is not a presidential decision. It was a court decision by the Supreme Court. Canada will continue to insist that the extradition treaty in force between Canada and the U.S. is the only method

for obtaining the custody of fugitives between our two countries. We will express that in the strongest possible terms.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I do not feel that the minister's answer is sufficient.

This is an affront to all nations. It allows the United States to come into Canada, abduct Canadian citizens that it suspects of having committed an offence in the United States, and take them back to the United States for trial. It is a complete abandonment of the principles of the extradition treaties.

What I would like to know from the minister is: What is she prepared to do to bring this matter before the World Court for a full and proper hearing?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that this was a judicial decision in the United States.

I have said that we are going to continue to make our case in the strongest possible way. We have done it in the past; we intervened in a case. We will do so in the future in whatever avenues are open to us.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, this is a flagrant abuse of international law. As we speak there are Canadians who are at severe risk.

One such Canadian is Mr. Ken Walker of Richmond Hill who was taken advantage of by the Americans in a sting operation. He is still wanted in the United States although he has not broken any laws.

This morning he called the minister's department and said that he had concern about this ruling. He was told by the minister's department: "We understand your concern. Call your local police". That is a callous response to a man who is in tremendous difficulty as a result of this ruling.

What is the government going to do to protect Canadian sovereignty and the safety of Canadian citizens?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows, and so does Mr. Walker if he wants to get into specific cases, that this government has acted on behalf of Mr. Walker as we have acted on behalf of other Canadians who are in difficulty in whatever country they may be in, including the United States.

This is a Supreme Court decision. We will stick by our stand, which the United States does not accept. We will pursue in every avenue we can that extradition is the only way in which to proceed.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The minister knows certainly that Canadians throughout the country were very disappointed last week when his discussions with the provinces broke off and the minister could not reach a successful conclusion.

I would ask him to give us today in the House a report on the status of the negotiations. Second and more important, what step does he intend to contemplate next to solve the constitutional crisis?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should not be disappointed that the process which yielded so many gains on the constitutional front was not able in that stage to get everything done.

From our point of view, there were four major questions remaining: an agreement on the Senate; an agreement on the amending formula; an agreement on reducing barriers to trade within Canada; and a means to bring us together on the basic questions relating to aboriginal Canadians.

There are ongoing conversations. I am quite encouraged by the people with whom I have been speaking, with their forthcoming nature and particularly the willingness to consider models of Senate reform which may lead us to an agreement on that question.

If the provinces continue to be forthcoming on those issues, we may well be able to get a breakthrough. If I have other plans to report to the House, I will certainly do that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for mentioning the four major areas that remain to be finalized.

I know that many, I would even say most, Quebecers hope that very soon proposals on renewed federalism will be forthcoming that will be acceptable to both the Parliament of Canada and a majority of the provincial legislatures.

My question to the minister is this: Do the areas that remain to be finalized include changes in the amending formula that would give Quebec a veto in the future? Is the minister prepared to give us the assurance that this very important point, which was part of Quebec's original demands, will be respected and that we can expect a positive response from the Canadian government?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): In fact, on the basis of our discussions so far, Mr. Speaker, agreement could be reached on an amending formula where the Supreme Court is concerned. This is an important step, and even the premier of Newfoundland and the government of Alberta made it clear they agreed with this proposal.

Two major aspects remain: the Senate and the status of the provinces. I think we would be more likely to reach an agreement on an amending formula once we have agreed on the Senate.

That is why we are now discussing with the provinces a number of formulas that might give us an agreement on the Senate. However, it is up to the provinces to demonstrate their own flexibility and their determination to reach an agreement.

* * *

[*English*]

BREAST CANCER

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health. As he well knows, breast cancer is now at almost epidemic proportions. This fact was underscored yesterday in this House with the tabling of a parliamentary committee report on the disease.

I would like to ask the minister again: Will the government consider making increased funding for breast cancer research a priority and will it do that by shifting existing spending?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I want to say first that the report tabled yesterday represents very good work. Of course, I have not yet had the time to look at all the recommendations that I want to do.

In terms of breast cancer, we will have to put more emphasis not only on breast cancer but also on other health issues. We are close to getting a report on foetal alcohol syndrome. The Hearn report on medical devices is coming too. We also have the drugs management report by Gagnon. All those reports have something in common: They deal with the health of women.

I would like to say to the House today, after one year as minister of health, I want to consider all issues dealing with the health of women. Those issues have to be seen in a particular perspective and it is that which I want to apply to breast cancer. If there is any way we can put more money toward breast cancer research and it is useful to do so, we will.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, this year in Canada over 14,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 5,000 women will die of it.

The subcommittee tabled its report on breast cancer yesterday. It found that breast cancer research in this country is grossly underfunded. The committee made one particular recommendation, that the federal government allocate $2 million to establish a Canadian breast cancer foundation.

• (1450)

I want to ask the minister of health specifically: Will he implement that recommendation and will he do it immediately?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in light of what I said before, I believe the member will allow me to consider all of the report and not just answer her recommendation today.

I repeat what I said. I said that if we believe it is the report's position that money is not sufficient in terms of breast cancer research, we will consider that possibility.

I am sure she knows there is no ceiling set in terms of money for research in cancer. It depends on the quality of projects presented to NHRDP or to the Medical Research Council. If we have good projects, I want to examine the money which is allocated. If we can do something, we will put more money into research for breast cancer.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the total allocation in the last budget year for breast cancer research from this government to the MRC was $849,000. That is abysmal and so is the track record of the department on women's health issues. I have mentioned the IUD, thalidomide, Depo-Provera, and breast implants.

Every two hours in Canada another Canadian woman dies from breast cancer. We do not have the time for more reviews. The study has been done. Will the minister implement it?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said. I said that we should consider women's health issues in a different manner than we have so far. It may be that for too long that question has been seen in a man's perspective. I do not disagree with that, but we are saying we will put $1 million toward breast cancer and other health problems with women. I want to look at the options. If there is a necessity to provide more money, we will.

* * *

CYPRUS

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

After the minister's recent visit to Cyprus I am sure it is clear to her and to the government that if Canada withdraws its peacekeeping forces it is going to just help one side and at the same time hurt the other. That is not the basis to encourage a peaceful, just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem.

Will the minister confirm for the House that Canada will not withdraw nor will it reduce its peacekeeping forces on Cyprus until there is a peaceful, just and viable solution?

Will she also confirm for the House that Canada is prepared to apply the same standard of support for the UN Cyprus resolutions as it was prepared to apply for the United Nations Kuwait resolutions?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the Cyprus issue it would be very difficult to make a commitment that we would stay until there is a negotiated settlement.

We have been in Cyprus for 28 years. We are very encouraged at the moment by the progress being made. Part of this is a result of having pointed out to the Secretary General earlier this winter that the Secretary General and the parties involved had a responsibility to come to a peaceful solution and Canada would not make a commitment to be there forever. Even the patience of Canadians runs out.

We are encouraged by the progress that has been made since then and with the changes going on in that region, with some of the parties involved, and how their interests are reflected.

We think the forthcoming discussions will be useful in making progress in Cyprus. We encourage the Secretary General to continue and also the parties involved to accept their responsibility for peace among their people in their region.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TELEPHONE SERVICE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Communications quoted observations made by the chairman of the CRTC and me on competition among telephone companies, but he did not take a position or answer questions on behalf of his government. I repeat my question concerning consumers:

Is the minister prepared to assure us that the CRTC's decisions will have no negative impact on consumers and on residential customers and that local rates will not go up? Yes or no.

An hon. member: Good question.

[*English*]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raises the question of the position of consumers with regard to the CRTC decision. I suppose the best source might be Mr. David Simpson, the executive director of the Consumers' Association of Canada who said: "We could have written this decision ourselves it came so close to what business and consumers were looking for". This is from the spokesman on behalf of the Consumers' Association of Canada.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I guess the minister has not been able to think about what he would like to say for himself and his government. I would like to ask him a supplementary.

Because this government has failed to pass legislation that will guarantee 80 per cent Canadian ownership and control of domestic telephone companies, including resellers, there is a threat of Americanization of our system since the CRTC opened up new areas of competition.

Given that the minister has made sovereignty a key policy of his new legislation, will he now move to pass those sections of Bill C–62 that will safeguard Canadian ownership of this key economic sector?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I will go even further than that. I very much appreciate the endorsement by the Liberal Party of Canada of Bill C–62. I think we should not just pass certain sections of the bill but we should pass the whole bill as quickly as possible.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CANADA

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Defence.

For a long time rumours have been flying around fast and furious to the effect that the Emergency Preparedness Canada training centre was going to be moved out of the town of Arnprior.

Last week the Minister of Supply and Services, our regional minister, clarified the situation by stating in a letter that the training centre will remain in Arnprior.

Will the Minister of the National Defence tell us today when we can expect the construction of the long-promised new residential building to be built at Arnprior?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in the latest budget, all responsibilities for civil defence were transferred to the Department of National Defence. All procedures, including infrastructure, are under review.

[*English*]

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my next question is for the Minister of Public Works.

The property and facilities on which this nationally used Emergency Preparedness Canada training centre is located is the property of Public Works Canada.

Can the minister inform this House whether or not the total plans for the new residential building, which was supposed to be up and operating by December 1990, are now ready for presentation to Treasury Board and are they planned for Arnprior?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the whole question is covered in the first answer.

* * *

[*English*]

CLIMATE

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who signed on behalf of Canada the convention for climate change at the earth summit. It regrettably contains no targets or timetables for reductions.

Since Canada publicly committed to stabilize all greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 in Geneva almost two years ago, would the Prime Minister tell this House what Canada's emissions were in 1990 so that Canadians can know what that means by the year 2000?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows that work has been undertaken to make a determination on the baseline level of information that will be the object of some discussion at the next meeting of the Canadian Council of the Ministers of Environment which will be held sometime next November.

I should also point out to the hon. member that the Prime Minister indicated not only would Canada sign the treaty but we would also ratify it within the year. We would also encourage other countries to enter into a prompt start process by which we could go out there and apply the dispositions of the treaty.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Prime Minister who also signed the convention on biodiversity to protect plants and animals.

Would the Prime Minister tell this House what steps will be taken to protect the 227 endangered species of wildlife in Canada, a whopping 13 per cent increase since last year, that are on the brink of extinction? What is the Prime Minister going to do for the short-horned lizard, the phantom orchid, the white-headed woodpecker or the High Arctic beluga whale? Anything?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, given my hon. friend's interest in the environment and his presence in Brazil, I thought that he would have wanted to invite the House to join in a very genuine round of applause for the Minister of the Environment for his tremendous leadership.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: This was clearly an oversight by my hon. friend. He mentioned the endangered species, which range from the beluga whale to the NDP, I suppose.

My friend raises a very serious question. The Minister of the Environment has indicated that the government is participating in post-Rio conferences with specific plans to deal precisely with the very legitimate question raised by my hon. friend.

I think that as he participates in these post-Rio conferences, initiated by Canada, he will feel the same sense of pride that he did in Rio as he watched the Minister of the Environment and other parliamentarians guide the Canadian delegation, I think quite successfully.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Gilbert R. Clements, Minister of the Environment and Minister of Finance for the province of Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period, in answering a question by the hon. member for Yukon, I used the words "intelligent question".

This did not translate what I actually meant. I do not want to impute that the hon. member is not an intelligent person. I should have used the word "pertinent". That is what I meant. If I caused any heartache, or whatever, to the hon. member I wish to apologize.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

CONCURRENCE IN MAIN ESTIMATES, 1992-93

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle (p. 12117).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): At the suspension of the debate at one o'clock there were seven minutes left in the question or comments period. The hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants had the floor.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, after the very eloquent address this morning of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I was directing a question to him when time ran out just as I was posing the question.

Since we both came here many moons ago in the class of '65, and although there were some younger members honoured yesterday because of the class of '68, I was calling upon him to give his views—perhaps not necessarily those of his party, but from his own parliamentary experience—as to the state of the constitutional discussions. Does he see a danger in trying to come up with some type of an agreement? It might not find favour all across the country, and may not be in a form where it can be presented to the time clock that is ticking in Quebec.

From his point of view, what would happen, because Quebec has that law that there has to be a referendum in Quebec, if that referendum proceeds on a very clear question as to whether Quebec wants to stay in Canada—and of course we do not frame that question—and what would be his view if that question proceeded on the basis that we cannot put an agreement to Quebec before that October deadline?

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked me if I would put forward my views even though they may not be the views of my party.

I want to say to him that any views I give are those of my own party and vice versa because I do have my say within our party caucus and discuss the matter with my caucus members. I do not go off giving views that do not belong to the Liberal Party of Canada. That is called unity and that is what we are talking about in this entire debate.

To address the several questions which the member has just put to me, I want to say that if I were to give him the answer the minister opposite, who is handling the constitutional questions at the present time and federal-provincial relations, would really thank me for giving him the precise answers. If I were to come up with all the answers for the government at this time I would probably be the most famous Canadian going.

To ask me to tell everybody else what is going to happen in the days ahead is a little bit unfair because if we had the answers we would be going in that direction.

I said in my speech this morning that the rhetoric has to be toned down on this issue. I also said that the demands have to be toned down from all angles and that flexibility must improve across the country.

Parliament could be recalled this summer—the option is open—and we could debate the constitutional proposals or whatever. We could also be here to discuss whether or not we are having a referendum. But to say that if I had the answers I could give them now, anything else that I might say would disrupt the very sensitivity of the items that are being discussed now.

The member mentioned our long tenure here in Parliament. My long tenure in Parliament tells me not to disrupt an already sensitive situation. What I have said is that we must have the political will and the determination to handle this situation. This morning I said there is no such thing as failure. I also said that every person in this House, on both sides of this House, must make it their business to see to it that the constitutional issue is settled and that we can get on with the economy and the other great interests of this nation.

Let me remind everybody that there is far more to lose by standing aloof and making great demands of our own by individual groups or organizations than there ever will be to gain.

All Canadians and this Parliament must come together. We are a nation known as negotiators. We now have to negotiate to put this Constitution together and we are not going to do it if we are going to go off in 10 different directions at the same time. Now is the time to prove our mettle.

I want to say once more, in reply to the hon. member, as I said this morning, that 112,000 young Canadians are lying in cemeteries abroad, in Korea and throughout Europe, 18, 19, 21 and 24 years of age. They fought for this country and they fought for the free world. If we do not come to grips and unite this nation at this time as did the Fathers of Confederation, the Baldwins, the Lafontaines, the Georges-Etienne Cartiers and the Macdonalds, and all those great statesmen who followed on in the 20th century, then we are not only failing those 112,000 young Canadians who died in the name of freedom, we are losing faith with those who built this country in the beginning.

• (1510)

I say to members on both sides of the House and to the hon. member who asked me the question: We must have the political will to face up to this issue, to sit down and negotiate and bring the Constitution of Canada into fruition for years to come. We have the ability to do it. We must not lose it.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to enter into debate today on the motion to concur in the Main Estimates of the government, the spending estimates of the government.

It gives me an opportunity to raise a number of concerns in this House about issues across the country and in particular around some of the particular spending plans or lack of spending plans by the Government of Canada as they relate to my riding in northern British Columbia.

It is a good opportunity to do that today. The minister of forests is encouraging me to mention forestry in a few comments which of course I will be pleased to do. I would do that in encouragement to the minister. I know he is going to hang on my every word today about the importance of forestry to our area.

There are a couple of areas I would like to mention. I am pleased that the minister is here because a couple of the issues affect the community for which we share representation. I know he will be taking notes. I hope he will follow up on these as I have already done to the minister in writing.

In particular on forestry, just a bit of a nudge to the minister. He knows there have been discussions in Prince George regarding the Forestry of Canada Research Centre located in Prince George currently on the federal government experimental farm which unfortunately, from the federal government's point of view, through attrition and cuts and transfers really is being slowly chopped away to the point where most unfortunately we may lose a real presence by the federal government in terms of a role in agricultural policy and research. There have been many transfers of officials to Kamloops.

I am afraid we are going to reach a point in this operation where to some degree the government is going to say there is nothing left. It will then be in a position where it will have to close the whole shop down. That would be most unfortunate.

I know the minister is aware of that. He is aware of it from a departmental point of view as well, given the location on the experimental farm site near the airport in Prince George and the discussions I have had, and I know he has had, about attempting to relocate that facility to the new campus of the University of B.C. where I was pleased to attend the sod-turning with Premier Harcourt and of course the first convocation of the newest university in Canada. The minister of forests was present as well.

That is really great news for Prince George and the whole region of northern British Columbia. It is important because of what the minister's department can do in making a contribution to the operation of that university. I am talking specifically about the transfer of the Forestry Canada operations now on the experimental farm to the university site. There is a close co-operation that can be held with the collection of research capability and learning at the campus and also of course with the project locating right nearby which the minister has been to as well, Forests for the World, which is a display of the different tree species we have in the area. It gives the public an opportunity really to come and see just what having a forest operation is. It is located near the campus. I would urge the government and the minister to move as quickly as possible in making an announcement that we can have that Forestry Canada operation, small as it is, moved to the campus site.

The minister had appointed a committee and had promised to report some months ago. I have written to the minister to ask for more details on that and as to when we might get a decision. It is very important. It goes to the heart of what we are talking about here today. It is not grand schemes of a constitution. We are really talking about the nitty-gritty of government, some of the very basic spending plans that government can have in our ridings. I mention that as one of them.

As well, the minister should be tabling soon I hope a state of the forest report flowing from the legislation to create his department. Also, Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do that we have expressed our concerns in this House before about the government's cuts to forestry programs across the country. I think of the FRDA program in British Columbia, which is a concern to all of us. We do not see Forestry Canada removing itself as a player in terms of co-operation that it can play with the provinces in forest renewal, in forest management. In particular following the world summit in Rio on the environment, it is all the more important that we maintain a presence, I argue, in terms of Forestry Canada. I know that is a subject of some debate and discussion on the Constitution.

I hope that in the final analysis when a discussion is held about whether we are going to have a forest department that the premiers, the Prime Minister and this House do not just throw out the work of many of us in our first days here as parliamentarians to bring forward legislation in this House to create that department. I would argue that there is probably a need today more than ever, given our demands on our forests from an international environmental perspective, for a federal forest department.

I hope at the very least in the discussions that some heed is paid to that particular issue during the constitutional debate and the debate that we are going to end up having in this House on that issue.

There is another spending issue that relates directly to forests and ties in directly with the work or the lack of it I suppose by the Minister for International Trade. That comes to the whole question of the softwood tariff dispute we have now with the United States. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I led a delegation of New Democrat MPs from the interior of British Columbia as well as my colleague from Thunder Bay in northern Ontario to Washington to meet with American legislators and officials on this issue. I think it was a very important two days. We delivered a strong message to the Americans about Canada and about our view on this issue.

We have some well known differences with this government's approach to this whole issue, but on the question of the softwood dispute we gave a united message to the Americans. I say that Canadians want to ensure that from this government they get the same message as well.

I have said on numerous occasions that it is important that we keep pressure on our own government. It is a pretty clear perception among most Canadians that this government just rolls over and plays dead whenever George Bush and the Commerce Department in Washington, D.C. basically tells it what to do. We found that in this dispute, whereas yet we have not heard a formal word from the United States, the Commerce Department or the Bush administration as to whether this whole softwood dispute can even be referred to this much vaunted dispute settlement mechanism that the minister of trade so often talks about. It is revealing of the weakness of the free trade agreement that even after three years of operation this government still has to plead with Washington, D.C. for this whole dispute to be settled by even a weak dispute settlement mechanism, which it is.

• (1520)

We have not heard the end of that yet. We may end up having a dispute over the dispute settlement of all things. It gives an indication of how much trouble we are in with this dispute. We are on the verge of perhaps the most massive trade dispute in Canadian history between our two governments. It is over an issue that is of critical importance, not just to the entire country but in particular to British Columbia which makes some 80 per cent of the softwood lumber exports to the United States.

Another issue I have raised throughout my riding and in different parts of the country is an important issue for many of the smaller communities in this country. In many cases we have to plead with different levels of government to get the kinds of services and programs we need. In many cases larger centres across the country take so much for granted. I guess I am reminded of that each day here in Ottawa where, of course, we would expect our nation's capital to have those kinds of buildings and monuments to our country and to the history of this area. However, at the same time, let us not forget the contribution made by the rural communities, the resource communities across the country. Yes, they are away from the major population centres, but they are just as deserving when it comes to government services and programs.

I am reminded in particular of a case where we were pleased to have convinced the Minister of Communications to provide some funds for an art gallery in Prince George. I would like to encourage the government to go a step further. We have to take a look at using some of the funds under the communications subagreement to help with the art gallery in Prince George.

In the election campaign in 1988 the previous government clearly rejected any federal help for a performing arts centre in Prince George. I have collected information since that election. I have been diligent at this because it was my sense that this government had spent millions of dollars elsewhere across the country on similar ventures but, of course, gave the cold shoulder to Prince George. To date that evidence shows that some $143 million in projects similar to that which we have been lobbying and working for in Prince George has been spent and authorized by this government, ranging from the Comedy Museum in Montreal. I have nothing against a good joke or project but we are just asking for our fair share.

I ask that the government give serious consideration to those proposals because that is the kind of nitty-gritty work the Government of Canada can do to show Canadians and residents of these communities that small communities are as deserving as any major population centre for the kinds of projects which bestow pride on a community for the work they have done.

We had a healthy contribution from the new Government of British Columbia for the Civic Centre complex in Prince George. That was announced on Friday. We are pleased with that. This government is prepared to spend billions of dollars on helicopters for which there is some question as to their need and yet a community that needs an art gallery and what have you is given the cold shoulder by this government. That is not good enough. We deserve and expect more.

As well there are a couple of transportation matters that are critical to ridings line mine in northern British Columbia where transportation is an important issue because of our location. I am pleased to have been able to work with community groups and others.

There is a new instrument landing system being put into Prince George, a project costing around $2 million. I am pleased to have been able to do that but we have more work to do, and I think of air strips outside of the Prince George area where in some cases we cannot even get a medivac jet in to take someone out.

If members from large urban communities would not be able to get an ambulance they would be shocked by that, yet that is what we have in many of these communities. The government has to make a commitment to provide the necessary infrastructure and programs necessary to provide these services to Canadians regardless of where we live in the country.

The finance minister at least alluded to that at the first ministers' meeting in Toronto on the economy some time ago. Prior to that he mentioned that the government has tucked away somewhere a capital projects fund.

I have written to the minister. I would like to find out a little bit about this fund. How much money does the Minister of Finance have tucked away somewhere? Is he going to spend it all in the run-up to the next election campaign as the Prime Minister was to apt to do prior to the last election campaign? Let us get some details on that capital projects fund. Let us make it public so we can see what is available and at least give communities across the country an opportunity to make representations to the minister for funds from that project.

One of those infrastructure programs on which I have been corresponding with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Transport and the British Columbia minister of transport is the Yellowhead Highway program, which we used to have. It was a program that helped upgrade the Yellowhead Highway from my colleague's riding, Skeena, through my riding in Prince George—Bulkley Valley and down into the Kamloops area, represented by another of my colleagues.

That program was allowed to collapse and run out by this government and by the former government in British Columbia. I asked this minister in this government on behalf of the people along that highway and on behalf of the minister of transport for British Columbia, who has asked us to make representations to the government, to go ahead and hopefully renew that program.

At the earlier First Ministers' Conference that I mentioned, the Minister of Finance hinted at a national highways network. When a Minister of Finance is hinting at something like that we should take him up on it. However it is his turn, we have taken him up on the offer to renew this program. I now want to hear from the minister and this government whether they really are committed to an infrastructure program that can help rebuild those transportation arteries which we require all across the country.

I hope that before this House rises for its summer break the minister can make that kind of announcement to give some assurance to Canadians and the people in northern B.C. that this very important transportation link has the attention of the Government of Canada and will be dealt with, approved, and renewed in the near future.

I mentioned airports and air transportation. I mentioned highways, and the unique federal role in this particular issue, one which I do not think is thought of much in western Canada. When I drive on any of the roads in eastern Canada I note that there is significant federal presence in working with the provinces in highway reconstruction. We just ask for the same in northern British Columbia. I do not think it is asking too much for this government to treat one end of the country the same as the other.

I would like to conclude with an appeal to the government to please make up its mind about VIA Rail remote services. There is a run from Prince Rupert to Prince George to Jasper. This government said on October 4, 1989 that it would make a decision on this run. It has been announcing that it would be soon making decisions on this. We have been patient while waiting for the government to make a decision.

I appeal to the Minister of Transport and the government to make up their minds as soon as possible. Do not sit around and wait. We do not want to wait for an election campaign for good news, we will take the good news announcements now. I ask the government to get off whatever royal seat the government is on and make up its mind about this very important issue in our area.

• (1530)

It is an opportunity to provide that valuable transportation link. I have used this opportunity in the House to raise a number of important issues concerning the nitty-gritty of government spending and planning. I hope the government will take heed of some of these measures and make some positive announcements for all of us. It is a case of many communities asking and fighting for their fair share.

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to make some comments on the 1992-93 Main Estimates for Agriculture Canada.

I would like to begin by presenting a few facts about the agrifood industry. In Canada, agriculture and food and beverage processing contributes some $50 billion to the economy every year. Food processing is the second largest component in Canadian manufacturing after automobiles, and the agrifood sector accounts for about 10 per cent of our total exports.

These are impressive figures that clearly demonstrate the importance of the agrifood sector to all Canadians. However, in this 125th year of Confederation Canada's agrifood producers are facing some of the greatest challenges in the industry's history.

The world economy is growing increasingly globalized and interdependent. New trading blocs are forming and more and more countries are entering the international marketplace.

The opportunities for Canada in this environment are enormous. Already an exporting country, we have the natural resources, the human resources and the technology to build on our strong trading base. However, if our agrifood producers are going to capitalize on these advantages they must move quickly to diversify and become more efficient and more competitive. They must adopt new technologies, new methods and new ways of thinking and doing business. They must put more emphasis on research and promotion, seek out new market opportunities and form new partnerships at home and abroad. They must begin to look much more closely at the long-term sustainability of the sector environmentally, economically and socially. They must do this in a time of continuing restraint, increasing competition and ongoing international trade wars.

In 1989, in an effort to help the industry adapt to changing realities, Agriculture Canada undertook the agrifood policy review in consultation with the provinces and the industry stakeholders. The review is based on four major pillars of reform: market responsiveness, regional sensitivity, self-reliance and environmental sustainability.

There has already been significant progress toward these goals. For example, the new safety net programs, GRIP and NISA, are designed to encourage greater self-reliance on the part of agricultural producers and greater income predictability.

The three-year National Farm Business Management Program announced in March is designed to increase farm business management training and to make more business information and consulting services available to farmers. The check-off legislation now before the Senate would encourage greater research and promotion by agricultural producers.

In 1992-93 Agriculture Canada's priorities will be to continue to build on the work of the policy review, to encourage continued adaptation and greater competitiveness in the agrifood sector, and to ensure improved government responsiveness to the changing needs of the industry.

The department will be working to build more effective, efficient and regionally sensitive partnerships with the provinces and the industry stakeholders.

It helps the primary and processing sectors improve their competitiveness and provides farmers with the information, services and training they need to improve their business management skills.

It helps the agrifood industry pursue new diversification opportunities; and helps maintain and develop domestic and international markets for our products through trade policy, marketing support, research and responsive regulations.

It promotes the environmental sustainability of the Canadian agrifood industry and the safety and quality of Canada's food supply.

Finally, it enhances corporate and organizational structures to better enable Agriculture Canada employees to provide quality service in response to the changing needs of the department's clients.

The federal budget contains a number of provisions which should help with these efforts. For example, the tax exemption for ethanol and methanol in gasoline blends will encourage the development and use of ethanol and methanol fuels made from feed stocks. This will not only lead to considerable new market opportunities for grain producers, it will also help to protect the environment and encourage increased producer involvement in value-added processing.

The Small Business Financing Program, which will run until the end of 1992, will help small family farm businesses in difficulty obtain loans at lower interest rates.

Tax reductions to Canadian manufacturers and processors will help to improve the competitiveness of food processors and farm input suppliers such as machinery manufacturers.

The review of Agriculture Canada regulations, in partnership with provinces and industry, will ensure that federal regulations are helping, not hindering industry adaptation.

As well, through the agrifood policy review, the department will be continuing its efforts to build a second generation of supply management and to ensure the efficiency of our transportation systems.

Through agreements like GATT and NAFTA, it will continue to work toward a more liberal and predictable international trading environment with more equitable trading rules.

The department also recognizes the need to continue to support our agricultural producers over the short term. Agriculture Canada's Main Estimates for 1992–93 total about $2.9 billion. Of this, more than $1.2 billion is being paid for GRIP and NISA and for the farms support and adjustment measure initiatives, FSAM I and FSAM II.

In the year ahead, the department will focus on improving safety net programs so that they do more to encourage industry adaptation. For instance, the provisions in FSAM I to encourage participation in GRIP and NISA are a good example of how income support spending can be used to foster greater self-reliance by agricultural producers. I would also like to note that governments are committed to extending NISA eligibility to the whole farm program.

Combined with the efforts of the federal government to stimulate economic growth through low inflation and interest rates, these initiatives should go a long way toward relieving the pressures on Canada's agrifood sector.

In fact, the 1991 census of agriculture shows that, despite the difficult economic times over the last year, we are already seeing some progress.

The census reported increased acres under cultivation since 1986, an increase in livestock production and more acreage dedicated to specialty crops, a sign that farmers are beginning to diversify.

As well, farmers are increasingly adopting more environmentally sustainable practices, with reduced use of chemicals and increased use of conservation tillage.

• (1540)

The 1992 survey of farms shows that farmers largely thought they were holding their ground financially. Some 48 per cent said their situation was the same, 13 per cent said the financial picture was better; and 38 per cent said things were worse.

In comparison, in the 1990 survey 43 per cent said their situation was the same and only 11 per cent said it was better. Some 45 per cent said their situation was worse than the year before, 6 per cent more than in the most recent survey.

The results show that farmers are more optimistic about the future. In 1990, 34 per cent thought their situation would stay the same, 19 per cent felt it would improve, and 39 per cent felt it would get worse.

In the 1991 survey 44 per cent thought things would stay the same, 25 per cent thought their situation would improve, and 23 per cent were pessimistic about the coming year.

More concrete signs of improvement can be seen in the grains and oilseeds sector which has been the hardest hit by the international subsidy wars. Wheat exports are 34 per cent higher at this point in the crop year than they were last year. Sales through the west coast have hit records every month except September.

Due to tightening world wheat supplies, especially in the United States, and greater demand from the former U.S.S.R. and China, world wheat prices have risen since the crop year began. This has resulted in higher Canadian Wheat Board initial payments. As well, we have seen higher initial payments for feed barley, designated barley and durum wheat.

I am confident that with the co-operation of all governments and with strong industry leadership we will continue to see improvements in the economic position of the agrifood industry in the years ahead.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments on agriculture of the hon. member for Elgin—Norfolk. I completely agree with him that there is a tremendous need for research and development in the food processing industry. If we lose the food processing industry, we lose the market for those producers.

Clearly that is one of the greatest challenges facing us with the free trade deal with the United States. There are no offsets. There is no protection as there was in the free trade deal for automobiles signed back in the sixties. Essentially we are just reducing the tariffs on processed products.

The agriculture competitiveness council recognized this in a report which it put out in January of this year. It said that we need more research, that we need to upgrade the equipment we have in the food processing industry, and that we were in a deathly competitive world with producers in Mexico, with producers in the United States, with producers in Ireland, and with producers in other countries. It emphasized the need for increased commitment by the government.

When we look over the 1992–93 estimates of the Department of Agriculture, we see that scientific research and development has been cut by 4 per cent or $11.4 million in 1992–93. Although the hon. member is talking about the right things, his government is doing the wrong things because its cutting back agricultural scientific research by 4 per cent.

If we add the 2 per cent, 3 per cent, or 4 per cent inflation that we face we see an effective cutback of probably 7 per cent or 8 per cent.

It is interesting that just before these estimates came down the Minister of Finance brought down his budget. In the agriculture competitiveness council report of January of this year, which was released slightly thereafter, it talked about the importance of the agrifood processing industry. It said that if Canada did not act immediately, if Canada did not provide very significant incentives to encourage investment in productivity enhancing activities in the agrifood sector, we would lose out. It recommended that we increase the capital cost allowance from 25 per cent to 50 per cent.

When the Minister of Finance brought in his budget he brought in a piddling 5 per cent increase. This is to save an industry of which he was the minister.

I would like to ask the member: Why is the government cutting scientific research? Why is it only providing a 5 per cent increase when the government's own agriculture competitiveness council recommended a 25 per cent increase? Why is there a cutback in agricultural research when its own competitiveness council was recommending that there be a massive increase of 200 per cent in current tax depreciation and research as recommended by its agriculture competitiveness council?

Mr. Monteith: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his comments and his question. He will recognize that the policy review undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, by the former Minister of Agriculture, pointed to some of the things he has talked about: about further processing of products in Canada, not only in agriculture but other aspects of natural resources, so that we might create jobs in Canada and create that extra wealth for Canadians. I believe that is the direction the government is taking.

The hon. member talked about research and development. He thinks there have been cuts. I would tend to think that if the hon. member really took a look at it he would recognize that those dollars being spent on research and development by the federal government are under review. They will be put to greater use in the future to make sure that those dollars are wisely spent. We recognize we have to spend dollars in research and development. That is what the Minister of Finance was aiming at with his reduction in the federal budget.

I am sure the hon. member will also recognize the competitive council, in its discussions with Canadians across Canada, talked about the various things that might need some looking at such as the regulations which three departments, including the Department of Agriculture, have already started. It recognized that we needed to take a look at some of the regulations to make sure we were not hindering processing or further development in Canada.

The hon. member will recognize that the government looks at over-all expenditures. We are acting in a responsible way, trying to make sure those dollars spent are spent in a super controlled way so that we do not increase the deficit and end up with the problems we had when we took over the government in 1984.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, our side has agreed among ourselves to limiting debate to 10 minutes so that two speakers could be heard in the 20 minutes, starting with me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent to give the opposition party the power to split the speeches?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, our twinning of the two ridings seems to be going very well. The students who returned from Your Honour's riding last week had nothing but praise for the reception they received. I hope when your students come back to our area under the 125 celebration we will be able to host them in the same way and to continue that program.

• (1550)

I rise today to talk a bit about the government's estimates, not necessarily estimates in terms of specific items as much as in terms of government spending. Our party before the budget and since the budget has put forward to the government the idea of creating jobs by putting money into infrastructure that is needed right across Canada.

Once again, I have to ask the government to see that this idea has merit. It can create jobs. It can get Canada moving again. As we look at our infrastructure, sewers, roads and various other types of infrastructure in different communities, we see what is needed to keep Canada at a certain level of ability to perform.

I know these are difficult economic times. I would just say there are probably areas this government could look at. One would be in the administration of the UI funds in terms of putting money into creating jobs rather than having to spend it on unemployment insurance or welfare rolls.

I do not see this happening. I see despair out there as to when the economy is going to turn around. When are we going to be able to use the low interest rates we have seen come down so slowly over the last while? They are down, yet the businesses are not picking up, at least in the rural areas. There does not seem to be hope or the new ideas with which the research and development we used to have in Canada might have created new jobs.

We saw in the budget the decrease in research and development. Over the years the government has cut back the Economic Council, the Law Reform Commission and the Science Council of Canada. All these areas have given greatly to Canada. I know members opposite will say that we can go somewhere else and get this research done. I heard it here this morning. Yes, we can probably go to the Americans as usual and ask for their statistics. They do not always apply to Canada because we have different values from the Americans, different values for what we feel in Canada has made us Canadian.

I want to raise another idea today. When I took part in the debate earlier I said that we have excess in our ministers' departments. We have excess in their staff and we have excess in people overseeing groups. The chief of staff who is highly paid, paid higher than a member of Parliament or higher than his minister, is he the same as the deputy minister or the assistant deputy minister? I do not understand why we need all these layers to produce something.

A very innocent example was given today in the House during Question Period. Yesterday we had an all-party report on breast cancer. The three parties agreed that cancer causes death: 5,000 women will die and 14,000 women will have breast cancer in Canada this year. These are real statistics. We do not need more studies to say that we need more research to prevent these senseless deaths from occurring in Canada.

If it were a man who had the same problem, it would probably be passed and we would not even have to ask about it in the House. It seems so ironic that the mothers of our children, the women out there today, have to live with an idea that more studies have to be done to tell the Department of National Health and Welfare that it would be a good idea to start putting some of its dollars into this, particularly when it says it has a ceiling with no limit.

I also want to raise the issue of CFB Cornwallis.

Over the last year I have seen the continuous reduction of jobs in my area. I do not have great companies in my area. I do not have ACOA that can find multitudes of businesses to bring into the area or a multitude of businesses to expand in my area. We do have CFB Cornwallis and it has provided jobs continuously for all my lifetime in that area. It has worked very effectively. It is in a cost-effective area. The taxes are not high, land is cheap, we have a ready-made harbour and ready-made facilities for any naval training. We have an airport and we have CFB Greenwood, which can work in conjunction with CFB Cornwallis. There are many reasons why CFB Cornwallis should be an ideal place for the Armed Forces.

Yet we have seen a reduction of jobs, with a further reduction of about 100 jobs contemplated within the next few weeks. We have seen businesses close and the threat of school closures. People who have been employed for years may have to face very tough times and leave their homes and area. This threat has been hanging over the people in the area for well over a year and a half.

What does CFB Cornwallis do and why is it important to the Armed Forces? Since 1968 all new recruits who speak English have been trained at CFB Cornwallis. I realize the Minister of National Defence has said as of last September the Canadian Armed Forces would be reduced to 75,000 for regular Armed Forces. This was in light of the conditions in the world, and I can quite accept that. But where are those 75,000 enlisted men going to be trained? My people are asking me where they are going.

I tell them we have the ideal facilities. We have been training since 1968. I do not know why we cannot be reassured it is going to continue, and we will be able to train new recruits for the Armed Forces across Canada. We can do militia, cadets, reserves, and we have done other training there over the years.

People look to Parliament to see what decisions are going to be made and if their future is protected. New recruits coming in from Alberta or Newfoundland want to know there is a place for them in the Armed Forces. Yet, apparently there are no new recruits coming into the Armed Forces because of whatever the policy is.

It is my understanding at the end of this month we will lose our base commander and a lieutenant-colonel will come in. It means the status of the base for new recruits will be reduced to a station. Those who have had a military base in their constituency know that somehow the government has failed to find something to put into CFB Cornwallis along with new recruits. I say that because our area is a bilingual constituency and we have a bilingual university. My people and I see no reason why we could not be training all new recruits in Canada. Certainly I cannot see why we would be even thinking of moving the English speaking new recruits anywhere else in Canada.

I have to voice these concerns to the House because we have had something and we see it slowly being lost through the reduction of jobs, the closing down of businesses, the threat of school closures and even hospitals. We have to ask ourselves if closing means when there is only one person left, then we close the area. If that is so, it is very cruel and unusual punishment to inflict.

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Perhaps I may add just a few words. I would like to respond to the cordial remarks made by the hon. member for South West Nova and stress the superb co-operation between our two ridings, as a result of which residents of both ridings will be visiting each other this summer to create a brotherhood of Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to my colleague, the member for South West Nova, which is adjacent to my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants. I represented the riding of Annapolis Valley—Digby Annapolis—Cains, as it was called when I was first elected many moons ago and Cornwallis was very much a part of my responsibility. I certainly share the concerns she expressed here in a pretty objective way about what is happening to Cornwallis through attrition and/or ministerial decree, notwithstanding the fact there evidently is a committee on base consolidation and closures that is supposed to make recommendations.

Now we have had another statement from that committee. It is going to postpone fundamental decisions, perhaps until after the next election. I know and come from Nova Scotia too. We have had a history of servicing the services because we are never going to have the massive industries of other parts of the country. That has been part of our history and the pending closure of Cornwallis flies in the face of that.

I would like to ask the member how she feels this base closure committee is really performing. How can it objectively assess the criteria when the minister openly says there are going to be a lot more changes because only 17 per cent of the defence budget is being spent in Quebec? There are going to be changes in other parts of the country regardless of history, to make sure that is redressed. Does she feel this is the sword of Damocles hanging over the base at Cornwallis and the future is no brighter than the hon. member painted it in her remarks?

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants for his question. He expresses the concern of my constituents I run into every day as to why this is happening at CFB Cornwallis and soon to be CFS Cornwallis I guess. I have to agree, we are now going to have an infrastructure rationalization process in the ministry of national defence to look at the determined force requirements, determine infrastructure requirements and identify surplus infrastructure. That is what this MAGDI, Ministers' Advisory Group of Defence Infrastructure, said it would be doing.

I find it quite unique in the sense we are giving the Department of National Defence something I think we have never actually given up as parliamentarians, which was the exact role of National Defence in Canada. It is all right for the Department of National Defence to say what may be excess or why, but I do not think anybody should be allowed to say something is a certain way without looking at the effects it has on the community. That must be put into perspective at the Department of National Defence. The defence people are going to make the study and the decisions. At the same time the minister has said openly in committee 17 per cent is not enough of the defence budget for Quebec.

At the same time I know my people are asking why a new naval reserve is going up when we have all the facilities at CFB Cornwallis. Perhaps they are not being given the right answers. They are not being looked at. There seems to be a real dichotomy between the minister and where he sees defence going, and the Department of National Defence in its infrastructure rationalization without looking at economic realities. It could be one general prefers to have something over another general and that is who is going to have his case put before the Minister of National Defence to be reviewed. Parliament will have 30 sitting days to review and no more whenever the decision of the minister's review panel, which comes after the infrastructure rationalization process does it at defence. They are given to the minister. The minister looks at the proposals. He gives them to a review panel. The review panel hands them back to the minister. He then looks at the proposals and they come to Parliament.

By that time this great study says, get the people used to thinking they are not going to have something and then two years later you can do it.

I am saying it is not a fair way to treat Canadians. It is one thing to say you have to have an even distribution of defence dollars across Canada and that can be done perhaps in capital spending.

But we will never have tank cars built in Nova Scotia in the Annapolis Valley unless somebody decides to put a factory there with a lot of money because the centre of activity is in Ontario.

Surely we can train new recruits in the Canadian Armed Forces. We are going to have at least 50,000 enlisted men and they have to go somewhere to be trained. Why can it not be at Cornwallis? Why can this minister not give that commitment to not only South West Nova but to all Canadians?

It is the most cost-effective way. There is no way you can show me a less cost-effective way of spending our training dollars than at CFB Cornwallis.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the debate today is to indicate whether or not a member is supportive of the government's expenditure plan for 1992-93. I rise in the House to indicate the reasons why I oppose the expenditure plan and in particular reference to Winnipeg.

Members of the House will know that in the last decade Winnipeg has had a particularly difficult time. In the first part of this decade, from 1979-80 right through to the 1984 election, both Liberal members from Winnipeg stood up and worked very hard on behalf of the city.

Subsequent to that, the strategy of the federal government has been to pull out one support after another from our city. As a consequence, an expenditure plan this year does not show what can be done for Winnipeg.

The core area initiative, the most public of programs, the one in which most of us came to identify with a more optimistic future, a game plan for the city, has been taken away. It was not renewed at the end of this year when the opportunity presented itself to the federal Minister of Energy, who represents the federal government at the table.

A few weeks ago all of us watched great difficulties in our cities, from Toronto to L.A. Those of us who have downtown constituencies know the frustration felt by youth, families and the elderly as they found the city unsafe.

The one thing that distinguishes North American Liberals from North American Conservatives is whether or not we should sit back and allow this to happen, whether or not we should allow frustrations to boil over, whether or not we should tell people it is their problem and not ours.

From one generation to another, the Liberal tradition has been to stand up and fight for those people and find a solution. I personally find the expenditure plan lacking in energy and vision. Once again we see no particular plan of action for Winnipeg, or for any other big city in the country.

Canada is of a size where any government showing any sense of commitment can very quickly put together packages which do not overwhelm the treasury, to protect cities from the fundamental flaws we see in other countries. It is not good enough to sit back, watch TV and see another country or city crumble and say thank God it is not my city, province or country.

It is a chance to see what the worst signs and future can be, take the initiative and turn this around.

There are several things that can be done. I must say at the outset it is not a case of telling the government to come walking in with a big stick and big bucks and change things. No, no. The style of the 1990s must be that of partnership. There are organizations in the voluntary sector, well-meaning businesses, provincial governments and municipal governments. The field is filled with people with energy who want to make sure their cities work but they need one more actor at the table. They need a committed federal government.

• (1610)

What can the federal government bring to the table to help in the renewal of our cities that is not there now? First, the government can go back to CMHC and restore the long-standing commitment that we have to social housing and to assisting with low-rental housing across the country.

If we look at the dismal state of the housing market in this country and then look at the federal government expenditure plan, it is clear that there is a direct relationship. If the federal government, through CMHC, is not active in housing the market collapses in this country. If we want the strongest component for dealing with new Canadians who have put together non-profit

housing organizations, for seniors groups and for the Lions Clubs of this country, we need the federal government to be there to finance and show direction. But no, that opportunity has been passed over.

Second, if we look at the renewal of older neighbourhoods, one of the most successful programs that we have had, I would say since the early 1970s, has been the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, RRAP. It successfully helped low income homeowners, and in some cases landlords who were dealing in low-rental areas, restore their property so they could stay there. They continue to stay there because of the activities. Think ahead seven or eight years if there were no repairs in the inner city. Then we can just begin to imagine the worst scenes we have seen on television being a backdrop to Canadian cities.

Third, there is youth employment. Why is it impossible for the federal government to properly fund Challenge '92? Why were so many students not given the opportunity to work? In the case of the constituency of Winnipeg North Centre as many as 9 out of 10 in the category of non-profit organizations were denied an opportunity to work this summer because of underfunding of a program. If you do not have a job, how can you have hope and how can you get educated?

Fourth, changes in the unemployment insurance program have pretty well prevented aboriginal youth and many women who have been out of the work force for some time from getting proper training. Without training it is impossible to take a step forward.

Fifth is safety in the cities. There are a number of regulations and laws within the Criminal Code that can be changed. There are a number of initiatives that can be taken by the Solicitor General's office. It could start up the race relations organization that has been long promised, and nothing has ever been done. Why has something not been done to help out with the fundamental question of safety on the streets?

This is not an issue from the right wing. This is not an issue on which it is possible to say: "Oh well, it is only the law and order people who are concerned about safety". The average Canadian family living in a big city is concerned with the safety of themselves, their children and their parents. We, as a government, have an obligation to respond to this and come up with ways to design cities better, to make more functional laws and ensure that the support services are properly financed so that the basic question of personal safety is responded to more positively.

As for economic development, how can a city find its role in a new competitive world if the federal government, which is in charge of the trade arrangements and the international environment, does not take a concern with the individual cities of this country and in finding a role for the people living there in trading. What is the role of Winnipeg in the international economy? It has lost its role and it is having a difficult time understanding what it is to do. What is the expectation? How is it being helped by the federal government? There are 650,000 people living there and yet there is no plan for their economic functions.

On a much larger scale, the people of Montreal are facing the same crisis. The economic base of Montreal is very similar to that of Winnipeg. It relies upon the textile industry, the apparel industry, the construction industry, engineering and the transportation of commodities from the agricultural fields. They are all similar to components of the Winnipeg economy, and Montreal is suffering a similar collapse.

Does the government have in its expenditure plan that is under discussion today any particular points of reference to help the people of Montreal or Winnipeg? The answer is a resounding no.

If your national government decides that your problems are too small then how can you possibly begin to redevelop your own city? Where is the federal government when it comes to providing languages for new entrepreneurs in this country?

If we do want to develop trading partners in Asia, if we do want to develop partners in Eastern Europe, who has the language skills? Who has the documents in their language? Who has the ability to understand Canadian law and apply it to the international trade situation? Who is going to be supportive of the long trips over to these countries so that trade can begin?

It is not this government. That is what is sad. The expenditure plan has left out any reference to the tremendous problems facing Canadian cities. I use Winnipeg as an example but I could be talking to the House about Montreal, Toronto, or Edmonton. All these cities face a crisis, some of them somewhat different.

It is not for the federal government to come in and say: "We have the answer". However, it is up to the federal government to say: "We want to be a partner. Let us sit down at the table and let us go over a list of issues. You tell us what you need and we will help you form a better urban environment that will create jobs, create a strong economy, rebuild houses in neighbourhoods and get our cities going again".

The cities are the centre of economic energy and we must defend them.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I was listening very intently with a great deal of interest to the excellent speech given by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

I was struck by the common sense that he pronounced and the logic that he brought forward. At the basis of our Canadian society is the city itself. Therein we have the whole vehicle for our modern life in the urban context. If we allow our cities to become disorganized, to become debased, to decay and to become unruly then frankly we in this country have thrown away the very vehicle of our urban way of life.

I cannot help but think that this government is completely missing the boat when it comes to dealing with urban problems. He mentioned, and I think correctly, the violence in Los Angeles. It was a very tragic episode, not only in American history but in human history. That episode showed us that these problems have not been solved. The difficulty is ongoing, and it would seem that our governments are turning a blind eye to the problem or just do not know how to handle the situation.

From a judicial point of view, 8,000 people were arrested in the Los Angeles riots. It defies the imagination to understand how they are going to process these 8,000 people through an already crowded court system in the United States.

This is the sort of thinking that we must consider because what has happened in Los Angeles could very easily happen in Canada. We did have very unfortunate riots in Toronto as a result of a shooting incident. They gave us a clear signal that Canada is not exempt from these problems. If we do not deal realistically and strategically with the problems that exist in our cities then we are going to be faced with ever-increasing violence and disruption.

• (1620)

As the hon. member has mentioned, we must deal with the questions of housing and employment but we also have to work together at the three levels of government.

The Minister of Justice stated that she is promoting meetings and dialogue with the mayors of the major cities in Canada. Hopefully in a year's time we will have a meeting of the three levels of government, but this does not seem to me to be the response that is urgently required and that Canadians want.

The government must get in better contact with not only the problems that exist in our cities but also with the difficulties that it seems to be having in entering into a dialogue with supposedly friendly provinces and municipalities.

The situation goes much further than just the cities themselves. It goes to the thinking that seems to permeate our society today. There is a survival of the fittest attitude. Unfortunately this attitude is manifesting itself in very derogatory ways. For instance we do not seem to be doing what we should be doing for single parents and their children, ex-wives who have been separated or divorced from their husbands and are finding themselves incapable of meeting the expenses of raising their children let alone looking after their own needs.

We have a tax system that allows the ex-husband to deduct his payments to the ex-wife and children but the wife who receives the payments must pay taxes on what she receives.

We have heard that the courts and other authorities tell us that when the wives and children do get the money, it is less than half of what they need to raise the children. We are told that 12 per cent of the ex-husbands are living below the poverty line but 66 per cent of the ex-wives and families are living in poverty, even if they are receiving payments. If they do not receive the payment, that poverty level figure is increased to 75 per cent.

There must be more recognition of what needs to be done and how it is going to be done. If not then we are saying that our federal system stymies the justice and the equity that we all expect to have in this country. However, the government is not only turning away and not recognizing the problems that exist but it is also wilfully abandoning the programs that had meant so much in cementing our society, bringing people together, and giving people hope.

I just want to deal with two programs as they refer to the justice system. The first is the Court Challenges Program. We have talked to the government. We have asked questions in the House. We have asked questions in committee as to why the government would possibly do away with the Court Challenges Program. It is incredible to think that this program has been jettisoned by the government.

It is a program that cost $2.4 million. Certainly $2.4 million is a considerable sum of money, but we should consider that this program allowed disadvantaged and poor people to be able to take their perceived injustices and questions to court. Not everybody was given financing, but if it was determined that their case was something that needed to be brought forward and needed to be determined, viewed and questioned then the organizing group gave them funding of up to a maximum of $35,000 toward their legal fees.

This has been of immeasurable help to us. Not only has it helped disadvantaged people, visible minorities, single mothers, and aboriginal people but it has brought forward a good body of law. It helped us to enrich the body of law that we so proudly speak about in this country.

We have had court decisions that have resulted from the Court Challenges Program such as the Butler case, in which it was determined by a vote of nine to nothing that the obscenity rules in this country were directly related to violence against women and violence against the family. This now allows us to proceed, I would have hoped faster than we have, with tougher pornography laws, in particular, so that we can protect our children from this degrading and abusive form of material.

Also, we are doing away with our Law Reform Commission which has been the genesis of a great deal of our legal thinking. We have talked about the various bills in this House. We have discussed cases where in at least 44 recent Supreme Court decisions the Law Reform Commission was cited as being the origin of the particular legal thinking.

We now have Bill C–46 before the House, the contraventions bill. In 1976, it was the Law Reform Commission that requested this. The government first brought it forward in 1986 and finally we have the legislation that we have today.

It seems the government is determined to do it, but if we do away with our Law Reform Commission then Canada will be one of three Commonwealth countries without a law reform commission. We will be joining Zimbabwe and Bangladesh as the only three Commonwealth countries without a law reform commission.

Quebec is now in the process of setting up a law reform commission. This will mean that all provinces in Canada have a law reform commission, but the federal government does not. It is a travesty in a federal system that we would abandon this role and not consider our law more important than we have.

I think I have 20 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I want to be sure because we have a motion that members of your party will split the time for their speeches.

Mr. MacLellan: My colleague is in committee and cannot leave, unfortunately.

There is a certain fibre, a certain cement that we have had in Canada. We have been able to relate one to the other, we have been able to care for one another, we have been conscious of the needs of one another. It seems that these programs and these concerns are dissipating. It is mainly because the government is choosing not to keep those programs going.

In a lot of cases the government has set up or initiated good programs, such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, employment programs and various labour initiatives. It then has proceeded to reduce the funding for those programs which is counterproductive. This is not the way to proceed.

I also want to give a great deal of credit to the hon. member for South West Nova and to compliment her on the comments she made concerning the Cornwallis base. It is a tremendously important facility in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada.

When we see new institutions being funded and reorganization in the Armed Forces taking place when we have this excellent facility in Nova Scotia, the thought, even the very germ of an idea that we would let this facility go is absolutely galling and ridiculous. It is a marvellous facility not only in the technological expertise that exists there but also in the infrastructure which is so costly today. It has an excellent infrastructure and is in a marvellous location with very competent personnel. The thought that we would let this go is unthinkable. I certainly hope the government will listen to the words and reasons put forward by the hon. member for South West Nova. It is well worth listening to. It is a benefit to her constituents and to the country as a whole.

• (1630)

Frankly, the situation in Atlantic Canada is very bad at the present time. I think the government is trying not to notice this. How government members can possibly not notice it, how they can possibly come into the House and not be completely and utterly embarrassed by their treatment of Atlantic Canada is very perplexing to me.

In my constituency on Cape Breton Island we have a devastating economic problem. The meaningful programs we expect from government are not forthcoming. There does not seem to be a recognition of what is going on in Atlantic Canada and certainly on Cape Breton Island.

The community has no understanding whatsoever as to why the federal government has abandoned its role in Atlantic Canada.

We have the situation in the fisheries. We have asked the government time after time to please tell us what will be done as compensation for those who are going to be losing their livelihood.

In Newfoundland there are thousands of communities depending exclusively on the fishery. On Cape Breton Island there are communities which are completely dependent on the fishery. These communities will suffer irreparable harm if the fishery is closed. What is the government doing? It is causing tremendous anguish.

In Nova Scotia and Cape Breton we had an excellent tourist industry. It has been hurt by the GST and by higher taxes on gasoline. We depend mainly on Americans visiting our region and frankly, the GST and the gasoline tax are disincentives to come to our region.

It may be said that applications to obtain a GST rebate can be made. People just do not go through that process. They are not prepared to go through that hassle. They will stay at home. They will go as far as Maine, Vermont or New Hampshire and decide that is as far as they will go. We will lose the assistance we could have had from their visits.

This is so fundamental. It seems that everything in Atlantic Canada right now is tainted as far as the economy is concerned. Something has happened pretty well on all fronts to cause questions in every industry and every form of livelihood. This is a mystery to us all as to how this could have been allowed to happen to the extent that it has.

This is a great country, even though we have our economic difficulties at the present time. There seems to be different levels of Canadians. There is a gulf between the more prosperous regions of the country and the less prosperous, between the rich and the poor, and that gulf seems to be widening. This was not the way it was supposed to be. This was not Canada as most of us thought of it. This was not the idea that we ever imagined would be of such prominence in our country as it is today. This cannot really be allowed to continue because if it is we are going to ruin the spirit of the country as we know it.

Certainly in Atlantic Canada there is the feeling because the four provinces together only have a total of 32 seats that politically, government believes Atlantic Canada is expendable. The government asks: "Why worry about the fishery? Why worry about the tourist industry? Why worry about agriculture in Atlantic Canada? Why worry about the forest industry? Why worry about the communities that are suffering such difficulty? Because we can win an election and not have to worry about Atlantic Canada".

That thinking is diabolical. I want this government to reassess its actions. I want this government to reassess the needs that it is giving priority.

I want this government to realize that the four provinces of Atlantic Canada are very much in need of their federal government. The federal government cannot just say that at the very best, it is going to allow the concerns of Atlantic Canada to wait for another day when there are not so many other things on its plate. These people are good Canadians and they need the support of their government. They are asking for the support of their government and they are not getting it.

I want this government to reappraise its priorities. I want this government to be mindful there are Canadians in Atlantic Canada needing its help. I would suggest right now that there be plans and there be analyses of the economic situation and that the proper regional development framework and assistance in the short term be put in place.

What has happened is a tragedy and if something is not done very soon, the damage will be irreparable. These people who have depended on their government will find their government not anxious and in fact not even willing to help them when they need that government assistance so badly.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I found the intervention by the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys quite interesting. I was intrigued by his having mentioned early in his discourse the benefits provided to the visible minority community by the Court Challenges Program.

I wonder if he realizes that in fact the Court Challenges Program was never used to bring a single case to the Supreme Court of Canada. At the time the government decided to terminate the program there was an attempt to organize young lawyers within the black community to begin to initiate some cases. In fact, the Court Challenges Program was about to be used for the first time by visible minorities. I would like to hear what he thinks about that.

How does the hon. member relate that in the present social context to the fact that at the same time, the Law Reform Commission had prepared a preliminary report examining the issue of jury selection as it related to what had been suspected in Ontario to be an exclusion of visible minorities from juries? It was an initiative taken by Ontario to pursue that issue. Can that be seen to have a relationship to the government's decision to delay the implementation of legislation on the Race Relations Institute?

In short, there are a number of elements in the decision of the government to terminate programs or commissions that have impacted seriously on the ability of visible minorities to exercise their right to be a part of the process. This is at the very time when the issue of racial discrimination has become critical in many parts of this country.

Is all of this in some way connected to the introduction of sharp changes in the refugee determination system? This is at a time when the Reform Party is raising xenophobic questions with respect to government policy on immigration. Are we not finding a kind of xenophobic government in terms of the legislation that it is passing in response to the Reform Party and in disregard to the concerns of a considerable sector of the community?

• (1640)

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his questions and his comments. What he says is correct.

While the Court Challenges Program has not brought a case to the Supreme Court involving visible minorities, the matter had been under consideration and there was an attempt to correct that. It was unfortunate that the visible minorities did not get more support from the Court Challenges Program.

I think it is unfortunate too that the Court Challenges Program has been cancelled. The deficiencies of the program did not get a chance to be corrected. I feel that it could have played a very important part for visible minorities. They never really had the full benefit of it. I think that is extremely wrong, particularly when we are talking now about amending our Constitution and amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The government is in fact saying: "We don't need the Court Challenges Program any more", and at the same time considering these amendments. We are going to have to look at these amendments in light of their relationship to our legal system. The effect on visible minorities, aboriginal people and other groups is going to be very important. At this particular time when we need it so badly, the government is withdrawing it.

The member also talks about the Law Reform Commission and the jury selection process. He is right on that as well. This is something that was being looked at. Hopefully we were going to have a meaningful commentary on that.

We also had a very good report in process on the law and multiculturalism, an excellent program that dealt with the law relating to visible minorities and the various groups in our communities and exactly trying to relate one to the other. The actual fundamental preparation for it had been completed. In fact, there was a group of consultants from the various multicultural communities who were to meet with the government to discuss the report four days after the budget was presented.

The budget was presented cancelling the Law Reform Commission, the meeting was cancelled. These meetings have never been rescheduled. To the knowledge of the multicultural community, they do not know where the reports sits. They do not know if these meetings will ever take place. In fact, they are now of the mind that they will never see this report, that this report will never be made public. This is an unmitigated tragedy when we consider how much has gone into it and how much we need this report.

That is just the callous thinking and the disregard that exists.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague and I thank him for his support for Cornwallis. I could not help but think that the question put prior to me was an appropriate one and leans toward the question that I would like to ask the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys.

The member mentioned ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. It has not proved to be very effective. In this government's implementation of ACOA, it has not proved to be an effective use of creating jobs or bringing new ideas into my area. I think I speak not only for my area but for the surrounding communities south of Halifax. We have seen it play a role in tourism, in building hotels and things like that.

Has the member experienced the same thing and does he have any ideas? I do. I have a couple of suggestions. I wonder if the member would like to comment on where ACOA has gone wrong under this government in terms of delivering $2 billion. I think most of my constituents would like to see where the $2 billion is going.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the hon. member for South West Nova that we would all like to know where the $2 billion went. It is probably the biggest mystery of all when we are talking about ACOA.

The concept of ACOA on paper initially was not a bad concept. What happened was that political patronage became the dominant consideration in ACOA. Moneys were given depending upon who you were and what constituency you lived in and what you had in your wherewithal to be able to do for the government at a later date.

That is crass. It was the number one criteria for ACOA.

By Cape Breton standards, we received considerable funding for large industries that were organized and applied for by people outside of the jurisdiction. They were given a lot of money. They could not turn the money down. We do not know what relationship they had with anybody in the government or the Public Service, so I cannot comment specifically.

They came in. They set up the businesses. They employed people who wanted jobs badly. The local people worked very hard only to find that when the funding was used up and the tax credit was gone, the job training grants were used up, all of a sudden the doors were closed in the industries.

These people were not only without a job once again, but actually had their hopes dashed because they thought that finally they were going to have something worth while and they were going to have a future. They were going to be able to look after their families and make a home for themselves in Cape Breton without having to worry about where the next pay cheque was going to come from.

This is not the situation now. We find ourselves back to square one. What we need to do is foster the local entrepreneurs who have a stake in the community and who have shown that they want to live in the community and to help them, not because of what political party they support or what they can do but on the basis of their ideas and what they want to do for the community.

That is going to have to be a fundamental consideration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to the government's Main Estimates for the current year.

However, I find it very difficult to understand why a number of opposition members have been telling us since this morning that the government does not spend enough. They complained that the government withdrew from certain programs and that it cut spending. We tabled Main Estimates totalling $160 billion for the year 1992–93. This does not include the interest charges on the debt we inherited, an irresponsible debt that goes back to the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, a $200 billion debt that causes all kinds of problems because of the interest which accumulates each year. I wonder how anyone could claim today that the government is not spending enough money when we realize that we have a budget of around $120 billion, that the public complains it is being overtaxed and we are being asked to increase spending in practically all the government's current programs. We are even being asked to introduce new programs. I realize there is significant need, but people should also realize that if we want to control taxes, if we want to reduce taxes, we will have to stop increasing program spending, or at least cut certain programs and focus on the priorities.

I think it would be interesting to consider how the tax money the government will collect this year to provide services to Canadians will be spent.

I just mentioned that first of all we have an unfortunate situation where a significant share of the government's tax revenue will go to paying the interest on our debt. The debt keeps increasing annually because we do not have the money to pay the interest, let alone the principal. This means that 25 cents out of every dollar spent in 1992–93 will be applied to debt charges.

There are members who wonder why the government keeps blaming the previous government for the deficit. They say it has now been seven or eight years and we should be able to find something else to talk about and come up with other reasons.

• (1650)

Unfortunately, as we have been repeating for six, seven or eight years, this debt got out of control and is causing problems now and will continue to do so for generations. The government became so ambitious that its revenues no longer covered its expenditures. It had to borrow to pay for programs it was making available to Canadians and which it really could not afford.

The fact is that more than 50 per cent of budgetary expenditures consist of amounts paid to individuals through our programs and through agencies and provincial and territorial governments. People still complain in this House about cutbacks in transfer payments to governments and individuals. That is entirely false. These expenditures have increased from year to year. I mentioned earlier that if we go back to the 1984 budget, this was a $70 million budget. Of course, the government was running an operating deficit of $16 billion that year, which meant its budget was actually $86 billion.

The fact remains that today, planned budget spending totals about $120 billion, which means that transfers to the provinces, instead of going down, have increased on an annual basis. Of course we had to limit those increases in recent years, in this budget as well, but there again, instead of cutting spending on transfer payments, the government is doing everything it can, within the fiscal room it has to manoeuvre, to keep upgrading these transfers and respond to the public's expectations as much as possible.

Eight per cent of this budget will be spent on defence. We have taken some very substantial measures to control defence spending, and new guidelines have been issued to deal with our new obligations to replace obsolete military equipment. We had to cut defence personnel to be able to modernize our fleet. However, 8 per cent of the budget will still be spent on defence.

As for Crown corporations, 3 per cent of the budget will cover that item, while 11 per cent is allocated to services other than defence, offered directly to Canadians by the federal government. These services are part of the cost of government operations. There are officials and people who provide those services, and these people have to be paid. This includes salaries and wages. It includes accommodation. It also includes equipment for inspecting food and drugs, if we want to protect the

public and ensure our food is safe to eat. Of course it takes money to have this kind of control.

We have to control enforcement of environmental regulations. I think that investing in the environment is becoming increasingly critical. I think the public expects its leaders to take certain steps and invest in correcting the problems that have developed over the years. The opposition is asking the government to act, but I think it will realize how aware we are of the country's needs. We know a lot more money will be spent on dealing with environmental problems.

We also know how important air safety control is. This is part of the budget for services like aircraft safety and scientific research. We know that it is important to invest in research if we want to meet the challenges of the years ahead. Surveys and mapping are all services in which the government must invest and of course they are in the budget.

The budget also includes fields like health and safety. I see the Minister of Health here and we know very well that we must invest large amounts year after year for better health services and in research for the benefit of Canadians. Canada is a privileged country in this field.

Of course it is not perfect, but we must continue. We will find in the budget the money needed to correct the problems we have identified.

I just spoke about food. Food quality in Canada is the envy of the world, but we must keep track of it, monitor and control it. There are also the environment, medicine and roads. A country as large as Canada must invest heavily in its road system. As well, there are the seaway, airways, airports, ships and harbours. That is all part of our budget.

We often forget all that. We often take all the services we enjoy for granted, but of course they cost something and that is found in the budget. This budget also includes the protection of other consumer interests, like inspections and enforcing regulations on such things as weights and measures, communications and financial institutions.

Social programs and programs for native people are also found in our budget. Most Canadian families receive some income support. We know how important our old age pensions are to give our seniors a decent life. In addition, unemployment insurance is a huge cost in a difficult period when Canada must restructure its economy and face new challenges.

A major investment must be made in unemployment insurance benefits, because obviously in a time of such great change, Canadians are hit and they must be protected until the situation returns to normal. We can talk about family allowances. We know how important it is to help our Canadian families.

For that reason this budget gives more to deal with those needs, even though the government has very little room to move. As for competitiveness, I said that we are now going through extraordinary changes with the opening of markets; we talk about globalization of trade and we must face tremendous competition. It will not decrease but become more intense. Therefore we must invest and that is what we do in this budget.

We are investing large amounts in science, technology and the infrastructure we will need to face all those problems. We must also protect people and property. We are involved in security, policing, the courts, prisons and social reintegration of offenders. Again, we know that we are going through a difficult period and need more and more good security services in this country.

We have passed legislation on the security of individuals, of Canadians.

• (1700)

Structures and infrastructures must be provided to ensure public safety and deal with people who have had a brush with the law for one reason or another. Money must be spent for their rehabilitation. We cannot neglect them and let them turn into bad citizens. We have to see to it that they are rehabilitated as quickly as possible and, of course, that costs money.

As far as border protection is concerned, we know full well that to preserve its sovereignty, Canada has to protect its borders. A lot of money had to go that way. Canada is a three–ocean country and, as such, has borders, the traffic through which needs to be monitored. In order to be able to afford providing such services to the public, naturally money must be raised. Unfortunately, this means levying taxes. To do so, we

need personnel and materials. Administering all that costs quite a bit of money.

Regarding the Immigration Act, again, we are a nation of immigrants in Canada. But this does not mean that immigration just happens. Controls are required as well as all kinds of expenditures that we have to take into account in our budget.

On the revenue side, there are the proceeds of the Customs Act, but then again, money has to be spent in order to collect custom and excise duties.

In a rich, prosperous country such as ours, in spite of the indebtedness I talked about earlier, compared to other countries, there is no doubt that we are privileged. It is our duty as elected members of Parliament to provide cultural and recreation services to our people, and a lot is invested in that. I think that a proud country like Canada must provide cultural services to promote culture throughout the country.

There is also the representation and protection of Canadian interests abroad. We do have to be represented abroad, world-wide, and that entails considerable expenses.

Add to that foreign aid. Considering how privileged we are as a nation, as I pointed out earlier, compared to other, poorer nations, these do need assistance of course. I believe Canada cannot afford not to provide assistance to countries where people die from hunger, which is not the case in Canada. I think it is the thing to do to provide assistance to bring hope to these countries and help them achieve some level of prosperity.

Finally, there are the parliamentary institutions, activities that all members of this House certainly consider as essential to maintain our democratic system. There is more. But I think you get a pretty good idea of how where the money goes, of how the taxpayers money is spent.

I would like to remind hon. members of one thing, especially those opposite, and I will close off on this. I have been sitting in this House for four years now and I would like the opposition members who, day in day out, criticize government for their lack of consideration for the Canadian citizens, for their lack of consideration in programs offered to provide security and an adequate quality of life, to keep one thing in mind. By the way, a recent United Nations study carried out throughout the world concluded that Canada was the country where citizens were afforded the best quality of life. Nevertheless, I believe that a lot needs to be done. Many Canadians are in need and need assistance, but let us not forget that there is a limit to how much taxpayers can pay. Canadians are already overtaxed. We cannot afford to increase our expenses without cutting somewhere else because we cannot go over the $160 billion planned for this year. We cannot even think of doubling this amount. Somebody would have to pay for it eventually.

I would therefore ask the members in the opposition to tone down their criticism and stop blaming the government for the shortfalls of just about every single one of its programs. There is a price to pay. In fact we have already reached the limit and I think that the recent budget is reasonable and that it will enable us to meet our obligations. We must of course take care of those people who require government assistance, but it is about time that most people who can provide for themselves do so without counting on the government, especially as regards unemployment insurance and welfare for which we provide transfer payments. At this point in time, we must focus our efforts on those members of our society who are in the greatest need of help. Mr. Speaker, all this is to say that this budget is extremely important and that it will allow a decent living for all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my friend that I listened attentively to his remarks and there were many things he said with which I agree.

I especially want to focus on that part of his speech near the end where he said that we must look after those who are in most need. It is important to explain to the people of Canada where we as Liberals have a different point of view from the government.

The people who are most in need right now in this country are those people who are out of work. We are talking of more than two million people.

It seems to me that if we are already spending about $35 billion in unemployment insurance and welfare, if we were to maybe add another $5 billion or $6 billion to that amount, we could probably get those people into the work force. Then we would have a productive labour force and it would not be the same sort of drain on the

treasury. We would be creating an asset for that work, whereas right now these disbursements on welfare and unemployment insurance, not to mention the fact there is a lack of productivity, are a real affront to a person's dignity.

The government is constantly telling Canadians that we cannot do this because of the deficit and the debt of the nation. The member said we are paying about 25 cents on the dollar in interest payments. I personally do not think that is such a big deal.

In other words, if someone has a mortgage of $100,000 on their house and they make around $50,000 or $60,000 a year, they are paying 25 per cent or 26 per cent in interest rates and they manage to get by.

My question for the member is does he not think that Canadians without a tax increase could handle another $5 billion or $6 billion for the mortgage of this country if it meant we could put those two million people back to work?

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Larrivée: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. He says that if we got another five or six billion dollars into debt, we could eliminate unemployment in this country.

Without wishing to be overly partisan, I would say that if we realize the extent of our current debt—

An hon. member: It's not too much.

Mr. Larrivée: It may not be too much, but we must not forget that the $400 million worth of debt some people seem to take for granted costs us 25 cents out of every dollar we collect to provide services for Canadians.

In fact, it costs us about $40 billion annually. When you talk about five or six billion, my answer is that if you had planned things differently 20 years ago, with the same tax revenue we would have had $40 billion to distribute in the form of services to Canadians.

The honourable member says that with five or six billion more, we could eliminate unemployment. Sure, there would be no more unemployed left in this country and we could even offer them bonuses.

Experience has shown that this kind of investment, and I am referring to borrowing to inject money into the economy, does nothing to deal with the problem. If that were the case, there would be no unemployment today. However, it is not the answer, and that is not how we will create jobs.

It is not the answer, because what is important today is training. The problem is not only the debt we have been handed down over the years but the fact that we have failed to train people for the jobs available today and the jobs available in the future. What we have to do now should have been done 20 years ago: train people so they will be able to work.

The jobs are there. In Canada, between 500,000 and 600,000 jobs would be available if we had the right people to fill them. However, people are not trained for these jobs. It would be wonderful if we had a magic formula that would deal with the problem overnight, but there is no miracle solution. We have to do what should have been done long ago, which is train people and prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow, and that is how we will become a prosperous country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but other members have a few questions.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by the hon. member for Joliette, who said several times that the United Nations had referred to Canada as the country with the best quality of life in the world. I also heard this on television, and I heard about the UN criteria for this kind of statement.

However, the UN overlooked a very important item. It forgot to say that Canada has been living on credit for the past 30 years. It also forgot to say what Canada would be like during the next five years. I predict that five years from now, Canada will be almost bankrupt. People will not say so, because they assume a country cannot go bankrupt, so let us say Canada will be getting increasingly poorer. In fact, we realize we are getting poorer every day.

Unemployment and the debt are out of control because we have 11 political powers in this country that are constantly bickering and cannot reach any kind of consensus, which means that all this is costing us a lot of money. A sovereign Quebec and a sovereign Canada with a dignified form of association would save us between three and five billion dollars, strictly in operating costs. Imagine how efficient we would be. We might save between 15 and 20 billion dollars. That is how we can stop Canada from going bankrupt.

If you want your beautiful Canada to go bankrupt, make a sovereign Canada with a sovereign Quebec, and an association between the two, and in this way we could have effective administration and together keep Canada from going bankrupt.

Perhaps we should invite the UN and give it some real criteria by which to judge what is good or bad for Canada.

Mr. Larrivée: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member, the sovereignist from Longueuil.

An hon. member: The sovereign.

Mr. Larrivée: Indeed, the sovereign of Longueuil. I want to thank the hon. member for his comments. He predicts that the future will not be rosy. He is a pessimist. I say everything will be alright, and I know it will be. Granted, as Canadians—all the provinces made the same mistake—we live beyond our means. We took advantage of our natural resources, but now we realize we have to change. We have to roll up our sleeves and adjust to a modern world, and then we will be on the road to prosperity.

When the hon. member says: "We are going to separate from Canada and we are all going to save money", I find that hard to believe. I am not so sure that will happen.

Mr. Parizeau in Quebec City says: "If we separate, we will reduce government spending. It will cost less in administration costs". When public servants in Hull started asking questions about their future—

An hon. member: That's Rocheleau's riding.

Mr. Larrivée: It is in the riding of Hull. Mr. Parizeau told them: "Don't worry, you won't lose your jobs. We are going to keep you all". Someone will have to explain how we can cut spending if we keep spending the same amount of money and maintain the same number of employees and provide the same services. Someone will have to explain why this is such an ideal solution. Mr. Speaker, we will continue this some other time. I thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): *Dura lex, sed lex*, as they used to say.

[*English*]

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to join in this debate on the Main Estimates.

I do so in the context of just having come back from the earth summit. It was a very intense experience, where the heads of state of 170 countries were united for three days by a lack of vision, a lack of urgency, and a seeming commitment to put national interests ahead of overwhelming global concerns.

I think they are all deserving of the condemnation of their citizens.

That having been said, in the Main Estimates we are talking about priorities of government. It is very clear coming out of the earth summit in Rio that what is required is a fundamental rethinking about what is important. I have been listening to the debate this afternoon and we are talking about the debt problem and so on, so there are political choices that have to be made.

I would like to inject a little sense of urgency this afternoon. Maurice Strong has a quote that is worthy of repetition: "We can be intellectually pessimistic, but we must be operationally optimistic". That is going to be my theme today. I figure I can be operationally optimistic by exposing some of the very skewed priorities of this government. It seems to be able to find money for the weirdest schemes and yet the money that is used to make a fundamental change that is so urgent in our world seems to be beyond it.

• (1720)

These are political choices made by this government and it is going to be responsible for having made them. I give the House one example. Dr. Nafis Sadik, the head of the UN Population Fund, confronted the representatives from those 170 countries with the need to increase social spending as a means of curbing over-population. Quite frankly, the population of the globe is growing so quickly that we are going to be losing space for future generations. It is not sustainable population growth. What does this government do on population?

In the last five years, it has decreased funding for planned parenthood. In 1984–85, it decreased it by 15.6 per cent, in 1985–86, by 12.5 per cent and in 1986–87, by 20 per cent. This shows the kind of wrong thinking this government has in its caucus. On the one hand, it wants to introduce abortion legislation and on the other hand it takes away funding for planned parenthood, to give women the wherewithal to find out about how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. This is an investment in our society that this government has chosen not to make.

It is an interesting statistic, further on the population issue, that the way to address overpopulation is to increase the access to education for women. It is an interesting statistic that for a woman who has not completed secondary education, the average number of children she will have is seven. If a woman has secondary education, that number drops to three which is still not a sustainable number but four less than seven. An investment in education for women is one thing this government should be doing, making education an attractive choice that young women could make.

The other way where the population can be decreased is if women have more participation in political decision-making. It is interesting and I think quite instructive that the Prime Minister remarked only a few weeks ago that Canada's international reputation depends on what his government does at home. I agree with that. It is interesting that at Rio there was not one government woman member on the delegation. This, in spite of the fact that the ministers both for external relations and for external affairs are both women.

Who does the government choose to send down to represent Canada's interests? Quite appropriately, the Minister for the Environment who did do a good job representing Canada. The other minister was the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. This was not a conference about fish, this was a conference about the future of the planet. Women make up more than 50 per cent of the human population on this planet. But no, the government does not send down a woman minister to represent it, it sent down another man to talk about fish. That is very instructive and it goes back to what I said earlier about governments acting out of national self-interest rather than very critical global concerns. I would like now to turn closer to home and talk about those other choices that this government has made because of course when you are government you have to make the tough choices. It is bizarre at best.

For example, the announcement when I was in Rio. I was incredulous to hear that there was a proposal to spend $4.3 billion for the world's most expensive high-tech helicopters to combat the Soviet threat. Has the government not been reading the papers lately? There is no longer a Soviet threat. Why does it not use the $4.3 billion to buy the whole Soviet submarine fleet? It seems that would make about as much sense.

The government says that those helicopters are going to be used for search and rescue. As a representative of a coastal community where some of those helicopters would be based, I should be in favour of this. I am in favour of the remotoring of those helicopters. I am in favour of giving the adequate resources for those helicopter pilots to do the job that they have to do. They do a good job with poor equipment in very unruly weather on the west coast of British Columbia.

However, when you put $4.3 billion up against $145 million in debt forgiveness that the Prime Minister announced last week, one wonders about the political priorities of this government. One wonders if the world has gone mad when we see that this is the way the government is behaving.

Put it also up against the $1.3 billion of federal funds per year for national municipal infrastructure where 63,000 jobs could be created. If we are going to spend $4.3 billion, let me make the shopping list for a change. Give me an opportunity. I could find a way to spend $4.3 billion which I think would be a more fundamental way of making those changes that are so necessary if this planet is going to survive.

The $40 million on proposed cuts including feasibility studies, consultant fees and designs for the purchase of extensive high-tech helicopters is just a ridiculous proposal for expenditure. Put that against the promise of this government in 1984 and again in 1988 for a national child care program. We are hearing repeated horrifying incidents of child abuse in Canada. Yet this government

does not seem to see the linkage, that a national child care program would go a long way in addressing that.

The government is not giving it because the members of its caucus are in favour of keeping women in the kitchen and keeping a more traditional family. Those years have passed. Women are not in the home in the kitchen anymore. They are out supporting their families. The economy demands that they do that.

The people who are suffering are the children who do not have adequate child care. They are forced to be latchkey kids where they come home on their own after school or they have sort of take-a-chance kind of baby-sitting services where there are no standards. We need a publicly funded national child care program. If we really believe in supporting the family then we have to be able to give the resources to the people of Canada so the children have support.

Then there is the expenditure, and this is another whacko idea, of $1 billion on low-level defence systems. Who are we being defended from? We are talking billions of dollars.

I will go back to the millions, what the government did not fund. It cut $200 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy, something that I know every single riding in Canada benefits from. Over the last two years of job training, a number of people have been employed, have been retrained and have been sent out into the work force.

• (1730)

What does this government do? It cuts $200 million from it.

Another example. The Conservatives cut three federal agencies which provided expert advice to the government; the Law Reform Commission, the Economic Council of Canada and the Science Council of Canada, costing $19 million. That was 185 lost jobs. The government also eliminated support for the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.

This is a time when the whole definition of what constitutes security is being redefined and the government eliminates funding for it. But it managed to find money, $46.7 million including a $13.7 million cost overrun on the Canadian pavilion at the World Exposition in Seville, Spain. Just so that viewers will know, that pavilion will be dismantled after Expo.

Is that an investment? It is no wonder that the Canadian taxpayers feel overburdened when they can see the kind of absolutely whacko ideas this government chooses to spend our money on.

The government has also capped the Canada Assistance Plan funding to Ontario, B.C. and Alberta. For B.C. alone, that means a loss of $166 million in 1991-92. But $50 million was found to support Canada 125 Corporation, a private non-profit corporation to promote Canada's birthday. Well, I can buy my own candles. I can bring my own hooter and wish Canada a happy birthday, and it is not going to cost $50 million.

The government has terminated the co-op housing program, a cut of $25 million. As the representative of one of the fastest growing ridings in Canada and also one of the most expensive ridings in Canada in which to live, this is a scandal that the co-op housing program has been eliminated. It is not only the wealthy who live in Saanich—Gulf Islands. It is those young families that are scraping along trying to find a way to buy a home. Co-op housing is often used as a start. But this government has chosen to terminate the co-op housing program, a $25 million cut. There was about $19 million found by the department of the Minister for International Trade for the propaganda and promotion of the Conservative "prosperity agenda". I put that in quotes because prosperity for whom, I ask?

Then there was the $14 million to sell the GST that nobody wanted. Believe me, that sales job was a big failure. There is still a lot of anger about the GST. On the other hand, the government has cut the Court Challenges Program in the 1992 budget, $2.7 million a year, that was allowing equality seeking groups and individuals access to courts to enforce their rights.

One wonders where the grand plan is when you see these comparisons. What is the priority of this government? It is more than just a coincidence that it is the social programs that are getting the short end of the stick while the flimflam and public relations it always seems to find the dollars for.

There was $800,000 to $1 million spent on new cars for cabinet ministers and senior mandarins over the last year, replacing vehicles still in top condition but not quite so bright and shiny. But there was also $3.4 million in cuts for funding for the aboriginal communications program.

In conclusion, this demonstrates that this government is devoid of vision, devoid of that sense of urgency I talked about that is necessary if we are going to survive into the 21st century. Maurice Strong was right that we can be intellectually pessimistic. We must be operationally optimistic. By speaking today in the House, I wish to expose the vacuous nature of this government's planning. It feels that by putting a fresh coat of paint on or a new ad that it can solve a lot of problems. This is not so. You have to get down and roll up your sleeves and work from the ground up by funding child care centres, funding family planning centres, educating women, putting more money into investments for education and technology and investing in the future of our country.

We have that vision and I hope when the election is called that people will see the vacuity of this government's agenda and choose a New Democrat government.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I must say that over all I agreed with many of her concerns about the government.

As members know, I do not share the ideology of this Prime Minister on the way this country should be governed. I have a different view than he does on free trade. I do not believe in this decentralist approach that is going on with the Constitution. However, I have to say to the member that I have a totally different view of the Prime Minister's actions in Rio last weekend.

I felt that the Prime Minister of Canada did a good job in Rio. I know it may sound strange coming from a Liberal to say that this Conservative Prime Minister did a good job on the environment, but I will state why I think he did do a good job. I thought that he stole the show when it came to the environment. In other words, this $140 million debt that we probably never would have had returned to us anyway, he managed to write off and create the perception that Canada was throwing in its oar, or to quote Maurice Strong: "He was operationally optimistic. He committed a further $20 million". I had some constituents on Saturday morning when I went to the Albion restaurant on Queen Street saying: "There he goes again, writing off another $140 million on the environment. What is he doing?"

As I said to the people in the restaurant on Saturday morning: "That is the cheapest $140 million Canadians ever spent, not to mention the environmental cause. Just think of the doors that will open for all of our environmental consultations, our environmental technologies and all of these things that are manufactured in Canada". Quite frankly, I think this was probably one of the best things this Prime Minister has done since he has come to this office.

My question to the member is: Because this person is of a different stripe, can he not do anything in terms of contributing to the dynamic of this country? In this case I personally would have liked to have seen him do more in terms of his commitment to the environment. It would not have bothered me if he had written off $250 million because, as many of us have said in this House, if we cannot save the planet, what good is the debt owing to us anyway?

If we are going to win credibility on this issue, I do not think that the New Democrats or the Liberals are the only ones who are concerned or committed to saving the planet. In this case the Prime Minister opened doors for us around the world where now if we just put our Canadian business card out there, I will bet we are going to get preferential treatment for environmental technology and environmental service for many, many years to come. I think that is what Maurice Strong meant when he talked about operational optimism.

• (1740)

Ms. Hunter: The hon. member's question and his comments preceding it demonstrate that national self-interest also extends to the Liberal party and not just to the Conservative Party.

In my comments I did compliment the Minister of the Environment for his performance in Rio. That compliment did not extend to the Prime Minister.

The 16 negotiators that Canada had there did an exemplary job. They did a stalwart job representing Canada. They are public servants of the highest calibre.

However there were only 16 of them doing that work and they had to work around the clock to be able to do their work. Compare that to the 22 from the communications unit whose job was to sell the story back in Canada. This demonstrates the real priorities of this government. It is willing to put more into flimflam than it is into substance.

The member's reaction shows that it is working with the Liberals, and that is why my operational optimism is to expose it.

As for the international debt issue, the $145 million write-off, we were never going to paid back that money anyway. Canadian taxpayers are paying it anyway, through bank rates, through interest rates. It is the bankers who are benefiting. The bankers are benefiting not Canadians.

The writing off of that debt is only one part of the solution to this problem. We have to realize that if there are going to be real changes it is going to have to be more than a $145 million write-off. There has to be more written off, there must be.

There must be some honesty with the Canadian public. The government must admit that we are never going to get that money anyway, that it was the banks that have been benefiting year after year after year on that issue, and that we are paying for it through bank interest rates, et cetera.

The Liberal member has demonstrated that he has the same lack of global vision that permeates the Conservative caucus. He demonstrates that it permeates the Liberal caucus as well. The only choice in the next election is the New Democratic Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments further to the speech by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I heard the member say that we had to spend more on education, health and so on. Of course it is a priority to maintain those services. But we must also add that we have reached a certain level, which I think is very satisfactory and we need only maintain it. I think that we must first create some wealth. We should first create the wealth to be able one day to pay this frightful accumulated debt of $400 billion.

In 1984, when I was elected, we said that we absolutely must reduce the debt. Unfortunately, at that time, revenues were about $75 billion and expenditures $110 billion. Today, we see that revenues are about $135 billion and expenditures $165 billion, so we have not really succeeded in controlling government spending.

I think that we should create wealth. How do we create wealth? We had examples like free trade. Free trade was badly handled. We should have prepared for it, because if you open new markets, you must train the work force properly to deal with those changes. The dollar must also be kept as low as normally possible to encourage exports. Interest rates must also be reasonable so that our businesses can raise funds and thus create jobs. That was not done. Basically, free trade is a good thing, but it was so badly mishandled that jobs were lost. Our unemployment rate is now 11.5 per cent. I must say to the hon. member that we cannot think only of spending; we must also think of creating wealth, jobs and prosperous businesses so that we can then redistribute that wealth. So my question for her is how does she see the way of creating—

[*English*]

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I see that the right wing thinking that has been demonstrated by the Conservative government and the Liberal opposition also permeates the Bloc Quebecois caucus. There is only that one choice. We do not have to create wealth, we have to redistribute wealth.

Rio de Janiero is a city of vast wealth, 12 million people in one city. There is a huge contrast between the vast wealth and the extreme poverty. We do not need more wealth, we just need more equitable distribution of it. That is the kind of vision that we need, not just in Canada but globally. We do not need more greed, we need solutions for all people on the planet. We do not need to act out of narrow self-interest.

We should act out of self-interest because it is our survival we are talking about, and that is the only thing that should motivate us.

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, like others in the House today I am very interested in participating in this debate. I think that even my colleagues on the front benches will agree that this is not utopia but, as others have mentioned in the House today, our number one ranking in the world obviously means we are pretty important. There is no doubt in my mind that

if we continue down the road we are on, with the leadership we have, we eventually will get a lot closer to utopia than we are today.

I had the opportunity to read some mail and some news clippings earlier this morning. There was a significant news clipping that came out of Washington, D.C., in which the media in Washington was questioning why the American government could not follow the same lines and same type of leadership as the Canadian government with regard to deficit reduction. Quite a number of my colleagues in the House have spoken to deficit reduction.

In my comments this afternoon I would like to deal with some of the successes of this government, particularly one specific program. It seems that members opposite are constantly nit-picking at various issues, although some of them may be important. At the end of the day they very seldom have compliments about the successful programs and efforts of this government.

The one program I would like to mention today is the Western Economic Diversification Program. The program was specifically put in place to promote the diversification of the economy in western Canada. In northern Ontario there is the FEDNOR Program and Atlantic Canada has the ACOA Program. I think that one of the most successful programs the government has introduced since 1984 has been the Western Economic Diversification Program.

The program is not meant to pit one person against another in terms of business competition. The program was put in place to diversify the economy, not to have a program financing people to compete against one another in a local community, in western Canada or in all of Canada. The specifics of the program lead the applicants to look at providing new products, new markets, new technologies, industry-wide competitiveness and most importantly, import replacements.

There is no funding for internal competition with existing companies or industries.

• (1750)

The program, as a result of being located in western Canada, has a western Canadian theme and western Canadian attitude. The head office is in Edmonton, there is a satellite office in each of the western provinces, and a liaison office here in Ottawa. It shows that the government understands that to put regional programs into place the management of those programs should be in the area that they are working within.

The program guidelines are very simple. We are looking for new products and new markets, but except for the very complicated projects that western diversification examines, most of those decisions are made in provincial or regional offices so that the applications by various companies and industries are reacted upon and processed extremely quickly.

Probably the most significant part of the western diversification concept is the fact that by far the biggest majority of all the monies that go out are in the form of repayable loans. The Government of Canada is not going out and giving money away and granting money to industry.

The Government of Canada has decided that if this is a business venture that will fly but needs a little kick-start then western diversification helps kick-start that particular project. At the end of the day the Government of Canada is asking those industries to repay their loans.

Like most things in life, the ones that you earn yourself are probably more respected than the ones that are given to you. That is probably one significant issue that arises from western diversification. You go in there and you work hard. At the end of the day you pay your debts, you feel well, and there is no indebtedness to somebody else.

There are a number of different aspects to western diversification. One of the ones that has been utilized most recently is the Quality Assurance Assistance Program. That particular program entails support from western diversification to take existing industries and help them upgrade to international standards.

Any Canadian company, whether it be in western Canada or elsewhere in Canada, that wants to compete in the international market knows that the standards that are required today are extremely high. If it does not have those standards it cannot compete in the international marketplace.

Those of us from western Canada truly believe we can compete any place in the world. With a little bit of repayable help from WD our industries in western Canada have had the ability to upgrade their facilities, get help from experts to make sure their quality reaches the required standard, and ensure they meet the international guidelines.

A lot of industry in western Canada will eventually be coming to western diversification. If not for funding they will be coming for guidance on how to meet these international standards.

Western diversification also gets involved with international marketing. A lot of smaller companies in western Canada have products that meet the international standards but they do not have the financial ability to enter the international marketplace to expand their markets.

Western diversification has taken a leadership role in promoting our products outside of Canada and in bringing people into western Canada to look at our ability to manufacture various goods.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands was making comments about this government's involvement in the environment. Western diversification, understanding the importance of the environment, took a leadership role a number of years ago in becoming involved with the South Moresby National Park. It has put well in excess of $100 million into the South Moresby park project to sustain a very special environmental area in Canada.

Western diversification also gets involved with projects dealing with various environmental standards and research. A good example is research into the low sulphur coal in western Canada that could be used in Ontario. We have a lot of quality coal which has a little bit too much sulphur and if the problem of getting rid of the sulphur emissions can be resolved, and they are working very hard at it today, I know that those colleagues of ours from eastern Canada will accept some western coal that is of good quality.

Western diversification has also entered into what has been called the partnership programs. I guess most of the House would remember this as an extension to what I remember as being the ERDAs.

We have had the ability to work with the provincial governments in western Canada dealing with forestry, mines, tourism, communications technologies. We had another program with the federal government, with the funds funnelled through western diversification, to each of the four western provinces. Each province had the ability to spend the money as it saw fit which would encourage economic diversification in its province.

The one that I can speak best about is one in the province of Manitoba. Through western diversification and the province of Manitoba, a number of small community infrastructure improvements are taking place as we speak so that the infrastructure is in place either to expand existing industries in a number of small communities or to attract a number of industries to these communities because they have the sewer and water facilities ready to go.

Western diversification has been a leader in co-ordinating various government procurement initiatives. The last speaker was talking about helicopters as an example of purchases that are very significant.

Whether it is fortunate or unfortunate, very few Canadians know about the activities of western diversification. The Government of Canada has made some very significant purchases that are situated completely in western Canada. As an example I would mention what is known as the CAATS program, which is the Canadian Automated Air Traffic System.

It was Hughes Aircraft which picked up the contract. This contract is worth over $380 million and from what I understand, by the time the Hughes company has finished investing in western Canada, along with the $380 million contract, the Hughes Corporation is looking at spending another $500 million in various types of industrial development. Once again the area that I know best is Winnipeg, and it has already set up a specific company to deal with the acoustics industry.

Another one is the Tactical Command Control and Communications System. The successful bidder has a contract worth $1.2 billion, the majority of which will be spent in western Canada.

When we look at some of the other expenditures the government is making throughout Canada, western Canadians will see from these two specific examples what the government is doing to diversify the economy into western Canada.

Western diversification is also very much involved in the sole source contract to Bristol Aerospace for the CF-116 update which is a complete update of the 18-year old CF-5 aircraft to give it an extended life. At the same time, the experience that Bristol Aerospace Limited has picked up has allowed it to expand into international markets. The company has attracted a

significant amount of business from other countries in the world that need their CF-5 aircraft upgraded.

• (1800)

Not much more than six or eight months ago Western Star Trucks of Kelowna, B.C. was awarded a $200 million contract to provide DND with 2,750 trucks and shelters over the next few years. This contract provided over 350 jobs for the Kelowna area and maintained an existing industry probably longer than was initially expected.

I would like to talk about a couple of specific projects close to home in Manitoba. One is the Centre for Biodiagnostics which was announced a while ago. From what I understand, on Monday a representative of the government will be out to officially open the biodiagnostic centre. This initiative is a three-way co-operative effort, with western diversification putting some funding into the project, the National Research Council putting in a third of the funding and private industry putting in a third of the funding.

Within a very short period of time I think that we will find that the centre in Winnipeg will probably be the international centre for biodiagnostics in the world.

Another favourite project of mine which I believe eventually will be somewhere in western Canada and which will provide over 400 jobs, but is in the research and development stage right now, is that of Meadow Materials. Meadow Materials has taken it upon themselves to do research into how to take silica sand, which is a very significant commodity within the riding of Selkirk—Red River, being probably the supplier of the best silica in the world. Western diversification is working with Meadow Materials and the Manitoba government in doing the technology improvement so that silica sand along with apparently other materials will be able to make silicon metal. It seems very simplistic in a statement but the estimated job opportunities when the project comes to completion is well over 400. When you come from a community such as Selkirk—Red River 400 jobs in that area is very significant.

I commend the western diversification people for their efforts in making that actually happen.

To sum up, I have made comments about how maybe things are not exactly perfect here and although I do not think they are that significant, some of the decisions that we have made in government have not been perfect or idealistic. What I would like to put to the members opposite is that I think there are times when the government does do a good job and does come up with progressive thinking and provides jobs and opportunities in a very progressive way.

I guess what I am asking is that the members opposite sometimes give credit where credit is due.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, we might have forgotten in the last 18 minutes or so that my friend and hon. colleague opposite said that we had been excessive in our criticisms of the government and in fact we were well on our way to Utopia. That is what he said "well on our way to Utopia which could be accomplished if this government was re-elected". He said, Mr. Speaker, I know you heard it because my hon. colleague on this side heard him say that there was an awful lot of nit-picking that obscured the pursuit of the ideal perfection of the universe in Canada under the hegemony of the Conservative government. I suppose the last time we came so close to Utopia was during the recession when we lost 29.7 per cent of our manufacturing jobs. I guess it is true we have not yet achieved Utopia since so far this government has cost only 25.5 per cent of our manufacturing jobs through its free trade agreement. Just to put that into context, Utopia so far has cost us 510,000 manufacturing jobs.

In the 1981-82 Liberal Utopia, 270,000 jobs were lost. In fact only about 22 per cent of those were permanent job losses. Under present circumstances, the loss of 510,000 jobs in manufacturing in this Utopia constitutes 65 per cent of permanent job losses.

Just to give you an idea of the practical impact of that, six plants have closed in Windsor in the last two weeks, and nearly 40 plants have been lost in Windsor alone in this Utopia since 1989.

Others have cited the practical effect on ordinary human beings. We know there is a crisis among young people in this new Utopia and I do not want to be nit-picking. I do not want to nit-pick but I guess it is nit-picking to tell the hon. member we have an unemployment rate among youth of 17.7 per cent right now. That is almost 18 per cent unemployment among youth. There is a drop-out rate of 30 per cent among youth and also a 40 per cent illiteracy and innumeracy rate.

The impact of these circumstances on our youth in this Utopia is an increase in property crimes among youth of 57 per cent since this government has been building this Utopia.

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, I would not say that is particularly nit-picking but I am glad the member brought up the problems he has in his own community of Windsor. The honourable member and I sat on a committee that did significant research into the auto parts industry. We found government policies which preceded us such as the National Energy Program, the low value of the dollar and the auto pact created an industry in southern Ontario that was not competitive.

The problem we have today is former policies, which people probably thought were all right at the time, but obviously did not work. As a result, we are going through a significant adjustment. I feel sorry for anybody who does not have a job, but these people do not have jobs because they are not high-tech. The reason they are not high-tech is the fact they work in a low-tech factory which is no longer competitive. If the leadership at that time had forced industry to modernize, educate its workers and be competitive, maybe we would not have the problems we have today.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate. Today we are discussing whether or not we should agree to give this government $48,902,383,552.00.

• (1810)

That is the decision we have to make. That is in the bill before us. I want to say to the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona I did not prepare this bill, but that is what is asked of us.

Now should we give $48,902,383,552 to those clowns across the way? That is the decision for us to make.

Let us evaluate what it did with the money we gave it last time. As you know, this House has voted money for this government on a number of occasions. Let us review some of its expenditures.

Only a few short days ago I asked the government how many departments and agencies presently had outstanding computer contracts, not the ones that are finished, not the ones that are over, not the ones they gave to their friends and have been completed, just the ones still in progress. Do you know what the answer was? The answer was $1,123,498,026.58. Those are just the outstanding contracts. My colleague asks very appropriately, does it not have enough? Seemingly not. This is what it is up to.

In my continuing quest to find out whether or not we should give this amount of $48 billion to the government across the way, more particularly to the Prime Minister, I asked other questions. It has come to my attention the Government of Canada does not trust Canada Post. I do not know why anyone would not trust Canada Post. I cannot think of any reason. But the Government of Canada used Interpost, which is a Dutch postal system partially owned by the Dutch government, partially owned by KLM Airlines and partially owned by a great Canadian company, Northwest Airlines of the United States.

It gave $733,000 worth of contracts to deliver the mail to this particular Dutch company over a recent period. Let me draw a parallel for my colleagues here in the House. That is a little bit like me owning a taxi company and using someone else's taxi-cab to go around town.

Mr. Kilgour: Save gas?

Mr. Boudria: I suppose it would save gas in my own cab, but it would not make much business sense. Then again, the government across the way does not make much business sense. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources used $301,000 worth of this particular service. Do you know the reason he gave me? Interpost offered low rates and "reliable service". The government used the Dutch post office to deliver its mail because it gave reliable service. What does that say about the Canadian postal system it owns and runs on behalf of the people of Canada? It tells me this government does not trust its own corporation.

That is not the only area where this government has wasted money. This government has been wasting money since it has been in power. It has been buying limousines, travelling around, doing all kinds of things and just wasting taxpayers' money like you would not believe. We have a first-class Minister of External Affairs who proved her class to all of us recently when she broke the

edict of the Minister of Finance travelling here and there.

Mr. Peterson: First class travel.

Mr. Boudria: Last year it came to my attention this government had built a dog house in Rigaud. This particular dog house in Rigaud is at the Customs and Excise training college. Canadians were howling mad when they heard the price of this particular dog house. It cost $325,000 to house 10 of our salivating friends in Rigaud.

Do you know why it built the kennel in question? Because the old one was on the tennis court and the good people there, the head honchos at the place, wanted their tennis court back. What did they do? They ordered a new one built so they could practise their backhand courtesy of the taxpayers of Canada. This cost $325,000.

The amazing thing about it is the original cost was $226,800, but there was almost $100,000 in cost over-runs on a dog house, if you can believe it.

An hon. member: That is like going to the dogs.

Mr. Boudria: No wonder we are going to the dogs in this country.

I have been asking this government a number of questions. Again, I am trying to hold it accountable in an effort to make up my mind as to whether or not we should give it another $48 billion. I asked how many computer contracts were given to install the various computer systems for the GST. That sounds like a reasonable proposition. After all, the GST was much dreaded by most Canadians and much heralded by the Tories across the way. They even appointed eight extra GST-loving Senators to get it through the other place. Anyway it cost $9,343,771 in computer contracts over six months between January 1, 1991 and June 30, 1991.

An hon. member: And it did not have to pay the GST either.

Mr. Boudria: You are right. My colleague is quite correct. They did not even pay GST on those particular computer contracts.

I also want to talk a little bit about advertising. This government is quite good at advertising. I remember when the present Minister of Communications was a mortal opposition member and used to criticize the government. He said about government advertising at the time, which was minuscule compared to today, and I quote from May 3, 1982, *Hansard*:

"If the present situation is allowed to continue unchecked, we will find that the essential equilibrium between government and opposition, which has existed over centuries of parliamentary democracy, will be destroyed".

Those were the words of that member. Do you know who the top spenders in advertising in Canada were in 1989? The Government of Canada was first with $76 million in advertising; Proctor and Gamble was second with $61 million; GM spent $56 million and the others, of course, are much smaller. Those are the kinds of expenditures we have seen.

I will give a few other instances here. I could go on for quite some time, but unfortunately time will not permit. I want to bring to your attention the leasing of real property by this government. In its budget two years ago this government cancelled the construction of new headquarters for Transport Canada. It renewed the lease on Place de Ville here in Ottawa and spent $170 million to rent the building, which the government is renovating. The employees will be working in a construction site for no less than eight years while the building is being renovated for the ultimate benefit of the Campeau Corporation, not the tenant or the employees in the building.

Questions were asked at that time about how this happened, who lobbied for this contract and so on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, having consulted my colleagues, I must tell you that we have concluded that we will refuse to give the government the $48 billion it is asking us for today.

• (1820)

[*English*]

Let us give the message to Canadians that this government does not need an extra $48 billion. It deserves a kick in the pants, which is what we will do at the next election.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask a very quick question of the hon. member.

He talks about whether or not the $48 billion should come to the government. Back in 1980 or 1981 the Liberal government was coming forward and asking for money. It was not really money because the government was asking that it be put on the credit card. In essence, I think every Canadian can understand that back in 1983 for every dollar of tax revenue the Liberal government was providing about $1.23 in services. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker.

Where was that extra 22 or 23 cents going? It was going on that Visa credit card and then the MasterCard because that was over-exposed. All the balances on those credit cards kept going up.

Now we are hearing the member moan and groan as the government is trying to get its fiscal ship back in order. Today, for every dollar in tax revenue there is about 95 or 96 cents going toward services. We have made that adjustment.

Is the member suggesting that the government should go back and is he concerned that it is only $48 billion? If we were following the policies of the Liberal Party ten years ago we should be requesting $96 billion and just putting those balances on the credit card.

I would like him to explain if indeed that is the case, why we are not asking for $96 billion instead of only $48 billion.

Mr. Boudria: It is always nice to get a question about credit cards from the government that gave us the American Express bank.

I find it interesting that a government member would be asking a question on credit cards. The government gave us the Amex bank, signed it by an Order in Council the day of the last election, probably in the fear that it was going to be turfed out on its ear and that if its friends at Amex could not be rewarded, the way to—

An hon. member: It didn't happen.

Mr. Boudria: The member says that it did not happen. No, it did not, but we will get to them next time.

The member asks us about fiscal responsibility. That is interesting given that one half of the accumulated debt in the history of Canada is there courtesy of the present Prime Minister and his administration.

In other words, the $400 billion debt we have today was only $200 billion in 1984, immediately after a very severe world-wide recession. After years of prosperity this government made it worse.

The member asks me how much I think the $48 billion should be. He has missed the point. The point is that Canadians have no faith in this government. Canadians do not trust this government to administer their money nor the affairs of the nation.

That is why my colleagues and I do not want to give any authority to this government to be running the affairs of the nation. It is not a bill that the government should be asking for; it is an election. That is what we need.

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): If in 1984 there had been a $200 billion surplus and now through compound interest it had grown to $400 billion, would you be upset by that? That is exactly what has happened to the national debt. It was $200 billion in 1984 and the compound interest on that debt has grown and doubled right now.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, this government is telling us that after some six years of prosperity, the last year and a half or so in a recession largely caused by the policies of this government, the best it could do was to double the debt in Canada. And government members are asking me to explain that kind of mismanagement? I am sorry, neither I nor the Canadian public can explain that, but they do understand it and they will take care of it very shortly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, on the other side of this House sits the Tory government which has always been on the best of terms with the business sector. But what has this government done? During the last three years, our country has been undergoing a de-industrialization process. During the last three years, we lost 16 per cent of our manufacturing jobs while the United States lost only 7 per cent of jobs in that area. Therefore, this cannot be due entirely to restructuring, globalization and the recession.

An hon. member: Incompetence.

Mr. Peterson: It must be due in part to the lack of economic ability of this government.

An hon. member: That's it.

Mr. Peterson: In the automotive industry, our major manufacturing industry, the one which exports the most, during the last three years, we lost 21 per cent of our jobs, while in the U.S. the job loss figure was only 9 per cent. In other words, in the automobile industry, Canada is losing jobs 2.3 times faster than the U.S.

The last figures show an increase in unemployment. We are still in a recession and what is even worse is that those permanent jobs disappearing in Canada are moving to the U.S. and to other countries. As a country, it will be very difficult for us to adjust to that situation, but we have to start somewhere; all is not lost. There is still something we can do. First, we must create adjustment programs, those programs which were promised by this Tory government before the with the United States but which were never put in place.

Our objective must be to make Canadians the best educated, the best trained and the best equipped workers of the western hemisphere. If we reach that goal, we will see economical results in 10 or 20 years from now I hope.

We must remember that only the private sector can generate jobs and wealth.

That wealth is essential, not only for job creation, but also to reduce the deficit. We cannot increase taxes any more; it is impossible. Canadians have reached the point of ignition on the subject of taxes.

Let us be honest. Nobody in this House can tell us how to cut spending so that we can solve the deficit problem. What we must do is give the private sector the means to generate wealth, pay taxes, create jobs and transform the unemployed into taxpayers. That is what has to be done.

• (1830)

To do that, the government must change many of its policies, such as its monetary policy which has translated, over a period of 20 years, into an increase of more than 25 per cent of the value of our currency. This is an incredible burden for our exporters. This is a government that was not supposed to increase taxes, but it has done so 34 times since it came to power. It has also given us much higher interest rates, a very high currency rate, as well as taxes that are too high, while at the same time presenting us with the free trade agreement. Our exporters must face an incredible challenge trying to keep up with the American competition. This was not fair and we have seen the results of those measures.

There is another thing that must be done. It has to do with the relations between workers and employers and businesses. In Canada, we have the worst record among the 23 developed countries when it comes to the number of days lost because of strikes and lockouts. We have the worst record and the example came from this government when everybody saw what it did to its own employees.

I now want to say a word about training which was cut by this government. It is a cut of the contribution made from the general revenue for the training of Canadians. This contribution should in fact be increased so that we can become better equipped and better educated.

Let us now talk about science and technology, as well as research and development. Again, those sectors suffered cuts from the government. How can we face the competition at the international level, as well as globalization, when our level of research and development is but half of that of other countries?

Finally, there is the issue of co–operation between the three sectors, that is the workers, the contractors and the various levels of government. In Canada, we do not yet have the will nor the means to create this kind of partnership amongst the three groups, each of which is essential to job creation as well as prosperity in Canada.

In conclusion, I want to say that we must not be partisan when it comes to Canadian unity. We must remain united so that we can regain the potential that we used to have and that most Canadians now feel we have lost. If we do not work together, it will not be possible to envision a prosperous future and a country that enhances its capacity as well as the potential of its citizens, and in particular its young people who cannot find jobs right now.

Mr. Speaker, you will have noticed that in your own riding young people have nothing to do. When they ask: "What shall I do to find a job? I have a good education and I can work", what is your answer? What is the answer of my other colleagues? Must we tell them: "Wait"? No. We must create jobs and opportunities for these young people and this exercise must take place in a strong and united country.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. member for Willowdale on using his alloted time to speak French. I think this is quite remarkable, and I think the hon. member is to be commended on his efforts to speak a language that is not his own in this House.

I would like to comment on some aspects of his speech. In fact, although the hon. member for Willowdale is a member of the opposition, his speech could have been made by a member on this side of the House. All the objectives and the principles he wanted to put forward are typical of programs the government supports wholeheartedly. We agree we should make an effort to increase manpower training. We agree Canadian citizens are overtaxed. We cannot go on increasing taxes. We agree a partnership should be developed between workers, the private sector and the government. All these principles are admirable, but the first item on the government's agenda is to stop further increases in the deficit we inherited in 1984, a deficit to which this government has not added a single penny. The current deficit has two components: the $225 billion, more or less, we inherited from the Liberal government the day after the election in 1984, and the compound interest.

I would like to raise another point with the hon. member, before asking any questions or suggesting he help us find answers. The day after the election in 1984, the Liberal Party left us another legacy as well: an operating deficit. The honourable member will recall that at the end of the 1984–85 fiscal year, the federal government's current account was in the red to the tune of nearly $16 billion. Today, that same account, thanks to the efforts of this government, now has a surplus of nearly $15 billion. We first had to deal with this current account deficit in order to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order. Since the period for questions and comments is very short, only five minutes, it is only fair to allow the hon. member for Willowdale, equal time for his answer.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to thank the hon. member for Manicouagan for his question. First of all, as far as the deficit is concerned, this government was elected in 1984. At the time, the national debt was $170 billion. Eight years later, at this very moment, the national debt is $450 billion, under a Conservative majority government. This is not our fault. However, businessmen and homeowners know that when you have to buy something, you have to invest in the future. Whether we are talking about buying a house or a factory, sometimes you have to borrow money to pay back the cost of the loan.

Now, about youth training. This is an extremely important point. And investing in science and technology is also very important, we cannot overlook that either. We must invest in training for a prosperous future. Now is the time to invest in the things that count. That is the difference between this government and our party. How long is the government going to wait? Until the national debt reaches $100 billion or $200 billion? How long will it take? We must invest now.

• (1840)

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I too am glad to have the chance to participate in this supply motion involving $48 billion-plus. Most likely for those watching television it is not one of the most exciting things. However, as some of us remember or know from our history, the whole essence of Parliament is the granting of supply, the granting of the dollars necessary to make the government work. It began with the old dukes and lords leaning behind the bushes in the meadow as they tried to restrain the King from fighting wars and doing all the things the King did. That is where we get the title "Speaker".

The lords and the dukes would send someone to speak to the King about supply and all of the vitals for war and the King's court: the cows, the horses, and all the ladies necessary to make the King's court work.

That was the beginning of supply. That is where we get the name Speaker because it was the Speaker who was sent by the dukes and the lords to talk to the King to say: "You should not go to war and fight the War of the Roses", or "You should not go and fight this war of the Crusades".

That Speaker had his head chopped off up until about 1200 A.D. in the very civilized country called England. That is where supply came from.

This is the basis of Parliament. Though it is not the most exciting, sexy session of Parliament it is the basic session of Parliament.

I am glad to participate in that because I still believe that, even with all the imperfections and all the warts we have—because we do personify the people we represent, and certainly a lot of our constituents have warts, as do we—this is the highest institution in the land.

It is a strange place indeed. Just yesterday we had the courage in the Public Service pension legislation to force a vote on extending pension benefits to the gay community. That is certainly an objective of many members and it is an interesting debate. That came up for debate last night and was voted on last night. Those provisions were voted down.

Yet we evidently do not have the courage to force a vote or have members force a vote on our own pensions, with all of the problems that has caused the public domain.

There is this contradiction that many people are upset about. We seem to be so strong and courageous on certain things that are controversial, yet on other things that get right down to the nitty-gritty of our own work habits and our own emoluments we seem to be a little shy. I am really sad about that, but be that as it may we are still in supply.

I want to talk in the brief time that I have, having been fairly patient, basically not about the supply.

When talking about supply and the dollars involved in the bill that we are discussing, which affects all facets of the government, it is wide open season. It is open sesame. Anything is possible to say as long as it is in order.

That is what I am going to suggest, but still focus not on all the programs of government, not complain about the government I used to belong to because as I told the high school students and college students in my riding, there is not a party in this House of Commons or a party in the land that has all the answers to the challenge of government. We all think we have ideas but there is always a blend between the black and the white, and that is a grey area.

I have heard some of protestations of righteous indignation because the government has not done the right thing and the opposition can do it better. I was in opposition for many years and thought the opposition would do better. Then we got in government and I found we were doing some of the things we complained about in opposition.

Around the mulberry bush it goes.

I am going to do something I have never done since I became a member. I am going to read a column because it is so well written that I certainly could not improve it. It is generally about the issues I want to talk about.

I am concerned, as are all members and all Canadians, and yet we are getting tired of this constitution topic. I understand the reality. There have to be conferences. There are now phone calls being made. Parliament very well may be met with a package deal that really has not been ventilated much in Parliament. Yes, it was ventilated across the country *ad nauseam* in a sense, but there are many of us in the House who still want to have a chance to make comments here. I am going to anticipate what I believe are one of the two biggest problems.

The Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs has been trying to do a good job. Quite frankly, the halo of unity and trying to come together and constitutional fatigue may be creating more problems that are simmering under the surface. The package I understand they are talking about has several ingredients that, frankly, have not been debated in this House of Commons and have not had that much debate in the country.

I am not talking about the Senate. I will mention the Senate in my closing remarks as you start to give me the high sign in the few moments I have. I am going to talk about something that is a little difficult to talk about. You raise the issue and people start to interpret and perhaps call you names. I am talking abut the issue of the inherent right of the aboriginals to self-government.

That has blossomed very quickly in these constitutional discussions that have gone on in the last several weeks and several months. There was a report here from the minister several days go. We are told in the press that

there is a principle that has been agreed upon, although no legal text has been seen. There has not really been any explanation of the implications of that and what it really involves. One paper says it is just a form of municipal government. Another paper says it is another level of government, federal, provincial and aboriginal. Other papers say it is going to involve 400 or 500 self-contained aboriginal communities. Is the law of the land going to apply or is the law of the province going to apply? Are all people of Canada, be they aboriginal, English speaking, French speaking, going to be covered by the charter of rights? These are questions that, frankly, as far as I am concerned have not been given a positive definition. There is real confusion about it.

I am glad I have the opportunity under supply today to voice my thoughts and concerns and read a column that I think asks some very legitimate questions on this issue. Quite frankly, I am going to conclude with a suggestion that I do not think the Prime Minister will take, but I am certainly going to throw it out.

That is the purport of what I would like to say today. I believe we are getting into an area where I know the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs has to put on a brave face. He has to be an optimist and he has to keep moving. We are getting into this interim period where we are not sure where we are moving. We also know we have passed referendum legislation, therefore, we may come back into the House on that. That itself has problems for an independent member and for all members. The referendum legislation limits the debate on the question, which presumably would be a package, to three days. In three days with members speaking 20 minutes and 10 minutes of questions, you can only get about 20 or 30 speakers at the most on that situation which will be the fundamental question affecting the future of the land, if it comes to that.

I am glad to have this opportunity to voice some thoughts in anticipation of what I gather the Constitution ministers are talking about and/or in part have perhaps agreed upon. I am concerned that in this halo of unity to try to bring it all together as we would all like and/or the constitutional fatigue and the open sesame of compromise, we may be creating a monster within a monster in some areas of potential agreement in principle, although none of us have seen the legal text.

In that light and in the time I have, I want to refer to a column that was printed in *The Montreal Gazette* today, June 16, by one Peter Blaikie, who as many of us know is more than just a Montreal lawyer, but was the former president of the Progressive Conservative Party, long before my friend from Cambridge was on the scene.

Mr. Sobeski: I was there then.

Mr. Nowlan: Were you there? I had the interesting challenge of running against Peter and getting bumped and I took my lumps. He is also president of Alliance Quebec. There is a person whom we know. We may not agree with everything he says, but he is not a fly-by-night person. As I say, I got my scar tissue from him. Everyone should go through a defeat every so often. It is great for humility, but you do not want to do it too often. This man is rather articulate. As I say, you are not going to agree with everything he says but it does confirm some of my fears.

• (1850)

I think it is good to get this in the public record, so I am going to do something I have never done before. I am going to read this column. This will most likely take about five minutes. I hope it takes less. I do not want to read it too quickly. It was in today's paper. It will have some things that some might not agree with but I will not comment on that. I just want to read the column and then conclude with some general remarks. This is titled, but of course he does not have anything to do with the title in the paper. As Madam Speaker knows, that may be some copy person in the editorial room. The article is entitled: "Questions, the headlong rush to 'get a deal' is dangerous" by Peter Blaikie, as follows:

> "Notwithstanding the label, the current debate is not about renewed federalism. It is not about the "distinct society", except as a form of camouflage. It is not about language and culture.
>
> At its most obvious level, the debate is about the extent to which the provincial power-grab, principally by Quebec, will succeed. At another level, it is about the extent to which powerful, skilful pressure groups will have their interests satisfied. More subtly, it is about the extent to which the Prime Minister will sacrifice the national interest to repay his political debt to Quebec's ultranationalists.
>
> Three things are certain in the event that a "deal" is struck. First, there will be no benefits, in the long term, for the overwhelming majority of Canadians. Second, the issue of Quebec's future will not be resolved. Third, to the extent that power is transferred to Quebec, directly or by way of the "distinct society" clause, the future work of the separatists will be made easier.

Of course, this man lives in Quebec.

There can be no doubt that, after 125 years, there is ample scope to renew the federation. But the principal rationalization for a "deal", which has become a mantra in some circles, is "the need to decentralize power." Arrant nonsense.

Indisputably, Canada is today the most decentralized country in the industrial world. Most Canadian provinces are currently unable to finance properly their existing responsibilities. There is no convincing evidence, even in Quebec, that the citizens of Canada, as opposed to the provincial political barons, want significant further decentralization. No case has been made for savings flowing from decentralization.

Why, when we have so little confidence in our leaders, are we so eager to let them cobble together a "deal"?

Why should we allow the separatists, as will occur in a referendum on "federal offers", to attack the proposal without having to defend their position?

There is a second, equally dangerous form of dismantling of Canada being proposed. Until recently the issue of native "self-government" has been largely ignored by political commentators. The virtual silence is profoundly disturbing.

In fact, the current proposal to enshrine, for Canada's aboriginal peoples, an "inherent right to self-government" is evidence of national dementia.

Consider the following questions which are only some of those one might ask:

a) What is the underlying objective, the vision, behind the proposal? "Self-government" is simply a means. What is the end?

One must conclude that the government has abandoned any belief that native peoples are best served by integration into the mainstream of Canadian life. Is apartheid the goal? If so, how will that improve the life of the aboriginal peoples?

b) What is meant by an "inherent right to self-government"? No one in Ottawa, or are otherwise involved in the constitutional industry, has the faintest idea. The defence of this lunacy is frequently that other parts of the constitution have been subject to interpretation by the courts over the years.

It is one thing, after the fact, to find that as national conditions change, so do the interpretation and application of the constitution. It is quite another when those actually drafting the document have no idea of the meaning of the language they are using.

c) If the natives' right is "inherent", why must it be granted at all? A right which is inherent is more fundamental than any right which can be "granted" by a constitution. At best, the constitution is merely declaring the existence of the right, not creating it.

This may seem to be mere semanticism. It is not. If, as appears inevitable, the courts have to grapple with the concept in the future, they will have to consider what the word "inherent" means: "Forming an essential or intrinsic element of; existing inseparably within an object or person; innate."

d) What are to be the continental limits of "self-government"? There is little doubt that Ottawa and the natives have dramatically different views. It appears, from Joe Clark's bafflegab, that Ottawa is thinking in terms of municipal governments. Anyone who accepts that the native leaders agree believes in Santa Claus and every other multiculture equivalent. Is it unreasonable that we, the citizens of Canada, its "owners" so to speak, insist that, before approving the "deal" that is going to save us from hellfire and damnation, our "servants" tell us what it means?

e) Assume for sake of argument, that all the parties agree that what is being discussed is a form of municipal government. A whole series of other questions, important but unanswered, arises. Since we have over a century of experience with municipal government, why have our leaders not simply defined self-government?

How many of these "municipal governments" are there to be? It appears native leaders consider that there are several hundred distinct aboriginal societies. Is each to be independently self-governing? Will they all be subject to the same rules? What is to be the territory of each of the self-governing units?

How is the new structure to apply, if at all, to those native Canadians who choose not to live within the boundaries of the "municipalities?" What is to be the relationship between the new level of government and the existing levels? To what extent will the native peoples continue to be governed by, for example, the Charter of Rights or the Criminal Code? A similar question can be raised as to the applicability of provincial laws.

The list of questions is endless. Either they have been answered, and the results are being concealed from us, or they have not. Both scenarios are disturbing: in neither case do our leaders merit support.

(f) To what extent is there unanimity of purpose among the aboriginal peoples? At first glance, there appears to be very little; the native women have not been reluctant to dissent from their male counterparts. Is it unreasonable to suggest that Ottawa should have required the native peoples to present offers they had previously adopted internally?

(g) Who is going to pay for the Canadian experiment in rewriting history, and how much?

When faced with these basic questions, which the media are too polite to put, lips will be sealed with Krazy Glue. We have the right to know the answers.

The real problem is that the answers are no doubt "the Canadian taxpayers and far too much". Vast sums are today spent on the affairs of Canada's native peoples. As we add yet another level of government, the cost will inevitably grow. As to whether there will be benefits to anyone but the elite of the aboriginal peoples, I am from Missouri.

That is the article in today's edition of *The Gazette* by Mr. Peter Blaikie, former national president of the Conservative Party and former president of Alliance Quebec. I appreciate having had the time to read the article into the record.

I just want to refer very quickly in the minutes I have left to those rhetorical questions asked by Mr. Blaikie in *The Gazette* today and some of the confusion over what self-government means. This starts to bother me because there is a very important case—and I mentioned it in a question in the House the other day—right now in British Columbia. It is the case of Delgamuukw *v.* the Queen, British Columbia and the Attorney General of Canada. It is the Gitksan clan.

This is fundamental to the issue. It is the very question the negotiators have been talking about. I have here a copy of of party of the factum of the appellants, the aboriginals. It is very clear. I am not going to waste time now in my remaining two minutes to read what the appellants, the aboriginals, believe the inherent right of self-government means. It means a lot of what is in the Blaikie article.

Under one the items in the appellant declaration they want the court to declare that they have the aboriginal rights to the territory, to proprietary interest in the land and to harvest, manage and conserve the territory and its natural resources, and on we go. This is a proprietary right, which means that other people who happen to be there now, be they corporations or individuals, third parties, will have a real interest in the interpretation of that.

Paragraph (iii) of the factum reads:

> The Appellants' existing aboriginal rights include an inherent right to self-government over the territory, themselves and the members of the Houses represented by the Appellants, in accordance with the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en political, legal and social institutions;

That opens up all the questions that were actually raised by Mr. Blaikie's article.

The negotiators cannot try to confuse. Part of the problem with Meech Lake when it got down to the crunch was misinformation and disinformation at a very critical time.

I do not agree with everything the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs has done. I am afraid, because of fatigue, trying to be too nice and being locked in rooms with the same people over a period of time, one gets the Stockholm syndrome. People get too agreeable because they do not want to disagree with the persons they have been living with, talking to and meeting over six weeks or six months. I am afraid that element may have happened. I am glad the minister took a pause, got away, reflected and had discussions.

It is not the time at this critical hiatus to have any disinformation or misinformation and to kid around with this very important principle that has much to be meritorious about if it is the way some people interpret it.

Let us not try and fool the Canadian people by saying: "Oh, don't worry about it. It is only another little form of municipal government", when the people involved, the aboriginals, feel very much differently. I appreciate the time. My time is up.

• (1900)

In conclusion, I would just say I did not know about the referendum. I have mentioned to other people at another time here in this House, I think the Prime Minister, if this hiatus stays, if there is not an agreement, and some of these things are not clarified, the Prime Minister—and it is funny for me to say—may have a golden opportunity here using the referendum bill or an election on either the aboriginal question and/or the Senate question.

I certainly agree with the Senate question and there is a lot of hocus-pocus on that. I do not have time to get into that, but even Bobby Rae has forgotten that the 13 colonies, not the 50 colonies when you had a distinction between Virginia of 900,000 and little Delaware and Rhode Island which only had 40,000, something like the distinction between Ontario and P.E.I., not necessarily in fractions but it is that big versus small, the 13 colonies had the guts to in effect give the states two senators per state then. Granted they were not elected, they were appointed and different things, but they did it to balance off population.

I am for the abolition of the Senate. I think the Prime Minister could ride the abolition of the Senate either in a referendum and get momentum for an election or even have an election and pull a Mackenzie King on the King-Byng issue which resurrected Mr. Mackenzie King when Arthur Meighen thought he had him down on the ropes.

It is funny for me to say this because I can tell you this, if the Prime Minister called an election on the Senate and its abolition because he cannot get agreement on a constitutional package, I certainly could not be campaigning against him on the abolition of the Senate because I think that is what we should have. I think 80 per cent of Canadians would go for it.

Madam Speaker, you have been very tolerant. I have many other things to say but that shows you how terrified I am about all these issues here. There are many other members who want to speak. It is difficult to get in all of these views in the narrow timeframe I have.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, I have heard the honourable and dare I say venerable member on two or three occasions raise this topic without a great deal of clarity about what the question really is.

The hon. member cites an article in *The Gazette* and he cites a court judgment in British Columbia, both of which have in common that they have paid not an iota of attention to the entire debate on the question of what the inherent right to aboriginal self-government is and has been accepted to be.

For the hon. member's edification, it is simply this. When the Europeans came to North America, the native people did not expect they would do anything but share this continent with the visitors. They were generous about it, generous in a fashion which was uncharacteristic of Europeans who thought they had a proprietary right over all that was there. That impetus from a different culture led to an effective colonization of the native people even though they had never conceded the land or their right to govern themselves.

In fact, the signing of treaties signifies precisely that the Crown recognized they had a right to govern themselves, which was inherent because it is a characteristic shared by all people, European or aboriginal.

I do not understand why it is so— difficult for people to understand something so elementary and something that they assume for themselves, except that they assume it for themselves at the expense of the native people and have done so ever since the Europeans arrived here.

What has happened here is that early negotiation, the arrangements that resulted, led virtually to the destruction of the native society, to poverty, to dependency, to paternalism, and they want it to end. I think most Canadians would like to see it end.

In fact, if I recall correctly, there is a poll that says 70 per cent of Canadians would like to see the native people negotiated with on the basis of the recognition of inherent right self-government, which includes one other characteristic that should not be too difficult for people to understand, and that is the assumption of equality in negotiation. Not another thing is assumed.

That judge in British Columbia and that writer in *The Gazette* refused to recognize this. The difficulty with the hon. member is that he is paying too much attention to a judge and to a *Gazette* writer rather than taking the time to talk directly to the native people. He should not be asking that question in this House. I suggest that he sit down with native people and discuss it in those terms.

He would be then, as has been the case with those engaged in the negotiations now, in a position to understand what is being discussed. He would understand that the native people want the same rights as everybody else on land which they have never conceded, but they want to do it as Canadians.

If we persist in looking at what they asked for as something alien instead of something inherently human then this kind of strange question, certainly strange to their ears, will continue to be asked.

As for the 13 colonies and their arrangement for an equal Senate, the hon. member ought to know that the equal Senate in the United States is no magical solution there either as it will not be in Canada. For example, in the United States right now it takes an average of three years to pass legislation. I am not so sure that is the kind of thing that we want to have here.

That is a partial answer to the question, but I would ask the member if he has done that. Has he made any effort to sit down with native people and ask them instead of a judge or a *Gazette* writer about the issue of inherent self-government? Has he explored the impact in the United States, not of the great disparities in population on the function of government there, but the effect of having two houses of virtually equal power in which one is equally distributed and the other is by popular election?

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, I am not going to waste much time on the second part of the question about the Senate because as far as I am concerned, I would abolish the Senate. I do not think the Canadian public needs another elected body to in effect prevent a lot of the laws from being passed. We can reform this House. The abolition of the Senate and mostly independent votes other than perhaps on budgets and throne speeches would do more to make this House live than any other thing I can think of.

In terms of the first part of the question from the hon. member, whom I respect, I must say, and I may be a little bruising to him but he can take it because he can give it out, if he believes what he said then I am glad for him, but he does not happen to be in that conference room. I have not read some of the things that he has said. The fact of the matter is, whether he wants to believe it or not, we do have a judicial system. The aboriginals went to court in British Columbia with a B.C. claim for large globs of land where there happen to be—

Mr. McCurdy: A racist decision.

Mr. Nowlan: Speak about racist. The hon. member has spoken in this House with proper indignation about the racial policies of South Africa and the apartheid policies there. Does he not see that there is some similarity? This is not a law or an accord or an agreement. If it was any of those things we perhaps would not have to worry so much and some of the problems could be ironed out if they are not all the way he says they are.

We are putting this into a Constitution and we have not even got an amending formula for it. That is the problem and that is the fear I have.

To answer the question, and I will say this very sincerely and honestly to the member who has been very rightfully indignant about South Africa and its policies based on race, is this not reverse apartheid to put in a Constitution that certain types of government are going to be dependent on race? I am sort of throwing this back to the hon. member and he may not have a chance to answer, but that is part of the fear. I think that is a little exhibit.

The hon. member is a learned person and a professor of microbiology and the sciences. Perhaps he can see that there is a little connection.

However, part of the norm is to have it explained by those who are making the rules at the conference table as to what this concept means. It is not as simple as the member said because it was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia who startled the Indian community by in effect coming out against the inherent right of aboriginal self-government and gave his reasons in a quite thick judgment, which I have.

To answer his question, no I have not talked to some of the Gitksan tribe but I have read the judgment.

• (1910)

It is a very profound judgment. I do not necessarily understand it all or agree with it, but it exterminated and cancelled out those initial rights as you well know. That is what the appeal is about, so I let the court take it.

Let us not kid ourselves, as we are talking about this and making a deal, there is not some knowledge and judicial opinion on what this is. At the moment, people and some of the leaders of the negotiations are saying very confusing things as to what it means. That is what gives me concern.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate and reject any suggestions by the opposition this government has lagged in its commitment to good stewardship of the economy and the public purse.

The fact is this government has been following a consistent and comprehensive plan to create the framework necessary to help Canadian industries and workers succeed and prosper in today's fiercely competitive global environment.

This action to improve Canada's economic fundamentals is helping to ensure our return to real growth and new job creation for our country this year.

Let me take a moment to put our current economic situation in a broader international context that sheds a more honest light on the opposition's self-serving attempt to wrap itself in the shadows of economic gloom and doom.

This spring the United Nations ranked Canada as the world's best place to live. According to the UN human development index, which takes into consideration income levels, the environment, education, health care and life expectancy, Canada has the highest quality of life of all 160 nations. Just as important, the internation-

al monetary fund this spring also forecast Canada will have the strongest economic growth of any G–7 country this year and also in 1993. The OECD and the Asian Development Bank have made similar predictions.

Even at this time of economic difficulty, we in Canada enjoy the second highest standard of living among the major industrial economies. Particularly to outside observers, Canada is the envy of the world. Canada is seen as a success, as a unique experiment that works.

Having said that, I want to emphasize it is not my intent to gloss over Canada's current economic problems. Yes, recovery has been weaker than expected and consumer confidence remains at a very low level. Our jobless rate is unacceptably high. But it is important we recognize that while recovery has been slow and confidence has been weak, it is nothing less than the reflection of the global interdependence that makes our economic policies so necessary.

As a major trading nation, and Canada is the seventh largest in the world, Canada has been hard hit by the world economic slowdown. Growth for the G–7 is expected to be 1.7 per cent in 1992 and that is hardly a robust recovery. Our vulnerability as a trader has been compounded by the industrial restructuring taking place here in Canada and also around the world.

This has been a difficult and painful process for many, as companies seek to control costs, improve productivity and enhance quality. But it is a process that must occur for us to survive and grow in a world of globalization and increased competition, accelerating technological change and new consumer demands.

The changes involved in such restructuring are affecting all regions across Canada and all sectors of our economy. It does not matter if you are in the auto industry, the steel sector, agriculture, natural resources, retailing, wholesaling, distributing or finance or whether you live in rural communities or big cities, the fact of the matter is we live in a era of global interdependence and no country can manage its affairs in isolation. As a consequence, one of the major challenges facing Canadians is the need to educate ourselves better. We must make a three-pronged attack in this regard. We must first retrain workers as traditional jobs become obsolete. Despite 1.5 million unemployed, we are told at least 300,000 jobs cannot be filled because of the lack of skills and training, particularly in the software and computer sector. Second, we must upgrade the job skills for employees as technology and market needs evolve. Third, we must improve formal education so today's students can find the jobs and succeed in tomorrow's work place.

To effectively meet the education challenge we must also get the economic fundamentals right. This includes turning around the government debt and government deficits. This is essential to keeping inflation down and making lower interest rates possible. Keeping inflation down and low interest rates is the key to sustained growth with price stability.

Deficit and spending control is also essential if we want to maintain the government's ability, whether it is a federal, provincial or even municipal government, to provide the resources needed in key areas such as education and health care. Let us remember every dollar of government revenue that goes to pay the interest charges on the public debt is a taxpayer dollar that cannot be used for productive investment or to assist those in need.

These basic economic facts of life are why we have worked to implement the fundamental changes needed to build a more competitive market-oriented economy, with less government intervention and reduced government inefficiencies. These actions include trade liberalization, and this includes both the free trade agreement and the GATT and the current negotiations on a North American free trade agreement. The objective is clear; we must secure fair and open access for our exporters to the international markets.

One can go back to 1965 when Canada was negotiating the auto pact with the United States. There were speeches in this House from the opposition members at the time who said: "Voting for the auto pact is going to destroy the Canadian auto industry." Ten years later the auto pact was a sacred trust among the unions. We must recognize trade liberalization is important.

Tax reform on the personal and corporate side creates a fairer tax system that enhances our export potential and competitive position. This government has been involved in deregulation, most notably in the transport and energy sectors.

Over 20 Crown corporations have been privatized, which has helped reduce the number of employees on the federal payroll by almost 90,000 since 1984.

Most recently, there has been the opening up of the financial services sector to encourage more competition and allow the industry to respond to the realities of the marketplace and in particular global realities.

Underlying these steps is a clear and fundamental economic fact of life. Governments do not create jobs, the private sector does. Government must create the type of economic and policy environment conducive to investment and job creation.

We have also taken some tough action that has been needed, including setting clear public targets and applying a disciplined wage policy to the government itself to get inflation down to the lowest level in almost 20 years.

What is the impact of doing that for consumers? What is the difference between a 7 per cent inflation rate and a 2 per cent inflation rate? If we accepted a 7 per cent inflation rate consumer prices would double in about 10 years. If as a nation we can accept a 2 per cent inflation rate, then prices would not double for 36 years.

Some people would say: "What's wrong with a 7 per cent inflation rate?" But if the nations you trade with and compete against have a 4 per cent inflation rate or a 2 per cent inflation rate, then five or ten years down the road you become increasingly uncompetitive. Keeping inflation down is very important.

• (1920)

These fundamentals for the Canadian economic renewal have been built on and expanded in the February budget. We are reducing taxes to instil confidence, increase investment and improve industrial competitiveness. But to pay for these tax cuts the Finance Minister also cut government spending. We are taking further action to streamline the rules and operations of the government itself.

Again, let me remind the House of the steps we have taken to restore consumer and business confidence in investment. The personal income surtax will be cut from 5 per cent on July 1, and there will be a further 1 per cent cut on January 1. This will reduce the federal tax burden on Canadians by $500 million this year and by more than $1.2 billion every year after that.

Of course, I come from the province of Ontario and the Finance Minister brought his budget down in February. The Ontario government brought its budget in at the end of April. On page 28 of the Ontario budget there is a chart that shows the federal surtax reduction. For example, if you are a single person making $30,000, according to this chart your taxes will be reduced by $75 on the surtax. But what did the Ontario government do? It introduced an Ontario rate increase which took away that $75.

If anyone wants to get a copy of the Ontario budget they will see the provincial government increased what the federal government reduced. That is one of the dynamics we have to deal with. As a federal government reduces taxation it creates a vacuum and there is always a fear a provincial treasurer will come in and snap up that increase. It happened this year and the residents of Ontario are well aware of that.

In the federal government we announced the home buyer's plan, allowing Canadians to build or buy better houses using their funds and RRSPs. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation also reduced the amount of down payment required for a home buyer to qualify for CMHC insurance.

These actions, combined with lower mortgage rates, are already showing positive results. For example, as CMHC pointed out last week, 26,000 families have taken advantage of the 5 per cent down payment required to purchase a home. It is also important to note three-quarters of these families say they would not have been able to buy when the down payment requirement was 10 per cent. In other words, we are helping to make home ownership affordable for more Canadians than ever before.

The budget took further important action to restore the industrial and economic capability. We announced tax measures worth some $2.3 billion over five years to help Canadian manufacturing and the processing sector become more competitive. There were three things that were in the last budget.

The manufacturing and processing tax rate will be cut from 23 per cent to 22 per cent effective January 1, 1993, and to 21 per cent on January 1, 1994.

The capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery has been increased from 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

Third, we are also prepared to reduce the withholding tax on direct dividends paid to non-residents. This step, combined with the drop in the manufacturing and processing tax rate will help improve the investment climate and competitive edge we have. It will help rebuild the manufacturing and processing sector that has been shaken by the economic slowdown and restructuring.

I read out a lot of numbers and I am sure some members of Parliament are a little confused by what all this means. It is important because we happen to be located next door to the United States of America. When you take a look at the marginal effective tax rate on companies, it is currently 21.6 per cent in the United States, while in Canada it is 23.4 per cent.

Those were the numbers before this budget. After these three changes take place the effective rate in Canada will drop to 20.6 per cent. The Americans, if they do not do anything and they do not increase or reduce taxes—and they have a large debt they have to pay—would stay at 21.6 per cent.

In other words, today the tax rate for a Canadian manufacturer is 1.8 per cent higher than its U.S. competitor. But as of 1994 the Canadian marginal tax rate will be 1 per cent lower. Therefore, by doing those sorts of things it helps Canadian manufacturers. By helping Canadian manufacturers it creates employment. I will repeat again, governments do not create jobs; it is industry that creates jobs.

We are also establishing a small business financing program to help firms in temporary financial difficulty adjust. The ceiling for loans under the Small Businesses Loans Act will be doubled.

We will also streamline the administration of the scientific research tax credit system and in this way enrich it by a further $230 million. We will revise the lifetime capital gains exemption to restrict its application to real estate. This will encourage Canadians to direct financial resources toward productive investments that boost the ability of Canadians to compete globally.

These measures do not compromise our commitment to reducing the deficit. The budget includes spending cuts needed to balance our tax cuts and continue the track needed to reduce the deficit to the point where we can begin the process of paying down our national debt.

What are some of those spending cuts? Defence spending will be cut by $2.2 billion over the next five years and this is a real peace dividend. We certainly will not disregard our obligation to our forces but the results will be a smaller and also a more effective and better equipped defence force.

Forty-six federal agencies and organizations will be eliminated, streamlined or deferred and federal grants and contributions will be reduced by $375 million over a five-year period.

Then of course, these actions will allow us to provide a tax break to all Canadians. This also helps the manufacturing and processing sector while setting us back on course to get the deficit to fall to $27.5 billion this year and $22.5 billion in the next fiscal year.

By 1995-96 we will have zero financial requirements. In other words, there will be no need for the Canadian government to go to the market and borrow. The government will have sufficient cash flow to meet its requirements during the fiscal year.

In closing, let me point out that the current economic situation is in line with what was indicated in the budget, that the 1991 final quarter was weak and that this weakness would continue over into the first half of 1992. I am glad to say that there are also real signs that this turnaround is taking place to the benefit of Canadians.

The simple fact is our structural reforms and budget measures combined with an upturn in the United States, our major export market, has positioned Canada for renewed growth and job creation as the year progresses. This is not just a matter of opinion. These are positive indications that the economy is strengthening.

A few quick numbers as my time is winding to a close. Motor vehicle production in April was up 7.3 per cent above its first quarter level. In the first quarter real exports were 3.7 per cent above their level in the fourth quarter. In March alone they rose by almost 2 per cent and the Conference Board index of business confidence rebounded to 16.1 per cent in the first quarter after declines in the previous two quarters and it is at its highest level in almost two years.

These indications are in keeping with the budget outlook that the growth will come slowly in the first half of 1992 and will continue to grow in the second half and will rise to 4.5 per cent for 1993. There is no doubt our country has a way to go before we can truly say that we are out of the economic woods but it is just as clear that we are on the right path. That is why this government intends to stick to this course. We will not repeat the errors of a previous government which tried to borrow and spend its way out of a recession. The result of that policy approach is with us today in the large national debt that so drastically limits the resources available to our government.

• (1930)

No, we will not jeopardize Canada's future by abandoning the policy directions we have put in place. They are helping us make a more competitive country, the low inflation rate, low interest rate, a high productivity country that can take advantage of our new opportunities in world markets. That competitive strategy will provide all Canadians with the best guarantee possible for a more secure and prosperous future.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Mount Royal. Will the hon. member confirm the fact that she is splitting the 20-minute period with the hon. member for York West?

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Yes, Madam Speaker, I have just been so advised.

Hon. members from this side of the House want to talk to this government's poor record and poor public policy and the fact this country is suffering dreadfully. The question often asked is: "They have been raising money and bleeding me almost to death with 34 tax increases over the years and the GST. All that money flowing in, where is it going?" That is what people are asking.

Some of the things that my constituents are most unhappy about in my riding of Mount Royal are the cuts this government has brought in in a general overview, particularly as they affect our youth, our students. It is morally scandalous because they are the future of this country.

The government has been consistently attacking those kinds of support mechanisms that were in place. Those mechanisms were helping our youth to get a foothold, to get started so they could be the future to support the wonderful country we used to have before all the unfortunate short-sighted cuts were put into place. Those cuts are affecting the health of our society, the psychological health, the social health and the fiscal health and well-being of our society.

Looking at the unemployment rate from Statistics Canada right across this country, we know that unemployment has just increased exponentially. We know that when there is unemployment there is concern, stress and nervousness. It affects the entire family. For young people, it affects their view of the future and any hopes for the future. The impact of the family stress is showing itself in the cranky mood out there right now.

I would like to know what this government has done to alleviate the situation of our youth and our students who are unable to find jobs. What has the government done? It has gutted the transfer payments for post-secondary education. It has cut back on summer challenge funding. It has tampered with the Canada Student Loans Program in the budget.

Our most valuable and precious resource is being wilfully pillaged by this government, the talent, the potential. The government's failure to provide the needed tools for these young people really hurts more than anything else.

Our seniors are hurting and their cost of living adjustments are not what they should be—32 cents or 37 cents is not helping them. The last time around their cheques showed a 75 cent increase. They certainly are not going to be able to buy a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk with that kind of increase.

Seeing the jobless youth for tomorrow really hurts the family and our seniors in this society. I think the government has been extremely short-sighted in that regard.

There was tremendous short-sightedness on the part of this government when it cut the Economic Council, the Science Council and the Law Reform Commission. The government did not like the information it was receiving. It did not like the studies being tabled because they did not support Conservative views of society. It did not like a strictly market-oriented approach. The bottom line is all that counts and nothing to support the social services and the other kinds of projects and programs that have distinguished this country in its social perspective. The government just shut them down.

What else did the government do? It merged the Canada Council with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council without even consulting to find out if that was the best thing to do.

The government cut down on the race relations money or it cut out the race relations program entirely. It cut out the Heritage Language Program which was most effective. It cut down on the Court Challenges Program. In fact, it is cutting out the Court Challenges Program.

The minister today had the nerve to say that all the areas of discrimination have been established and the landmarks have been set. Therefore, there is no need for any more information in this regard, so there is no need to have or to support the Court Challenges Program. That is far from true. I just came from a meeting for people suffering from AIDS and from HIV. They have serious problems around discrimination. We have heard from the disabled who have serious problems around discrimination. They need to go through the Court Challenges Program to be able to make this government see the light of day and to have it carry out proper programs in this country.

With respect to housing, the government has cut down on social housing and co-op housing to a degree that instead of making the economy turn it is cutting out access for people who desperately need proper housing.

What should I say about child care, the basic building block to equality. The language that this government uses is a fancy package for no content in its budget, no content in its programs, no vision for the future and no vision for this country. It is an absolute and utter disgrace.

The first and primary building block after having a family and having a decent home is a child care program. It is unfortunate and maybe at the same time not so unfortunate, but the reality is that we need two income earners in a family today to be able to live conveniently and properly.

The programs this government has put into place are a sheer disgrace.

I am really pleased to have the portfolio of critic for communications and culture. I feel it is incumbent upon me to alert the community out there to start talking to individual members of Parliament and tell them what this government has done.

The government has passed status of the artist legislation. It is very proud to have passed that legislation, but it made cuts in every single program that could possibly enable artists to function effectively and to earn a decent living. It is one of the reasons the artists are the poorest earners in this country. It is not because they have not got something to contribute; it is because this government sees them as a luxury.

Our country is obsessed with debating the Constitution. We are all constipated from the Constitution. This is a political question that should go away, please. Then we can address the real issues facing this country, the economy and putting into place the kinds of structures society needs to move forward and to face the global challenges out there.

We are capable. We are the best in the country and the world. We have good ideas. We have good businesses. We have good people. But it will not work if all we do is stick to one silly discussion. Let us get it over and done with and keep this marvellous country together and move ahead and address the issues that are seriously of concern.

The Standing Committee on Communications and Culture did a very fine landmark study called *The Ties that Bind—Les liens qui nous unissent*. Throughout the many hours that we sat and talked and had hearings and deliberations, we found many of our problems in this country could be examined as a cultural issue and could be solved easily through a proper cultural financing approach.

If a country wanted to remain a country and it wanted to have a spirit, how would that spirit be expressed if it was not through the cultural products produced by that country: the films, books, magazines, literature, television programs, artists and creators. There is a method that transmits all that information and that is through the communications mechanisms.

In terms of communications, the CRTC just opened yesterday telecommunications and telephone. No more monopoly. There will be a choice in the long distance market, but there was a concern about that. It is good for business to have choice in the long distance telephone market but it is also important to ensure that the private consumer is not going to be strangled or challenged by increases in local rates for home telephone use.

It is totally unnecessary, if there is a proper monitoring mechanism recognizing that a unified and integrated telephone system is not destroyed. Ma Bell and all its subsidiaries and colleagues are out there. They will be given opportunities at the business level, but do not touch the consumers in the home. That is the message that comes out: consumers come first.

What do we need to have an effective monitoring system here in this country?

• (1940)

We need the regulator to have the power to put into place the regulations and to keep a watchful eye on this new and evolving situation here in Canada. It can be a very healthy situation as long as we do not—I cannot believe I have only one more minute but if that is the case I am making a plea not to cut the CRTC budget. Put the six commissioners in place who are still not in place. Almost half the commissioners are not in place. It is ridiculous. How can we monitor and make this system work, for business as well as for the consumers, if we cut its budget.

We cannot cut out in that area.

It is just a shame that I cannot read into the record the kind of information that no one thought was out there for the cultural community. Everybody breathed a big sigh of relief after the budget came down. They thought there was nothing in there. However when they found out what was in this green book, another little document called *Managing Government Expenditures*, they discovered a section entitled "Ongoing reductions in non-salary operating budget". That is a convoluted way of saying cuts, cuts, cuts in the cultural sector.

For the communications and cultural sector they totalled $6.23 million just in 1992-93.

I would be pleased to give the breakdown if someone wishes to hear it for this particular sector. I do not wish to take my colleague's time unfairly.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I want to compliment my friend and colleague from Mount Royal on her not only factual presentation but very passionate and emotional appeal to the good senses of the government, if those senses still exist in some dark corner.

I have a two-part question. Would she care to finish her outline of the list she was unable to deposit before the members of this House? Second, she listed a long litany of cuts not only to very worth-while initiatives and projects but also to projects that have a minimal impact in terms of the $160 billion package that we are debating tonight, but an incalculable worth.

I am wondering if it is not more a question of ideology and public relations than of saving a few dollars to the public purse along the way.

Mrs. Finestone: Madam Speaker, I do believe it is a matter of ideology. Probably the reason I chose to be a Liberal was because we are not frozen in the ideological left that feels that the government should do everything and the state should be involved in everything or in the ideological right that says that the marketplace shall determine where everything goes and there is no role for government.

There is a role for government. If the government does not involve itself in good economic policy related to good sound social policy, we are not going to have a good society out there.

If we have a destabilized have-not community that is suffering from poor social policy we will never have a decent economic environment in which to grow and prosper.

The economic and social policies are very closely interlinked, and I thank the member for the opportunity to bring that to the attention of my constituency.

In conclusion, I would like to list the litany of cuts which will be increasing over the next five years. Before I do that, I would like to quote the words of Vincent Massey. I would like to quote him for my colleagues across the floor, all of whom are pretty decent human beings who are feeling pretty rotten about having to go out there and face their electors this summer. In 1924 he said:

> The economist can, of course, give us the facts. That is his job. He is a good cartographer, but a bad pilot. There were plenty of crises in the nineteenth century, when cold-blooded economic fact would have been the end of us if there had not been some vision to interpret it.

The vision to interpret, so that we can have a country that is meaningful from a cultural perspective and can be identified on the world's map, is cut when the Department of Communications is losing $1.8 million; Canada Council, $230,000—it is death by attrition; CBC, $400,000; Telefilm, $210,000; CRTC, $290,000; National Archives, $590,000—that is a disgrace; National Arts Centre, $150,000; National Film Board, $470,000; National Library, $550,000; National Gallery, $530,000; Museums of Science and Technology, $210,000; Canadian Museum of Nature, $260,000; Canadian Museum of Civilization, $540,000.

There are additional figures I would have been happy to give. If we want a country that is sovereign, that has cultural identity, that differentiates itself from the world marketplace, that has a reason for existence, then arts and culture and the role this creative intellect brings to our society are fundamental. We better start putting it first. It is a very important economic lever as well as a cultural expression of our people. It is the heart, soul and mind. It expresses who we are and why we exist.

We have problems as a nation. There are differences linguistically and differences culturally. We have the strength of Canada and its diversity. That is the unity of Canada. That diversity is expressed culturally in a variety of ways. It is the food we eat. It is the films we see. It is the way we entertain ourselves. It is the way we play. It is the way we have fun.

I ask members to come to Montreal and I will show them a city that is as culturally diverse as any city in this country. Its people know how to have fun and play together as neighbours, whatever the language. In my riding they speak 36 languages, besides the official English and French. They are proud to speak both.

[*Translation*]

It is a pleasure to live in Quebec and in Montreal. Come and participate. Let us keep this country and prosper together.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I am going to try to pick up where my colleague left off in a brilliant and articulate way.

We are discussing tonight a package of estimates, a package of financial expenditures by the national government that total $160 billion for the current fiscal year 1992-93. Those are big numbers for most Canadians. It becomes difficult to understand how large a pool of financial capital that really is when we begin to think of our finances back home.

The Constitution is clearly on the national agenda. Canadians from coast to coast to coast want that national unity dossier closed and closed successfully. At the same time people are constitutionally fatigued in part because it is a natural phenomenon that they feel it has become too much of a national pastime to discuss our Constitution. More important, they are fatigued out of a sense of frustration that the leadership at all levels, but starting here in Parliament in Ottawa, has not focused on the state of our economy to the degree they would expect.

Some of them are looking at their television sets this evening. They are probably in their living rooms thinking and asking themselves how much of this $160 billion expenditure package is being utilized to help the country get itself out of this economic malaise that unfortunately has gripped this nation for far too long. The average resident in my riding of York West wants to know the bang economically that we are getting from their bucks.

I was reading the result of a poll that compared a poll by the same pollster in 1982, 10 years ago, which essentially asked Canadians: "How hopeful are you for the Canadian future? How hopeful are you for your own family? What is the satisfaction level that you feel in terms of your place in the Canadian society?"

• (1950)

It was quite telling to notice how much those levels have dropped dramatically since 1982 in terms of their own personal hope and the hope they attach to the country. I do not wish to be negative for the sake of being negative or to be negative because we happen to be temporarily on this side of House. I refer to those statistics because they are basically cemented to the economics of the day. Many Canadians are disillusioned.

Many Canadians are indifferent. Many Canadians are hopeless in terms of their economic livelihoods.

When we talk about $160 billion, the person who is unemployed in my riding cannot help but think why we could not utilize some more of those moneys in terms of stimulating the economy and stimulating economic growth and with that growth jobs. What is so wrong with the logical feeling one gets when one looks at $160 billion?

What about individuals who are looking for some retraining but are told by employment offices across the land that the training funds have all dried up? Then they watch their television sets to forget about the real world and they see government advertising. About what? About its great training programs.

What about individuals who want to learn a job, a trade? Why can we not be like other modern countries and put in place effective apprenticeship programs? We would be saying that they do not need a university degree to be a somebody, that a university degree is as good as a plumbing certificate, a carpentry certificate, or a tool and die making certificate.

What about the transition programs that this government promised after having signed the free trade agreement with the United States? Those programs are needed when workers become displaced because of the free trade agreement. The agreement went through. People were displaced. But we are still waiting for those transition programs.

In a study done by the Montreal Board of Trade of my province of Ontario, the manufacturing capital of this country, some 400,000 jobs were lost. Most of them were in the province of Ontario. In my own metropolitan city of Toronto 8,000 firms have closed their doors with a direct loss of 63,000 jobs. Another 33,000 jobs were lost because of industry and companies beginning to size down.

We have a situation that is serious. It did not accrue somehow last week and we are complaining about it this week. The government says: "Give us a chance. Let's analyse it. Let's go back to the drawing board". This recession, this malaise, has been in some regions of this country more than others for a very long time.

It is frustrating to be a member of Parliament in the opposition. We are not sure where a parliamentary majority starts and finishes or where a parliamentary dictatorship starts and finishes in terms of trying to bring to the equation a number of variables that we feel are important.

Maybe there is something to aspirations of Canadians who hope for a minority Parliament or a minority government the next time around because it is the most accountable government Canadians have come to know. Nothing is a better lesson than the last eight years.

We talk about $160 billion of expenditures by the national government. It seems to me almost ironic that we are debating this tonight. Yet day and after day we have a government that continues to tell us in the opposition on behalf of Canadians that it cannot afford to stimulate the economy, that it cannot afford to have increased training, that it cannot afford to have transition programs, that it cannot afford to do apprenticeship programs and that it cannot afford child care, all under the pretext of the deficit. We are not preaching fiscal irresponsibility, nor is any Canadian advocating that we be fiscally irresponsible. But as my colleague said previously, there is a role for a national government to play. There is also a role for national governments to play in the economy. It would seem logical to me that some stimulus, some incentives are an investment in the future, that they would bear some fruit. We spend $30 billion a year to keep people on unemployment insurance and when they are finished their unemployment insurance we tell them to collect welfare, and they collect another $12,000 on welfare.

Canadians want to work. Canadians want to regain their dignity. Canadians want to be productive. Canadians want to be part of building Canada. They do not want to be part of the soap opera crowd that stays at home watching television, then goes down to their local unemployment office to collect a cheque. There is no dignity in that. There is no satisfaction in that and there is no satisfaction for those who are fortunate enough to be working and also paying for those services.

I will wind up my 10 minute remarks by saying that we are voting tonight on expenditures of $160 billion. Clearly there was room in this national government budget to help Canadians go back to work and to help Canadians help themselves. By helping themselves they

will help the country. If they feel better and feel more dignified, that poll in 1992 that showed a dismal drop in attitudes would be changed and changed for the better.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I want to first of all thank my colleague. He took a very reasoned and rational approach to an incredibly large amount of money and indicated that when you are spending $160 billion, there is certainly room to do something constructive and helpful to move this country out of its doldrums and move the population, who are feeling so badly about being out of work. I have forgotten what the figure was for people out of work, and I am going to ask my colleague if he could refresh our memory as to what is happening out there in terms of unemployment.

More particularly, I know my colleague is a man who has good ideas. He talked about all the things that could be done and the feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. I wonder if he could address some of the good ideas this party has put forward that could effectively create jobs and meet the aspirations of the unemployed that he was talking about.

Mr. Marchi: Madam Speaker, I would be happy to respond to my colleague's question.

One of those classic examples that comes to mind is one that has been proposed by our leader as recently as last week when he addressed the Conference of Mayors and Municipalities in Montreal concerning the idea of trying to get the federal government to support an infrastructure program, a program that would see the three levels of government participating in the restructuring, rebuilding and renewing of our inner and outer cities.

Again, it is a question of common sense and logic. You know as well as I do, Madam Speaker, whether it is Montreal or Toronto or Vancouver or Hamilton or North Bay or Sudbury, those cities and towns constantly need upgrading. Whether it is a question of doing it sooner or later, it would be advantageous for unemployed Canadians if we moved those projects up.

• (2000)

I used to be in municipal government in the city of North York and know of what I speak. There used to be a large number of projects on our shelves that we, as a municipality, were unable to afford a dollar on the dollar. We were only able to put up 30 cents, 33 cents, or 45 cents on the dollar in terms of initiating those projects. The remaining moneys for that $1 would have to come from the other two senior levels of government.

So there is a role for this government to play in actually kick-starting those projects. They could be taken off the shelf so that we could at least put carpenters, bricklayers, electricians, and the other trades back to work, which would then have an impact on the other services. There would be a sense of momentum, of movement, and some confidence would be rekindled in the economy.

Clearly one idea we have advanced is a national restructuring program with our cities and municipalities. We have asked for not great sums, certainly not as much as the refitting of the new helicopters would require, some $4.3 billion.

I am not suggesting our navy or our Armed Forces do not need upgrading but there are a number of different opinions concerning the dollar figure that is being attached to that $4.3 billion helicopter purchase and that it clearly could be scaled down.

My point is the government was very quick to approve those moneys and yet it was equally quick and easy for this government to dismiss other such ideas as not being in keeping with the financial plans of this government.

Some of the greatest frustrations for Canadians is that no one is listening to the ideas they have advanced. The idea for a restructuring program in our inner cities is not necessarily only coming from this side of the House and the opposition leader, it is coming from municipalities, from local elected officials, from provincial officials. The idea is being supported on the street level by those Canadians who dearly want to go back to work, including my own city of metropolitan Toronto.

There now seems to be more construction in Ottawa. We have the unbelievable situation of Toronto contractors coming to bid on jobs in Ottawa when two, three or four years ago that was absolutely an unthinkable solution but it is here and unfortunately we have to deal with it.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, there is a story going around about two tourists on safari in Africa. They were admiring the wonders of the grassy plains when suddenly they were charged by a huge lion. There was no place to hide and their vehicle was too far away to take refuge. One tourist stared in amazement as the second man bent down to tie up his shoelace. "You cannot possibly outrun that lion", he exclaimed. "No", replied the first man as he broke

into a fast trot. "I do not have to outrun the lion. All I have to do is outrun you".

Canada's future industrial strength depends on our ability and the ability of Canadian businesses to outrun the competition world-wide.

I am privileged to speak in the House today about a number of accomplishments in support of Canada's international competitiveness as promoted by the government's flagship economic department, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology Canada or ISTC as it is known.

Recognizing the link between science, technology, and industrial development, in February 1990 this government set up the Department of Industry, Science and Technology Canada specifically to promote international competitiveness and excellence in these areas.

ISTC works in co-operation with other government departments and agencies, with business and the academic community, to develop a wide range of programs and services to help Canada improve its international competitiveness.

Since its inception, ISTC has played a key role in developing the national Prosperity Initiative. The Prosperity Initiative recognizes five key areas where Canada must improve its competitiveness if we are to sustain long-term prosperity in this country.

I would like to repeat these five areas just for the record. They are learning, research and development, investment, our internal Canadian domestic market and our ability to export.

Let us consider the concept of the learning society put forward by this government in the last Speech from the Throne. We are only too aware of the unhappy statistics about high school drop-out rates in Canada. We know that about 85 per cent of the technology we will use in the year 2000 was not even invented in 1990. In this world of rapidly changing technologies, we must encourage our children to pursue studies in mathematics, sciences, engineering and related disciplines.

We realize too that learning is a lifelong process which must continue on the job as well as in the schools. ISTC has a number of programs aimed at supporting and promoting the scientific education and training of young Canadians. For example, the Canada Scholarships Program provides undergraduate students with $2,000 a year for up to four years of study in the natural sciences, engineering and related disciplines.

In 1991 there were 6,000 students benefiting from these scholarships in Canada. I would like to add that about half of the Canada Scholarships are awarded to female students. The program has recently expanded to provide scholarships for technologists and technicians.

This program is helping to ensure that Canada has a pool of technically skilled and highly qualified persons in fields critical to our industrial and technological competitiveness.

The department also leads a national public awareness campaign on science and technology aimed at Canadian youth to encourage them to place more value on, and to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology. ISTC also funds a program called Science Culture Canada which aims to develop a better public understanding of science and technology, especially among young Canadians.

National organizations and specific projects such as science fairs, exhibits, books, videos and lectures are sponsored throughout this program and such activities help to make science and technology less arcane, more accessible and more relevant to people in their daily lives.

Closely linked to the concept of a learning society is research and development. With the rapid evolution of technology, facilities are now in place to permit the almost instantaneous transmission of information and ideas. In these circumstances it is critical that our research and development performance keep stride with the pace being set by our world competitors.

Our record in this country is mixed. In high tech sectors such as electronics, aerospace and computers our research and development spending is ahead of the averages of most of the OECD countries. Yet only four Canadian manufacturing companies in 100 are doing any research at all and the top 10 companies account for almost 40 per cent of our research and development spending.

ISTC actively supports partnerships between government, industry and the research community to promote research and development and the application of new technologies.

Through the networks of Centres of Excellence, 35 universities, 37 major industrial bodies and over 500 of the top researchers in this country are working together in co-ordinated multi-year research projects in areas like biotechnology, disease control, industrial materials and processes, information technologies and atmospheric research.

Studies in Europe and the United States have shown that roughly half of business productivity gains can be directly attributed to technology improvements. But the best technology in the world is useless if you do not know you need it or you do not know where to find it or you do not know how to use it.

Real progress lies in the building of alliances and partnerships, in the sharing of ideas, information and resources and in the effective transfer and application of new technologies. In order to maintain Canada's position as a leading economic nation, we must strengthen existing partnerships and we must forge new ones.

For this reason, ISTC has initiated the Strategic Technologies Program to promote networks and alliances among the research community and government and industry. The program encourages the development and the diffusion of such technologies as biotechnology, microelectronics and advanced industrial materials. The program helps to provide a critical mass to Canada's research and development efforts to facilitate the gathering of scientific expertise, capital investment and market source development.

Our Advanced Manufacturing Technologies Application Program helps small and medium-sized enterprises to identify the technologies appropriate to their needs and to organize their production methods and train their employees so that the most effective use is made of these technologies.

• (2010)

Through the Technology Outreach Program we support technology centres that offer management and technical expertise, testing facilities, training, and intelligence to small and medium sized enterprises to help them develop new products and new processes.

ISTC is also active in promoting the principles and goals of Canada's green plan while at the same time recognizing sound business opportunities in the environmental sector. Our Environmental Technology Commercialization Program helps Canadian industry to commercialize environmentally friendly technologies both for the domestic market and abroad. Strong public and private sector spending in the environment over the past decade has created huge multibillion dollar markets in North America and Europe for firms that supply environmental goods and services to governments, businesses and households.

In 1990 Canadian production activity in this field was valued at nearly $10 billion. ISTC estimates the real annual expansion rate of the sector to be between 5 and 7 per cent. Programs such as these complement long-standing and successful programs like the Industrial Research Assistance Program of the National Research Council. This unique Canadian technology network consists of institutional partners and technical advisers who combine technical advice with access to financial and information resources. They deliver these services at the level of the individual firm.

These programs in support of research and development and technology transfers are vital to the continued prosperity of this country. We recognize that there is more to competitiveness than innovation and a highly qualified work force. We know that Canadian businesses must pursue a competitiveness agenda that includes human resource development, technological application, state of the art production methods and improved business management skills suited for the challenges of the nineties and beyond.

ISTC plays a vital role in working toward the improvement of the skills of business managers, including their understanding of technology and how best to use it.

A range of other services are available for small and medium-sized enterprises to increase their technological sophistication. For example, the Manufacturers Visitors Program sees Canadian firms open their doors to small and medium-sized businesses to show how they have successfully applied the principles of just-in-time inventories. Total quality management, empowerment of em-

ployees, and technology transfers are other assets of that kind of program.

It is precisely this sharing of ideas and experiences in the Canadian industrial context that will help to ensure Canada's continued competitiveness and prosperity as we move into the next century.

Through the annual Canada Awards for Business Excellence and the Strategies for Success initiative ISTC honours the companies and the individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to business excellence in Canada.

It is part of ISTC's mandate to provide Canadian businesses with information and services that will help them to hone their competitive edge. The department has set up 16 business service centres across the country. At these centres businesses can consult the Business Opportunities Sourcing System, a computerized data bank that offers profiles of over 26,000 Canadian companies.

Entrepreneurs can access thousands of licensing offers from around the world, or obtain information about government programs and about science and technology improvements, both domestic and foreign. Eleven of these business service centres are run jointly with External Affairs and International Trade Canada as international trade centres. Accessing the resources of over 100 Canadian missions overseas these centres are able to help provide firms with vital information to improve their export sales.

I mentioned earlier that one of the five key areas for our continued prosperity was our ability to export. I would like to speak for a moment or two about the importance of international trade. The fact is that Canada is a trading nation. This country was carved out of the wilderness by traders. Trade has kept food on our table and clothes on our backs for over three centuries. Trade has helped to build the high standard of living and the enviable social safety net that we enjoy in Canada today.

ISTC is committed to helping Canadian industries and businesses be competitive in the international marketplace. It is our objective to help develop and secure access to world markets for Canadian products and services. Working with industry we are assessing Canadian strengths and weaknesses in relation to world markets. We are developing strategies to position Canadian firms to compete more effectively.

There is no turning back from the reality of global competition. In today's world it is by stimulating initiative and the will to succeed that modern nations can achieve higher standards of living, greater security and continued prosperity for their people.

The department has launched a series of sector competitive initiatives in areas ranging from commercial education to micro-electronics, from forest products to the fashion industry, from advanced manufacturing technologies to the emerging environmental business. Working closely with industry, labour and other government departments, we are identifying issues, challenges and opportunities specific to each related sector and we are developing action plans to address them.

ISTC and International Trade Canada are working together to promote new market opportunities created by the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in areas such as consumer goods, food, textiles, clothing, footwear, consulting services, education and training services, and so on.

Confronted with the enormous challenges of our times we sometimes forget to acknowledge our achievements and concentrate only on the problems that remain to be solved. Therefore it is useful to take a good look from time to time at the solid hard work and accomplishments of a department in our Canadian government such as Industry, Science and Technology Canada. ISTC is in the business of promoting international competitiveness and excellence in Canadian industry.

Through programs and services such as those I have briefly mentioned tonight the department strives to co-operate with and promote the interests of the Canadian scientific, research and industry sectors.

The men and women of ISTC deserve commendation for their dedication, initiative and creativity in seeking and applying uniquely Canadian answers to the challenges of international competition.

Canada is a fortunate and wealthy country. It is no accident that the United Nations recently rated it as the best country in the world in which to live. We have problems and challenges ahead of us, but we also have the tools at hand to solve them.

I am pleased to have had this opportunity to share with this House some of the tools available in the Department of Industry, Science and Technology to help us in our pursuit of international competitiveness and prosperity. As I said at the beginning, the job is not to outrun the lion, the job is to outrun our competition. We are organizing Canada to do just that.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I listened to the Minister for International Trade trying to defend free trade. At least that is the way I heard it. It was very loud and very forceful. It reminded me of the line that my colleague from Edmonton East tells me comes from *Hamlet*: "Full of sound and fury signifying nothing".

It would seem that the government has determined that it is important at this stage in the life of Canada to try to sell the free trade idea to Canadians in the same way that it tried to sell it in the election campaign of 1988.

I did a lot of door-to-door canvassing in that election. I canvassed over 2,000 homes. The issue that was raised more often than everything else put together was that of free trade. It was not that the people I met were opposed to it and neither did they support it, they just did not know. They had the feeling that the government was holding back, that it was not telling them anything about free trade itself and was simply trying to persuade them that they had to accept it as an article of faith. It is like Castor Oil, have some because it is good for you. That was really what the government was trying to do the Canadian people.

In some areas of the country it worked. It did persuade people to swallow this article of good faith, to swallow this free trade deal with the U.S. and see how it would work out without ever really being persuaded to be in favour of it.

• (2020)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fontaine: Mr. Speaker, I found out about the subject of today's debate and I see no reference in it to the free trade agreement that has been so beneficial for Canadians and Canadian businesses.

I think that the agenda deals with an entirely different subject and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether members can on their own initiative change the program and comment on subjects that are unrelated to it. I would like you to give us your opinion on this, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is a precedent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est)): I would like to tell the hon. member for Lévis that I took what the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan said as part of his preamble and that he was just getting into his subject when you interrupted him.

[*English*]

Mr. Stupich: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who interrupted has probably forgotten that the architect of all of the economic problems of Canada right now is the person who spoke this afternoon, the person who is now the minister for free trade. He was the Minister of Finance. He was the Minister of Finance when the Conference Board of Canada said that the government "has induced the first made in Canada recession ever in the history of our country". We are still in that recession. The hon. member for Lévis might say that we are not in a recession any more, that we are in a depression now. Certainly things are very bad.

In spite of all of the assurances given by the now minister of trade, the former Minister of Finance, there is absolutely no sound evidence that we are getting out of it. Neither is there any sound evidence that the free trade deal is going to help us get out of our problems. On the contrary, there is a good deal of evidence to persuade me and a lot of Canadian people that it is the free trade deal that has created our problems. It is not just the free trade deal as far as we know it, but the parts that we have to guess about, the parts about which we have to speculate.

For example, a former minister of the Crown was the first minister to say that the Canadian dollar is so high because it was part of the free trade deal that Canada would agree to get the dollar high. If you want to make trouble in Canada, what is the first thing to do? Make our exports so high in price that nobody wants to buy them. Of course the high dollar does that.

What is the next thing to do? If you have cut off the foreign markets, then cut off the interior markets, cut off the internal markets. Don't give people who will spend it the money to buy consumer goods within our country. Of course, that is what they have done as well. The dollar was high and that pushed up the price of our exports and hurt our markets. Interest rates were very high and the government was taxing people to try to get the money to pay that interest. Of course, that was pushing up the

costs of living for the people in the lower income tax brackets.

The government from the time it was elected has been taking money away from the poorest and from the lower to middle-income people and giving it to those who are in the highest income brackets.

Let us take a look at the budget with which we are dealing right now. There is the GST, of course. Does the pittance where the lowest income tax people get a lower amount than those who are getting—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est)): Order, please. I would ask hon. members present to keep order, please, so that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan can continue his speech.

The hon. member again has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Stupich: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact that they are listening and that they are commenting. I suppose it hurts to have to listen to some of this. I can appreciate why they are trying to drown me out.

It is obvious that the government has been lightening the tax load for those at the highest income levels and increasing it for the ones at the low income levels. It has been doing that, there is no question about it.

In this particular budget when it comes to housing, what does it do? It said to the people who needed it most and could afford it the least "we are going to cut back on the funding for social housing, but we are going to increase the funding for those who have plenty of money. Families can put as much as $20,000, $40,000 of their RRSPs into housing".

The people who do not need that kind of help are getting it. The people who need it are being cut off. There is evidence. Make it higher and perhaps 28,000 would take advantage of it.

The point I am trying to make is that it is helping those who do not need help from the government who could have acquired homes, who could have built them without any government help, and saying to the ones at the bottom that they are not getting any government help. They need it so they do not deserve it. That is what it has been doing.

The ministers of the Crown have been quite open about this, quite honest about it. What they have argued is that if they leave more money in the hands or the pockets of the people who are most wealthy, perhaps they will invest it. They might invest it in Canada. They might invest it somewhere else, but they will invest it and it is good for people to have the wealthy ones investing.

If it is given to the poor, what are they going to do with it? They will spend it. That is wasting it. Let us take it away from the poor and give more of it to the high income people. That will be good. They will invest it.

What they are going to invest it in and who is going to buy the product they of course do not bother dealing with. They assume that is going to happen automatically.

In housing, they help the wealthy and they hurt the poorest. What about—

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Give them a break.

Mr. Stupich: The member says give them a break. Well, if he is one of the wealthy he has had the break and he has had it ever since the Tories were elected in 1984. He is still getting it. Heaven forbid that they get re-elected again but if they do, there is no doubt that they will get even more help at the expense of the ones in the low and middle income brackets.

What do they do with industry? Industry laps it up. They like it. But they made the help available to the manufacturing and processing industry by reducing the income tax. A reduction in income tax does nothing for you at all unless you are making a profit. It is only when you make a profit that you pay income tax, and often not even then.

Nevertheless they are helping the industries that are already successful and doing nothing for the thousands of industries, firms that have gone bankrupt and are still going bankrupt on a daily basis. There is nothing for them at all, simply help the ones who are already being successful and who do not need government handouts.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Capital cost allowance. He doesn't understand.

Mr. Stupich: Mr. Speaker, that is next on the list. Capital cost allowance, hastening the rate at which they can write off capital investments. It is another dodge. It is another way of handing to those who need it.

Unless you are going to pay income tax, you do not need to increase your CCA. You do not need a higher capital cost allowance unless you are in an income tax bracket already.

Sure it lowers an expense for those who do not need the help. That is the point I am trying to make. They are helping the ones who do not need the help and they are not helping, indeed they are hurting, the ones who do need the help. That is what is wrong with this budget and that is what has been wrong with every budget since the Tories were elected in 1984.

I can recall a federal member of Parliament decades ago, a CCF member who never lived long enough to become a New Democrat member. He used to argue then and he argued in the House of Commons: You want to improve the economy. We talked earlier about exports. The second feature is to put more money in the pockets of people who are going to spend it. If you did give more to the people at the bottom levels, they are not going to go on holidays. They are not going to invest it in an opportunity outside Canada. They are going to spend it here in Canada. They are going to put that money to work within our own country and put people to work by putting that money to work.

There are ways. The Minister of Finance who was clever enough to put us into the first made in Canada recession ever knew how he did it. He did it by keeping the dollar high and by having high interest rates that go together. He is trying to reverse it now but not quite enough. It is not the same person, but the same government. He does not have quite enough nerve to do it fast enough.

For a while they thought they made a mistake. They thought they were coming down too fast. They have been so frightened ever since at having made one small mistake that they are extremely cautious, cautious to the point that there really are no signs that we are recovering from the depression we are currently in.

In this budget the federal government also reduced the income tax. That is great. It was across the board, it helped everybody. Some of the people in the lowest brackets, the ones who are paying income tax, are ahead as much as $14 a year. There are others who are ahead $1,000 a year. If they turned it around and gave that $1,000 to the poorest and the $14 to the highest income people, it would have done some good.

• (2030)

The ones at the top do not need that extra money to spend. They are not going to spend it here anyway. They are already eating and drinking as much as they want. They are using the consumer goods to the extent they want. They can afford it. The people at the bottom are not. Even that income tax reduction was at the wrong level.

The government was very critical of some of the provinces for the problems they had. It cut back on the increase in transfer payments and led those provinces into the problems they now have.

An hon. member: He is not worth listening to.

Mr. Stupich: I do not know whether the hon. member has spoken in this debate.

An hon. member: Transfer payments are going up.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est)): I would ask the hon. member to always address his remarks to the Chair. I must also tell him that in a few minutes, during the period for questions and comments, he will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions and to comment. I give the floor to the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

[*English*]

Mr. Stupich: The member is listening but not quite sharply enough. What I said was not cutting back in transfer payments but cutting back at the rate transfer payments were increasing. There is a difference.

An hon. member: They do not know the difference.

Mr. Stupich: If he wants to listen to me and criticize or comment, then he has to listen a bit more carefully than he has been to this point.

The provinces have a problem, there is no question about it. They depend to a large extent on the transfer payments, the moneys they get from the federal government. All of the provinces get some and they all depend on it.

All of the provinces have public debt they have to pay. They have to pay interest on it. They have to try to get out of debt because debt to them is a way of financing current expenditures to some extent, and also capital expenditures. It is a very real thing. They all try to avoid it and get out of debt because interest to them is a cost.

It is different for the federal government. The federal government borrows money as well, of course, but it uses borrowing as a means of transferring more income to the wealthy from the low middle-income people and the low income people. The provinces have to pay it. The federal government simply collects it from one group and gives it to another. Only those at the top of the income level can buy significant amounts of Canada Savings Bonds or any of the other debt instruments the government uses. So there is that difference.

To the provinces debt is a real problem. To the federal government it is an opportunity for them to transfer more income into the pockets of those who need it least.

There was an item in the opening speech where the government talked about a national highway program. I thought it was coming to its senses and we were going to see something good in this coming budget.

The national highway program would do a couple of things. In the first place it would create a tremendous amount of job opportunity from one end of Canada to the other. It could be financed within Canada and would provide work in every province of Canada.

Those dollars being received by the people working on those projects would be spent in their own communities, in every province, from one end of Canada to the other. It would turn over time after time after time. It would generate a tremendous amount of economic activity.

Every time it turned over, the federal government would be there with its hand out getting its share of GST and income tax from those who were profitable working on that highway program. It would have been a tremendous income generator for the federal government. It would have been a tremendous income generator for hundreds of thousands of people in Canada who are unemployed. It would have given them some hope.

It would have done something else. Such a program would have helped tie Canada together from one ocean to the other, east to west. It would have helped eliminate some problems we have with north-south boundaries between provinces. It would have helped strengthen the east-west boundary between us and the U.S.

I have to ask myself why did nothing come of that? Why was it dropped? Who put it in there? Who wanted it in there? Opening speeches are contributed to by many people. The different cabinet ministers have an opportunity to say what they want. Somebody wanted the kind of program that would generate real economic activity in Canada and tie the people of Canada together from one end to the other. But somebody did not want it because there is not a word of it in the budget. Nothing. It is something that could have been so good.

Instead of that we have billion dollar programs for helicopters, for example. The only way we can put those helicopters to use is searching for submarines. The hon. member for North Island—Powell River suggested we buy the submarine navy from the Soviet Union or whatever country has it now and give them wheat in exchange. They desperately need wheat; they do not need the submarines. Then we would have some submarines to watch with our helicopters.

What are we going to do with those helicopters? They are not good for any other job except that. Billions of dollars are being wasted on projects like that when we could have had something that would have generated a lot of employment and economic activity. It would have been good for the economy here in Canada. It would have strengthened Canada from one end to the other. It would have strengthened that border. But we are not doing that.

This budget and the spending program announced by the Minister of Finance followed the regular Tory tradition that has been evident for the last eight years, since the Tories were elected in 1984. It continues to take money from the poorest and the low middle income people out of proportion to what it is taking from the highest income people. It continues to give new incentives and opportunities to those at the top of the pile to improve their position. It does nothing to get the economy going.

This housing program is going to run out pretty quickly. How many people in those categories need new homes? How many of them are really going to take their

money out of RRSPs to that extent and put it into new homes? Yes, there has been a flurry of activity as the member pointed out. How many more homes would have been built had the government been prepared to put that money into social housing in every province in Canada? That kind of program is needed from one end of this great country to the other. A national program like that could have helped tie Canada together.

There are a couple of things the government could have done. It could have done something to improve our economy and it desperately needs it. It could have done things to help pull Canada together and Canada desperately needs that. The government is following the agenda it came into office with in 1984. It has failed Canada for eight years. It is time to let someone else take over the reins of government, someone dedicated to the idea of building a real Canada. Canadians are proud of Canada now, but we could be even prouder. There is more we can do for ourselves and more that could be done. We could improve our economy. We could improve our country and make Canada a much better country in which to live.

I am proud of it now and pleased to be here. I am very happy to be a Canadian, but I am disappointed at what we have been able to do for ourselves with this Tory government that has been in office some eight years. Goodness knows just what bad news it is holding back to present us with later. I hope this government does not get re-elected whenever the next election is because Canadians cannot afford this kind of government much longer.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I think it has probably been a long time since this House has heard such a disjointed and convoluted bit of rhetoric. The member has talked about the inadequacies of the federal government's proposals. He suggested we spend money on social housing and creating jobs through public employment projects such as perhaps a national highway system. He has talked at length about ways the government should be spending more money, giving money to lower income people. He did not address where the money was coming from.

An hon. member: Yes, he did.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): He did not talk about the possibility of raising taxes for the bulk of Canadian taxpayers who really contribute the funds. He criticized reducing tax rates for small businesses without addressing the negative impact it would have on small business and job creation if we do not reduce tax levels.

• (2040)

He talked about the dangers of the debt and the deficit on a provincial basis. He spoke quite rightly about debt as being a disease that cripples and maims the abilities of governments to help people. On the federal level he talked about the deficit as being poor social policy because the existence of a deficit, necessarily by its very existence, is transferring wealth from the lower income people to the higher income people.

Do you know something, Madam Speaker? He is right. He is absolutely right because when we run a deficit the people who finance the deficit are generally those who have the ability to purchase Treasury bills, Government of Canada bonds and savings bonds. He is absolutely right. I agree with him.

When we run a deficit we are transferring money from all the single mothers, from all the elderly people and from all the disadvantaged taxpayers in this country. We are taking their tax dollars and putting them in a form of income in the bank accounts of the higher income earners. Is that not right? That is what he said.

The member showed a great deal of wisdom and insight in saying that. That is exactly why the mandate of the government has been to cut back spending, to reduce the deficit and to try to get a handle on this immoral flow of wealth from poor to rich. Surely if he sticks by his principles—and he is a man of the New Democratic Party people and constituency—he will have to support the government's financial and fiscal thrust.

I want to know what argument the member puts forward for attacking the government's agenda of trying to reduce our deficit financing and stop transferring money into the bank accounts of the higher income earners.

Mr. Stupich: Madam Speaker, I wish we had more time to go on with this and that the member would stay in the House. Perhaps he would learn something.

The member said I did not suggest where the funding would come from and that I criticized the government for having relieved the tax load on the high and upper middle income people by some $1.4 billion in this first year and by $2.5 billion in the second year, money that could have been used to create $25 million worth of economic activity. That is where the money would have come from: the giveaways to the wealthy. That is what I am suggesting.

Also $4.3 billion was spent for helicopters. The point I was trying to make is that we do not need those helicopters. There were $40 million on proposal costs dealing with the helicopters and $1 billion on low-level air defence against Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia does not exist any longer. This is $1 billion on a system that does not work. The government spent $250 million to purchase anti-tank guns. We will have to build the tanks first or buy them somewhere, or what are they going to shoot at? Will it be each other?

I tried to point out where the funding would come from. I am trying to say that the government is wasting money. We need not take all this money. Some of this money could go into the deficit. It could just take a portion of it and put $2.5 billion of it, one year's saving of income tax to the wealthy, into a national highway program year after year. That in itself would have a significant effect upon lowering the deficit by creating economic activity in Canada and by paying wages to people who would spend them here in Canada.

It is obvious. I hope the member now realizes the error of his ways.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I would like to make some comments about the estimates that we are going to vote on tonight. It is one of the most important votes we have in this Chamber. We are going to allocate approximately $160 billion to the government so that it can spend.

I remember when we took office as Conservatives in 1984 that the budget at that time was only $90 billion and the debt was only $180 billion. After so many years we are still running a huge deficit of $30 billion probably this year and next year, annually, and the accumulated debt is over $420 billion.

We are in a bind because a lot of the money we collect from the taxpayers has to go to servicing the debt. Naturally this does not allow us to move in the direction we would like to move and probably spend more money on infrastructure and other projects, especially in a time of recession.

I remember just a couple of months ago the Minister of Finance would not pronounce the *r* word, recession. He said: "We are not in recession. There is no problem. We are going to get on with economic activity". He did not realize—and a lot of the members on the government side did not realize it—that the economy was slowing down and that we were losing a lot of economic activity because of a free trade deal with the United States that had not been negotiated properly.

The people who negotiated the deal said that we would have an adjustment period for our industry, and so on and so forth. We have just to look at certain areas like the border towns of Cornwall and others that have lost almost all of their industry. Almost all their industry has moved to the United States.

It is quite understandable because in any situation where we have a free trade deal, we need parity as far as taxation is concerned, as far as the cost of money is concerned and as far as productivity is concerned. Otherwise we are at a loss. We cannot compete.

What happens is that people in business know. For instance, a factory situated in Mississauga where industrial land goes for $300,000 or $400,000 an acre can get the same land across the border in the United States, in Buffalo, for $30,000 or $20,000. The labour cost is lower. A lot of these companies move across the border to establish their economic activity in the United States.

All this has compounded the problem we are facing today. We are simply becoming suppliers now of raw materials for the United States and other parts of the world. As most of our trade goes to the United States, we are supplying the raw materials.

The Minister for International Trade has a special line now. He says: "We have much more exports to the United States". Naturally we might have more exports, but it is raw materials. It is not manufactured goods. This is the problem. Factories are being established in the United States. We export raw materials, and who benefits but them? I will conclude because my time it up.

Mr. Stupich: Madam Speaker, yes, it is true. The government has gone terribly into debt in the eight years it has been in office after promising quite a different approach.

We can recall that every year in at least the past four years the Minister of Finance has stood in this House and has predicted that year after next the deficit would be less than $30 billion. Each year it is the year after next. It is always the year after next. It is never next year or never this year. It is always in the future that it is going to be under $30 billion. He has not made it and he will not make it until he does something to get the economy going.

By spending a bit of money to get the economy going he will get the deficit down. We will be able to reduce not just the deficit but the debt itself.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to listen to the debate this evening. I do not think anyone on that side of the House, the opposition side of the House, has spoken in favour of a reduced tax burden when we think through what they have said. They are all in favour of increasing and expanding government services, that no deed should be left undone.

I raise that for a particular reason. *The Ottawa Citizen* and other newspapers across this country referred to what they call tax freedom day. The headline in *The Ottawa Citizen* read: "Tax Freedom Day. It took until June 10 to pay all taxes, report finds". That is what the report that is put out by the Fraser Institute tells us. Tax freedom day is the day when all Canadians theoretically free themselves from what they call pesky tax collectors. Obviously it varies from province to province. In Ontario they tell us it is June 13. In Prince Edward Island, I guess we can give P.E.I. credit, I think there is at least one Islander in here tonight, the date is actually May 10, so theirs comes earlier than in most provinces.

• (2050)

I make that point because the reality of governing is that when you have to deliver services, you have to pay the bills. That is the part that most of us have difficulty with when we listen to members from the other side of this House. They forget that at the end of the day the bills have to be paid.

I take delight in the words of the Liberal Party which governed this country or did form the government until 1984 when we replaced them. In 1984 when we took office, one of their top people and a former cabinet minister took great delight in bragging that they left the cupboard bare. In other words, the Liberal government left the cupboard bare. There is nothing there. There is no money there to use.

The government that replaced them, which was us, would have a difficult time governing simply because there was no money. They left the cupboard bare. Much to their astonishment we got re-elected in 1988. If things work out, however we never know what is going to happen in the next election, and if the economy begins to move forward and a few other things happen, I suppose we will have a fair kick at the can in 1992 or 1993 whenever the next election comes, although we never know when it is going to be.

The point is that when we took office in 1984, we inherited a debt of $200 billion. Even the members on the other side of the House do not argue with that number. They accept it as being a reasonable figure. Some might suggest that the figure was a little higher. Some will say that it was $240 billion and others will say it was a little more.

The point I want to make is if you put compound interest on that debt and work it through an eight year period, that is where we are today in this country, a little over $400 billion in debt. It is the compound interest on that debt. It was because they left the cupboard bare that we are in this financial mess. We are not trying to disguise that.

One thing I want to point out is that the only real measurement of the debt is in terms of the Gross Domestic Product. That is where I think we can take some pleasure from what we have done as a government. The economy under this government has expanded faster than any other economy in the world with the exception of Japan since 1984. I think we can take some pleasure in that.

We can also take some pleasure in the fact that in relation to Gross Domestic Product, our debt position has been halved. It is just half of what it was in 1984. We have made tremendous progress. In fact, if it were not for Tory policies, our debt would be much higher than it is today. They tell us that if we continued the spending habits of the former government, our combined debt in this country would be somewhere around a trillion dollars, up in the nine hundred and some odd billion figure. There are so many zeros on the end of that one you can hardly keep track of them.

Therefore, we have made tremendous progress. We are going to continue to make progress because we are exercising the kinds of restraints we have to exercise in order to take control. We have to take control of the economy, and we have. We are always compared to perfection. When you are governing, you are always compared to perfection. If you compare us to former governments and what they have done, I think we fare quite well. If you are comparing us to what a perfect world should be, maybe we a little bit in a sense fall short of the mark.

I am going to quote from Somerset Maugham. Somerset Maugham said: "Only the mediocre are always at their best".

An hon. member: We are almost perfect.

Mr. Thompson: We are almost perfect. That is right. We will accept that one. We are almost perfect.

Things are getting better. I think most Canadians realize that. I want to point out again a couple of statistics. These are not my words. They are not the government's words. I am quoting from the *Edmonton Sun*, of all places. The *Edmonton Sun* ran an editorial on June 2, 1992. I will quote some of the numbers that I think are worth repeating. They tell us that inflation has been at less than 2 per cent since January. Interest rates are continuing to fall, which obviously most of us know. In fact, if we compare where we are today with where we were 10 years ago, I do not think there is any question that we are in the right position in regard to interest rates.

I will use the date of August 6, 1981, a little over 10 years ago. Interest rates under the Liberal government at that time were 21.24 per cent. Today they are hovering just about at the 6 per cent range. I do not have to remind anyone what that does to you if you are in business, if you are carrying a mortgage or if you are going to take on more debt, whether it is a car loan or a business loan. It is just devastating.

I was in the business world at that time. I know what it does for the average citizen. It is something they cannot cope with. That is something that we have got firm control over, inflation and interest rates.

This article goes on. It says that this means that our own personal dollars go farther and buy more. Our pay cheques are not being quietly eroded and our mortgages and consumer loans are easier to pay. Further on in the same article it says that our dollar has dropped by 7 per cent since November, which makes it easier to sell our products to the U.S. and foreign markets.

Let us talk about the U.S. and let us talk about foreign markets. The point that we want to make is that exports right now to the U.S. are at an all-time high. I do not think there was a member on that side of the House today—I did not hear all of the debate, there may have been one sitting over in the corner—who mentioned that. Exports to the U.S. right now are at an all-time high, recognized by just about every economic think tank. Any student of economics recognizes that they are at an all-time high.

Where the opposition is having difficulty with some of our policies is they measure the unemployment rate in Canada against some of the policies of this government. They measure unemployment against the free trade agreement as an example. The previous speaker just mentioned that. The member suggested that any deal that we made was a bad deal or any agreement that we get into with the United States or any other country is always a bad deal because we are the loser.

That flies in the face of logic. The truth is the absolute facts indicate that we are doing very well, thank you, that we are competing like we have never competed before, much to the advantage of the citizens of this country. They focus on the unemployment number and merely that number and suggest that because that number is high, we are doing something wrong. They suggest that if that number is high we have lost jobs to the United States because of a series of trade arrangements we have had with other countries of the world, particularly the U.S.

• (2100)

I think what we have to do is focus on what is happening in the United States as compared to Canada.

In the United States right now there is a politician running around by the name of H. Ross Perot. Some are suggesting that he is going to unseat the incumbent President, Mr. Bush. H. Ross Perot is one of those who suggest that the United States gets the short end of

every trade agreement it has ever entered into, particularly the one with Canada. Up here we are suggesting just the opposite.

He is pointing out an extremely high unemployment rate in that country and says it exists for only one reason, because we got the better of them.

I guess time will tell whether we did or did not. The point is that it is always easy to look at that number, especially during a recessionary period, and blame it on the government of the day, the President of the day or the Prime Minister of the day.

The fact is that we are doing okay, and we are doing okay compared to our neighbour to the south. Those figures suggest to me that our numbers on a percentage basis are not much different than the United States.

One state I would like to examine in comparison to Canada is California. In terms of sheer size, the growth of the economy or the Gross Domestic Product of California's economy is somewhat similar to Canada's, and the population of the state of California is similar to that of Canada. We are a nation of approximately 27 million people and it has a population of approximately 30 million.

The opposition in this House accuses us of having lost 350,000 or 400,000 jobs because of the free trade agreement with the United States. What it does not realize is that the state of California, which has approximately the same number of people as the country of Canada, has lost 600,000 jobs in the last two years. That suggests to me that we are doing okay.

Let us take a look at the merchandise trade surplus. In the first quarter of this year it was up $3 billion, compared to a surplus of $7.4 billion for the entire year of 1991. We cannot help but see that is a very positive sign, it is a healthy trend developing.

They go into our exports and tell us that in the first three months of 1992 we are up a record 6.7 per cent. Our manufacturing output is up around 2.5 per cent.

Those trends are continuing and they are going to continue because we do have the fundamentals right. That is something that not one of them on the other side will argue, if they really want to argue in real terms about the definition of a healthy economy. They cannot argue that because they know that we are absolutely on the right track.

Not too long ago they attempted to argue that our position was being threatened by a high Canadian dollar. However that high Canadian dollar—although it has slid back a little, not a lot, and I mentioned the 7 per cent figure since December—forced us to become more efficient, to become better at what we do. In some cases it meant streamlining and in some cases it meant investing in new equipment. In some cases it meant dealing with fewer employees to compete with the rest of the world.

We have gone through some of those structural changes. In my own constituency I can point to businesses, in some cases major businesses such as pulp and paper companies, that had to go through that experience. They invested in new equipment and they had to scale down the number of employees within their plant in order to compete. That is very difficult for a company to do and it is very painful. It is something that none of us could actually stand up and support because it means that at the end of the day there is a family member, a friend or acquaintance who has lost a job because of this restructuring or streamlining within a particular business.

There are businesses back in my constituency that have done that and have survived the very tough last couple of years. They bit the bullet when they had to, although not too many of us were happy with them for having done it at the time.

Their productivity since that time has increased. They are actually increasing their output and decreasing the number of employees. They have done the streamlining necessary to compete in the 1990s and into the turn of the century.

There is a very high human cost to do that, none of us denies that. However, it is something that every country in the world is going through. I think we have gone through it sooner than some of the others and that is one of the reasons that the export capacity numbers are increasing.

If we examined those numbers most of us would find them most impressive. For example, last year we exported $12 billion in farm and fish products, $15 billion in energy materials, $19 billion in forestry products, $6 billion in aircraft parts, $32 billion in motor vehicles and parts, $7 billion in chemicals and fertilizers, $4 billion in office machines and equipment, and $4 billion in industrial machinery.

The numbers speak for themselves. We have experienced those difficulties. We have experienced a high Canadian dollar and we have suffered through it. At the end of the day our businesses and industries are going to be in a stronger position leading into the next few years. That is not to say that we will not go through this restructuring again because we will.

Back home in my riding and in every riding represented in this Chamber businesses have gone through that and will continue to go through it.

The finance minister often says that in time when we look back at what has happened in the last few months and the last couple of years it will probably be compared to the industrial revolution because some of the changes in our society are very much in line with what happened back then. There are some very quick and fundamental changes. There are structural changes that are very difficult. Truly at the end of the day they are going to pay dividends.

I think that what we have done will prove to have been the right thing. If we examine the numbers concerning inflation, foreign investment, and our export capacity they are very much in our favour. That is simply because we have done the correct things. We made tough decisions. I really think that at the end of the day they will pay dividends for all of us.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member for Carleton—Charlotte and I heard him say several times that we are doing okay. Quite frankly, I think that the economy of this country is heading in the right direction.

I agree with the member, and I have said this repeatedly in this House, that our interest rates are at an all-time low, certainly a low for the last 20 years. There is no inflation.

• (2110)

He cannot argue with me that there is not a lack of confidence. There is a lack of confidence in the market today. Despite these low interest rates and the zero inflation, we need something to get the entrepreneurial spirit of this country going again.

An hon. member: Spend money.

Mr. Mills: The minister responsible for the Treasury Board says: "Have people spend money". Did I hear that correctly? I agree with him but we are going to have to send some stronger signals out than just the inflation rate and the interest rates.

The financial institutions in this country are not supporting these lower interest rates and the low inflation. It is still very tough for small and medium-sized businesses to get credit for risk taking or credit for expanding their businesses. I know the Minister for International Trade does not agree with me on this.

The banking institutions in this country are like a cartel. Let us face it, they all move together. I met with some bankers last week from the Canadian Bankers Association on this particular issue. I will not name any names but they basically said to me: "We like making small business loans but we are not in the business of high risk". Any investment is a risk of sorts and certainly it is with most small and medium-sized businesses.

There is room for the government to use its leverage, its muscle. It can give all of the speeches its members give in this House of Commons to the people of Canada to try and motivate the banking and financial institutions to be a little bit more aggressive in making loans to small and medium-sized businesses.

I want to make one final point to the member. He can stand here today and say that we are doing okay. There are a lot of people in this country today who are doing okay. Never expect members on this side of the House to forget the people in this country who are not doing okay. There are a lot of people right now who are not enjoying the results of this low interest rate and this low inflation. I am speaking specifically about the unemployed. Do not expect us for a minute to stop reminding the government that we have to get these people back to work.

I wonder if I could have the member's reaction to those statements.

Mr. Thompson: Madam Speaker, I guess there is always room to agree and disagree, but I do agree with much of what the member had to say. I do not think it is simplifying it in a sense what I said. We are doing okay, but again I do not think we can say we are perfect and we are doing enough.

I do not know what an acceptable unemployment number is, but whatever it is it is always too high obviously. I do not think we can lay back and say we have done enough and that everything is bright and beautiful because it is not. There are a lot of people hurting out there. There are a lot of people hurting in my own neighbourhood and I know that. The indicators are out there.

Again, he mentioned that we cannot take total salvation in the interest rates. We cannot take total salvation in the inflation rate. I agree totally with that as well. They are positive signs that things can happen and they are happening. Again, when there is a job lost it is so much harder to bring that job back, is it not? Losing 10 jobs, it seems they can go like that but it is a lot harder to bring them back. It is more difficult and that is why the fundamentals have to be there.

Regarding the banking institutions, I could not agree with him more. Maybe it is time we all went on a bank bashing rampage in this House because Canadian banks are ultra-conservative. I think the Canadian banks have a great deal to be ashamed of.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Loosen the purse strings.

Mr. Thompson: What were their profits last year, $6 billion?

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Record profits.

Mr. Thompson: Record high profits last year.

An hon. member: And they paid tax last year because our government put on the tax.

Mr. Thompson: I agree.

An hon. member: That is a good point.

Mr. Thompson: This is fun when we get a little dialogue back and forth here.

I agree the banks had record profits. We did possibly collect record taxes from them and maybe we can take some comfort from that but the truth is their profits were extraordinarily high during a period when businesses were in extraordinary pain. When that happens I think there is something wrong.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): And where do they get their money?

Mr. Thompson: Where do they get their money? We know where they get their money.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Where do they gamble it?

Mr. Thompson: Where do they gamble it? Tell me.

An hon. member: Olympia & York.

Mr. Thompson: Well there you go. But it is shoving out the little businesses isn't it? It is a five-way debate now. I think it is important that this point is raised.

Last weekend the finance minister was in my part of the country and we had a little economic symposium set up. I was pretty fortunate and we had a great time last Saturday. One of the questions asked at the symposium was exactly the same question asked here by the member for Broadview—Greenwood and that is the record high bank profits. They also asked about the record high foreclosures or business failures in the last couple of years.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): What about credit card rates?

Mr. Thompson: And credit card rates extremely high.

One of the things the minister pointed out, and I will point it out to the nation, is that if you have specific cases where you feel a bank is unfairly treating a particular business or not taking a real solid look at the expansion of the business, bring them to the attention of the minister, or bring them to the attention of any member in this House. I think that is what we have to do because we cannot argue in generalities because any time I try to do that I get in trouble.

When we are on our hind legs speaking in the House we tend to get in trouble when we talk generalities. But it is incumbent upon everyone out there listening to speak out. If they know of particular instances where they believe the banks did not treat them as fairly as they should have or did not take them seriously, it should be brought to our attention.

Mr. Boyer: Tell Maz.

Mr. Thompson: Tell Maz. We do. I think we had better go after the banks. Every member of Parliament should be concerned about that whether they are on that side of the House or on this side of the House.

Now I know I have angered my bank manager friends back home but they just have a job, they do not write the rules.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to wade into this interesting debate on the subject of the government's estimates for the 1992–93 fiscal year.

The exercise sounds simple enough. We are basically debating and voting on an appropriation of $34.9 billion. That is probably the largest block of money that Parliament has authorized and it is doing it in a year of recession and a year of difficulty in our economy.

The total appropriation is actually $48.9 billion but interim supply provided the other funds. I find it remarkable to think that this amount of money is being appropriated here tonight when I know how little scrutiny that spending has had in the House of Commons and in the committees. I think that is an unfortunate thing. The rules that exist have evolved over decades and centuries. I can say quite honestly the vote that will approve the spending of $48.9 billion minus the interim, has barely even seen the light of day by the public.

• (2120)

In the Solicitor General's area where I work in the House of Commons, large sums of money are involved. Canadians know it takes a lot of money to run and operate various levels of government. There is one in particular I want to note because it has received no scrutiny. Most members will say: "Well, it is in the estimates somewhere. You have the Part III of the Estimates document". My answer to that is sadly, it is not. That agency is called the Communications Security Establishment. We actually do not know how much money it spends because the figure is buried and for reasons peculiar to government in the area of national security, we are not told. The guesstimate is the amount is $250 million, but we do not know and we do not know what they spend it on. That is just not right.

I am putting on the record the fact it is happening. I will be required to vote tonight and my party will probably take the usual opposition stance in relation to an appropriation bill like this. I want it known members opposite are approving an expenditure guessed at $250 million and they do not know where $1 of it is going. That is not what this procedure was meant to do.

I know members opposite did not create the procedure. I am trying to say the system needs reform in a major way. The rules of the House provide the estimates, as presented in this House and passed through committees, are deemed to be adopted this past May 31. Even the rules say: "What the heck", if you do not have an opportunity to review the details of the expenditure or have the opportunity to ask the questions. If the government-appointed chair of your committee has decided the committee just is not able to sit and does not call a meeting, then I guess the questions do not get asked.

I should say I am not advised of any case where a committee has been prevented from doing its work. I am sure all committees have made some effort.

Sadly, I heard someone say the hours and effort spent by members in reviewing estimates this year was approximately one third the hours spent the previous year. I do not think we are losing interest, but it does indicate the system simply is not working.

There is no real accountability of the government to Parliament and through Parliament to its electors. There is at election time, but on a day to day basis, on a fiscal year basis, on an estimates basis there simply is not. There is nothing at risk. A majority government knows in every case the appropriation will be approved and questions will not be asked.

Today at liaison committee, the Auditor General appeared and made some very constructive comments about how the process could be improved. I do not know where that will go, but members seem to be quite interested in that.

In comparison, our U.S. friends have an appropriation system where committees of their houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives, actually approve every item of expenditure. If it is not approved in committee vote by vote, the money is not spent and it is not approved. That is not the case here. We get one vote tonight and that is all. The tone of the debate here today and in previous debates has been fairly general. I cannot help but note that a lot of the discussion of the previous member had to do with how well the government is doing with the economy. Precious little was said about the real issue in the debate; that is, the expenditure of the $48.9 billion. That is a sad thing. I have been here for part of the day and opposition members are doing the same thing. I want to try to focus to that precise issue, the actual estimates procedure.

This is not just a ritual that we are going through. We are spending our taxpayers' dollars, that big number that I just mentioned. I am not going to repeat it.

Nowhere in the system is there now a method of looking at cost efficacy, of looking at the value for money spent. It just is not there. The resources are not there. The Auditor General mentioned it today and members at the committee I just mentioned discussed it and we are looking for ways. I do not know if we will succeed in quickly finding a solution.

I thought I would mention a series of thoughts that were generated in the 1988 election campaign. I had written some of them down. They are not all my own. It occurred to me and others at the time that what was needed was some mechanism like the mechanism provided by the Auditor General for Parliament in overseeing the public accounts. Perhaps a branch of the Auditor General's function would actually do management or efficacy audits and do it, not on a comprehensive basis because government is really too large.

There was some thought of creating within the Auditor General's office an efficacy audit function and suggestions that it be staffed by individuals seconded from the private sector on two-year contracts—it probably takes a half a year to learn what Ottawa is all about—and staff it with 25 or 30 individuals who deal with large numbers and management efficacy issues in the private sector. They would be seconded.

They would have two-year contracts or at least term contracts. They would target a particular ministry and monitor it for a period of time and provide at the end a report to Parliament dealing with the very issue of efficacy of management audit or value for money, not whether the government's policy direction was necessarily right or wrong, but whether or not the objectives achieved by the ministry were valuable in relation to the amount of money spent.

I think that Parliament ought to be looking at exactly a mechanism like that.

I want to close my remarks by commending to the House and to my colleagues here the search for improved mechanisms of accountability for government spending.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I certainly listened with interest to the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River and as he said, there is no mechanism to verify the estimates. They go to the committees and the committees are controlled by the government and the votes are simply a formality. Here tonight we are going to vote on the whole and there is no mechanism to know where the money is being spent and whether it is efficiently spent or not.

It was interesting to listen to him when he mentioned the United States. He says at least there they have a mechanism where each item is reviewed by both houses, their Congress and Senate, so that there is much more responsibility on how money is spent.

We are taken for granted here. The government has its majority. It brings in the estimates and the money is spent. Even so, we listen to a lot about how we have a huge deficit and how the previous member, the member for Carleton—Charlotte, said we have taken control of our economy. He said we took control of the economy. I wonder how we can take control of the economy if we run a deficit of $30 billion, if unemployment figures across the country vary from 11 per cent to 22 and 25 per cent in certain areas.

• (2130)

We have a huge unemployment rate. If we are not counting the people who are not on unemployment insurance but are already on welfare, it becomes an extremely high percentage of the population. We certainly have not taken control of the economy. We are really in a depression right now, and not even a recession.

The question arises: how can we change that situation? We can change it simply by having, as some members on this side of the House have suggested in the past, some capital spending on the part of the government. We stimulate the economy when it is on a downturn and we let it go when the economy is prosperous as it was in the past.

From 1984 the Conservatives had a real mandate to try to control the economy and to bring the deficit down. They have not done that and the member opposite knows it very well.

Mr. O'Kurley: Did it work in the province of Ontario to stimulate the economy?

Mr. Kindy: Some member is talking about stimulating the economy in the province of Ontario, if I hear him right. Naturally the economy in Ontario has suffered, mostly through the free trade agreement. This free trade agreement has been brought in by the Conservative government without enough studies. This is why right now we are not in a recession but in a depression.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member would certainly allow one-minute rebuttal from the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has quite fairly made reference to the remarks by the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte.

He focused on good news. There is the odd piece of good news out there, but the fact is that the government pursued an economic policy over the last year or two of high interest rates in an attempt to bring inflation down. There was a free trade adjustment going on, plus a global restructuring in a number of areas industrially, and it has basically brought this economy to its knees. Part of that recession was government induced. The existence of a large government debt did not help and our economic circumstances are really not too good.

The hon. member was not misleading when he gave his facts, but he is certainly showing an awful lot of blue sky when Canadians are seeing it as otherwise. We are looking for reality and accuracy in these debates.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Two members were splitting a 20-minute period. We have just finished a five-minute period of questions and comments.

I will recognize for the second 10-minute period the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I am actually quite disturbed by the bill we are voting on tonight. We are talking about almost $50 billion of taxpayers' money when we include the both packages we will be approving or voting on tonight. That is an awful lot of money to be making a decision on. The member for Scarborough—Rouge River made a very good point which was that we probably should have a much longer debate on this with much more ability to be specific about where this $50 billion is going. I do not know if a $1 billion expenditure could be put through this quickly in a board meeting of a major corporation. We are talking here of almost $50 billion of taxpayers' money.

How do you address all of this appropriation in less than 10 minutes? It covers everything from the Department of Agriculture to Enterprise Cape Breton, the communications—

Mr. Boyer: Speak of something specific.

Mr. Mills: The member says: "Speak of something specific". The specific thing I want to refer to is the fact that the process of spending $50 billion worth of taxpayers' money in one day is a little too quick. There should be a much longer debate on this with more specifics especially when people out there are having difficulty right now. They are saying: "When you are spending almost $50 billion, isn't there some way you can find in that lump sum of $50 billion a little bit more money for training?"

Right now in the city of Toronto people wanting to be retrained cannot find places to be retrained because we have apparently run out of money. It does not matter what part of the city it is. You can go to Centennial College, Seneca College, Humber College, George Brown College, there is no more training money left and here we are approving $50 billion.

If we were addressing the most serious problem that is facing our economy today in a more direct and radical way, and I am talking about the fact that there is close to two million people unemployed out there right now, then I might feel a little bit more confident.

Mr. Boyer: The amount of money in this year's budget is bigger than last year's budget.

Mr. Mills: The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore says that there is more money in this budget or in this appropriation for training than there was the last time.

An hon. member: Where is it?

Mr. Mills: It is still not enough. We heard the member from Carleton—Charlotte talk earlier about how well the economy is doing with the zero inflation rate and the low interest rates. The government has room to put a little bit more money into training. It has room to put money into some capital projects to get people back to work.

At what point do you loosen up? Canadian taxpayers, and we are all representing Canadian taxpayers here, are being asked to give the government $50 billion. This is at the same time as there are low interest rates and low inflation. At the same time government has no money for retraining and people cannot find opportunities to be retrained. There seems to be a lack of confidence in the

market and therefore we are stuck and we have very high unemployment.

If government knew it could not get approval of this $50 billion unless it found $2 billion or $3 billion for capital projects, I bet that money would be found pretty quickly. It would find it fast. That is the point I am trying to make. It has all the leverage on that side of the House. What we are trying to do is appeal on behalf of the two million unemployed that in this approval of $50 billion you are getting of Canadian taxpayers' money, find $2 billion or $3 billion to put people back to work or to prop up the retraining fund.

• (2140)

I know there is absolutely no room in this economy for any tax increases. If anyone had mentioned today the idea of a tax increase in this economy, I think they would be shot on the spot and no one would even care. We are not talking tax increases here.

I do think there are enough assets, good will, skilled labour, and talent in this country that we can afford another couple of billion dollars on the deficit to put people back to work.

I am not treating that lightly. We spent $35 billion last year on welfare payments and unemployment insurance. Would it not be better to add another $2 billion or $3 billion to that and get some capital works projects going and get people back into the work force so that they can have their dignity back? Then they would become taxpayers.

I just received a note from my colleague from Cochrane—Superior. There are currently 30,000 unemployment insurance recipients who run out of benefits every month. Most of them end up on welfare. There is no retraining. The funds are gone and very few job opportunities exist because—and the member for Carleton—Charlotte was so right when he agreed with us on this—the cartel of financial institutions in this country right now is doing very little to stimulate, help, and push along the 1,700,000 small and medium-sized enterprises in this country that are our greatest hope for putting people back to work.

I compliment the member for the idea that he put forward to this House and to the nation, that if anybody does not feel they are being treated fairly by their bank, the Minister of Finance will welcome hearing from them. I think that is a step in the right direction.

It is very tough in 10 minutes to talk about what is going on in a package of $50 billion. It is very tough but it would be irresponsible for us on this side of the House to look the other way when we have close to two million people who are out of work and not enjoying this zero inflation. They are only enjoying the pain of the zero inflation and the low interest rates.

Once again we appeal to the government. We on this side of the House are begging you to go through this bill appropriating $50 billion and see if you can find something that will help put those unemployed people back to work as soon as we can.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, I will be brief so that my fellow members can also speak on this.

I think that a fairly clear consensus came out of what I heard today on the motion by the President of Treasury Board for consideration of a deficit budget for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, a budget that all members here in the House called lacking in courage and especially lacking in new ideas to fight this deficit that is eating away at our economy and our future.

It is with this in mind that I address the hon. member who just spoke about cuts and making better use of money. For example, does he agree in this recession with the government in its budget this year? We know that last year it spent $2 billion more than it forecast the year before. Does the previous speaker, since I must address him through you, Madam Speaker, also agree that we are wasting, for example, $40 million on advertising this year to tout the benefits of Canada's 125th anniversary, without forgetting all the incredible mistreatment of francophones in those 125 years and also of the native people? It is spending $40 million to brag about that on television and it will waste $600,000 next week on a monument to the Queen of England. Would we not do better to cut such foolish, frivolous expenses as sending 12 members of Parliament to the earth summit in Rio with the Prime Minister? Would it not have been enough for the Minister of the Environment and the Prime

Minister to go there, instead of 12 official committee members, together with members who were invited by the Prime Minister to go at a cost of $200,000 or $300,000? Does the member who just spoke not feel that we are squandering public funds and forgetting to find solutions for the problems of unemployment and the economy? It seems that the only criterion guiding this government, and I close on this point, Madam Speaker, is just a hope that interest rates and the economy will get back on track. It has no philosophy; in other words, it governs from one crisis to the next, without clear objectives.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, I can hardly believe that the member for Richelieu would throw me such a lob ball.

I think that this government would probably be saving $4 billion to $5 billion a year if we did not have to contend with the separatist threat that comes from these six, seven or eight members. I cannot even remember how many of their members sit in this House, this nation's boardroom, the boardroom of Canada. I was elected here to try and do productive things to keep the country together. They are constantly sewing doubt and seeds of division which infect foreign investment and investor confidence. They do not realize that this $125 million, or whatever, is to try and keep this nation together. I do not know of a Canadian who would not support a bill to spend that amount of money if it meant keeping this nation together.

The member for Richelieu does not believe in this country. He is trying to separate, trying to set up a sovereign country for Quebec, which view obviously I do not support.

Canadians do not question that. They do not question that. But what they would like to see at the same time is the government, because of the dissension and the division and the lack of unity in this country, which is mostly caused by this sort of separatist thrust that we are eventually going to have to face right on in the next 30 or 60 or 90 days, get that resolved one way or the other. Then I think we are going to go back to being that united galvanized country that we were before this nonsense started.

• (2150)

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Science): Madam Speaker, the members are well aware, I trust, of the government's ambitious program to reform the Public Service to make it even more efficient and client oriented. Getting better value for the tax dollar has been the order of the day. Available resources have had to be redirected to the point of service delivery, that is where the client is, and away from overhead and administrative processes. Only through this action could the adverse effects of restraint on programs and services be minimized.

Changing how government does business means more than rethinking what government does. It means more than getting out of some activities, consolidating others, eliminating duplication and unnecessary processes, postponing some purchases and setting aside some worthwhile activities that cannot be afforded. It means improving how government does things to direct taxpayers' dollars toward better, more responsive and more client-oriented services, particularly at the point of service delivery; to make it easier for individuals and businesses to deal with government; and finally to focus resources and energies on clients' needs and ensure that public servants are ready, willing and able to resolve problems, answer questions and provide service courteously and quickly.

Concrete measures are being taken to improve services for businesses, more specifically to facilitate, streamline and modernize business dealings with government. One example is the move to a single business registration number. Another is the government's proceeding toward fully automated procurement that will reduce transaction costs and speed up the administrative processes.

A systematic internal review of the existing regulatory burden in each department and each sector is being launched. Regulations will be reviewed to ensure that: government intervention remains justified, regulation is the best among available alternatives, the design of the regulatory program maximizes the gains to beneficiaries in relation to the cost to Canadian governments, businesses and individuals, and resources are available to allow efficient compliance and enforcement.

The government believes that an innovative, competent and dedicated Public Service is a key asset in supporting Canada's economic competitiveness. Canada has a world class and high quality Public Service that is being saluted during "National Public Service: Serving Canadians Better" week.

This special week is being celebrated for the first time this week as a result of Parliament passing a private member's bill on June 4. This new national week will enable all Canadians to acknowledge the thousands of conscientious and responsible Public Service employees who are working to serve the public wherever Canadians are, in major centres and in smaller communities across the country, and from missions abroad.

The government is also decentralizing decision-making. We are changing what we ask of our program managers. Rather than directing them to follow rules we are asking them to focus their energies on serving their clients. We are making sure that public servants get adequate training to meet the demands of increasingly complex jobs. We are empowering them to make decisions and to be responsible for those decisions. We are holding them accountable for achieving results.

Many of our recent initiatives are the result of the major renewal exercise that the Prime Minister announced in December 1989, Public Service 2000. For the taxpayer and the client Public Service 2000 means that more tax dollars are being devoted to service delivery and less to internal administration.

Administrative decision-making is being decentralized. Program managers are challenged to focus their energies on serving their clients. They are being held accountable for the results and the bottom line of their programs, and training is crucial to making this all work. Public servants are being empowered to make their own decisions and to be responsible for them.

Central agencies are reducing and streamlining demands made on the departments. Internal administrative processes are being reduced and very much simplified. Investments are being made in people and in new technologies. Investment in information management is being undertaken to make it easier for clients to conduct transactions with the government and to reduce costs, red tape and paper.

Operating budgets covering salaries, operations, maintenance, and minor capital are being established. They give managers flexibility in deciding how best to spend their resources in order to maximize the results. They hold a promise of increased management efficiency, increased adaptability to changing client needs, and increased accountability for the use of the tax dollar.

Commencing April 1, 1992, a number of departments and agencies began operating budgets on a department-wide basis as pilot projects.

The way government has transitionalized and transitionally been organized has not always been conducive to clients' receiving simple, easy, and accessible service. At present there are thousands of different points of service delivery across Canada; a reflection in part of the expanse of this country and its dispersed population.

However, it can be confusing and very frustrating to Canadians to have to speak to several people from several departments on a pension matter, for example. A number of measures announced in the budget will help change the way in which services are provided.

Departments will be moving to adopt more flexible hours and to work together toward the development of single-point access to clusters of government services. In the larger urban centres, departments providing similar services will look for opportunities to collate service delivery.

In the smaller communities, existing offices of one department will serve as the service delivery point for several departments, responsible for dispensing basic information on programs and services and providing forms. This process has already begun using the Canada Employment Centres as service delivery points for other government departments.

Representatives from these departments will link with Canada Employment and Immigration to establish the exact way in which the employment centres can be used to provide residents of these communities with direct access to a fuller range of services.

The new concept of special operating agencies was introduced in December 1989. This structure gives managers the wherewithal to run their organization more like a business, with greater focus on results and the bottom line.

In return for commitments to performance, managers receive increased administrative flexibility and delegation. They enjoy greater freedom of action to serve Canadians better and to adapt more quickly to changes in client needs.

Five agencies are now in place. Nine others are in the final stages of preparation and they are producing results. For example, the government telecommunications agency has succeeded in offering a credit of $8.5 million to departments. The government is actively seeking opportunities to extend the application of the agency model.

Departmental managers will be accountable for the services delivered and for bottom line costs in a way they have not been to date.

The Veterans Independence Program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs will improve service to clients and minimize the administrative burden. This will involve prepaying entitlements and asking clients to submit their expenditure claims only once and at the end of the year.

Revenue Canada Taxation has already introduced no calculation tax forms for individuals whose returns are relatively straightforward. A similar saving in time and cost will result from the introduction of the new T-2 short tax form for businesses.

I have one last closing remark. As hon. members can appreciate, the innovations that I have just described mean that money taxpayers have entrusted to the government—and that forms part of the Main Estimates—will be spent with care and will buy increasingly more efficient services that Canadians can depend on.

• (2200)

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being ten o'clock, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 81(16), to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the supply proceedings.

The first vote is on the motion for concurrence. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 218*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Belsher	Bernier
Bertrand	Bird
Bjornson	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais	Bosley
Boyer	Browes
Cadieux	Cardiff
Chadwick	Charest
Chartrand	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Couture	Danis
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dick	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Friesen
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Horning
Hughes	Jacques
James	Johnson
Joncas	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
McLean	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
O'Kurley	Paproski

Plourde	Porter
Redway	Reid
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Saint-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Wenman	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Winegard	Worthy—118

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Angus
Bélair	Berger
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Boudria
Caccia	de Jong
Dingwall	Ferguson
Finestone	Fisher
Fontana	Foster
Fulton	Funk
Gagliano	Gardiner
Gauthier	Grey (Beaver River)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hunter	Jordan
Kaplan	Karpoff
Karygiannis	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kindy
Kristiansen	Lee
MacAulay	MacLaren
MacWilliam	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McCurdy	Mifflin
Mills	Nault
Pagtakhan	Peterson
Phinney	Plamondon
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Rompkey	Simmons
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Stewart
Stupich	Vanclief
Walker	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved that Bill C-87, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1993, be read the first time and printed.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible. Could he indicate to the House if the bill is in its usual form.

Mr. Loiselle: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to give the House the assurance that the form of this bill is the same as that passed in previous years.

Mr. Loiselle moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Madam Champagne in the chair.

The Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-87, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1993.

The Chairman: Shall Clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Clause 2 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall Clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Clause 3 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall Clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Clause 4 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall Clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Clause 5 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall Clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Clause 6 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall the schedule carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Schedule agreed to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Chairman, after years of hard work, it is a relief, at least for those who are interested in what happens in Parliament, that after repeated appeals to the House and to the Chair, I can now thank the Clerk and his staff, because at last I have a better idea of what is going on, now the votes are finally written in alphabetical order, in French and English. When you call the votes in English, I know exactly what they are in French. This is the second time this has happened in the history of Parliament. In fact, I really do not have to thank you, but I just wanted to point this out, because at last we can understand—

Madam Chairman: The hon. member has been looking forward to this for quite some time.

Mr. Prud'homme: I am starting to understand, Madam Chairman. Perhaps if more attention was paid to—I was saying that at last we have, in alphabetical order, what my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier has been asking for years. I do not see why there is so much brouhaha when someone is speaking in French.

Would you please call the House to order?

Madam Chairman: Order, please.

[*English*]

Order, please. Members who have been here for a few years know that the hon. member has been making a special request for many years and he is now telling us that he does appreciate that changes have been made. There is actually no debate allowed at this time. The hon. member has risen on a point of order. I think he will close his point of order now so that we can continue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Of course, Madam Chairman. And thanks to your call to order, I will be able to thank the House, although I really do not have to, for something that should have been done a long time ago. However, I think it should be said that at last people have realized that members whose mother tongue is French have a better idea of what is going on if everything is in alphabetical order. The process is so quick, and you are so efficient, that we easily lose track. So, my thanks to whom it may concern.

[*English*]

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Clause 1 agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Preamble agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Title agreed to.

The Chairman: Shall I report the bill?

Bill reported.

Mr. Loiselle moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Loiselle moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: It being 10.35 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 17, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

WOODLOTS

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, proposals by the Ontario government would give counties and regions authority over woodlots greater than 2.5 acres and other municipalities the power to control individual shade trees, windbreaks and fence rows.

These proposed changes could have a serious impact on private landowners' rights and should be of concern to anyone who has a tree growing on his or her property.

Ontario is pushing responsibility on to municipalities while at the same time allowing clear cutting on its own Crown lands. My constituents are tired of too much government and this proposed legislation promises to be a nightmare of permits, regulation, and enforcement; all to the detriment of the taxpayer.

Canadians love the privileges that come with freedom, peace, private property and the pursuit of the work ethic.

At this sensitive time in our country's history, I urge members of Parliament to work to find ways to support and encourage law abiding, environmentally conscious private citizens rather than targeting them with restrictive and expensive laws which have not worked in eastern Europe or elsewhere.

[*Translation*]

MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservative government is interfering with multicultural organizations instead of co-operating with them.

[*English*]

The minister is trying to undermine the World Sikh Organization by funding to the tune of $130,000 the National Alliance of Canadian Sikhs.

The World Sikh Organization has represented Sikhs without any grants or subsidies from the government, yet the minister has the nerve to proclaim the alliance as the principal organization representing Sikhs.

It is time the government stopped interfering in the internal matters of ethnocultural communities and the Sikh community specifically. The role of multiculturalism and citizenship should be the building of bridges and not barriers.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a measure taken by our government to support Montreal's economic development over the next few years. I do so on behalf of the members of the Montreal caucus I have the honour to chair.

Monday, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who is responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development, announced that $150 million would be allocated by the government to support projects in sectors that would afford the best prospects for Montreal.

This initiative by our government is well suited to the partnership that exists today between government and

the private sector and which is aimed at making Montreal a world class industrial and technological centre.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that I have the firm conviction that with this injection of $150 million Montreal will be able to further enhance its role as a centre of excellence for a variety of disciplines.

I would like to recall the work done by members of the Montreal caucus who made this initiative a success and, again, our thanks to the minister.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, three days ago the national police of El Salvador kidnapped Jose Adolfo Rodas Rivera without a judicial order and are holding him in police headquarters, likely torturing him.

Rodas is a leader in the Christian Committee for the Displaced People, the group that has promoted the peaceful return of peasant families to war–torn areas of El Salvador.

The police are the force of the old military elite trying to block the peaceful return of democracy to El Salvador. With continuing United States' money and arms, El Salvador continues to drive some people to become refugees

Therefore, this is no time for Canada to begin dismantling our laws for giving shelter to refugees. We must not classify El Salvador as a safe country from which no real refugees come. We must not return Salvadorans to the United States without first examining their refugee claims, as Bill C–86 would allow us to do.

Instead, Canada should call on El Salvador to release Rodas unharmed, and on the United States to cease arming the Salvadoran security forces.

* * *

CANADA 125 CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Willie Littlechild (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of this House and my colleagues an important event that will be held in the town of Lacombe in my riding on July 1, 1992.

In honour of Canada's 125th birthday and in memory of Roland B. Michener, late Governor General of Canada, who was born in Lacombe, Alberta, the town has requested the donation of trees from communities across Canada as a living tribute. They hope to plant 125 trees in Michener Park, each one of which will have the name of the donating municipality engraved on a plaque. It is hoped by this to symbolically bring Canada together.

I would like to congratulate the town of Lacombe and all the constituents involved for their enthusiasm, dedication, and for this special way of celebrating Canada's 125th anniversary.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): In my riding, the St. Germain School has started a unique project on Canadian unity. Youngsters in the fifth grade studied present day Canada and asked a number of questions which I will quote here.

(1) Will Canada separate? (2) What will happen in that case? (3) What can we, as students, do to prevent this from happening?

What did they recommend? I will read it to you:

> We want to do something for Canadian unity, and we have a message: A puzzle is worthless if there is a piece missing! We made a big flag which was signed by more than 600 people at school. There is a message on the flag: Long live a united Canada! Let's talk. Let's communicate.

[*English*]

The message is clear. It is not unlike the others I received from *Collège Louis–Riel* when they held a citizenship court, or from H. S. Paul and Samuel Burland schools, including the many hundreds of other students when they held their Canada 125 celebrations: "Let's keep our country together by talking to each other".

Merci, thank you to all of our young people.

[*Translation*]

THE LATE JEAN-CLAUDE LEBEL

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the sudden passing of a senior federal official.

Yesterday, we were told about the death of Mr. Jean-Claude Lebel, who for the past three years had been deputy minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, of which he was both the principal artisan and leading light.

He will be remembered by his employees, his federal and Quebec counterparts and his many co-workers and friends, not only as a dedicated and tireless public servant but also as an ardent defender of regional development in Quebec.

Speaking on behalf of all members of the Quebec Conservative caucus and on behalf of the members of this House, I wish to offer our sincere condolences to Mr. Lebel's family.

* * *

[*English*]

BILL C-80

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise Canadians that this government is ignoring the democratic process by rushing Bill C-80 through committee stage, denying experts in the field who unanimously oppose this legislation an opportunity to appear before the committee.

This bill hammers the last nail in the coffin of universality and will profoundly affect the lives of poor children. Yet the groups and individuals who work on the front lines dealing with these children are being denied the chance to say how the bill affects them.

• (1410)

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare has said that she does not see the need for social policy groups to present briefs to the committee because the bill is essentially a tax bill. Even the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the minister responsible for children, is not slated to appear.

When will the government stop looking to expensive tax lawyers for answers and start listening to what hungry children and advocates are saying?

I urge members of the government side to keep the debate open, even though they might not want to hear what the experts are going to say, and allow witnesses the time they need to present briefs to the committee. When is the government going to listen to the ruinous effects its policies are having on Canada's children?

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Bernard Valcourt, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, for bringing some common sense to our immigration system. In my riding, in town hall meetings, in my mail and in personal interventions, constituents of Halton—Peel have been asking for a system that is fair, that costs less to run for taxpayers, and yet maintains the humanitarian reputation of Canada.

Among the much-needed reforms we now see is a guarantee that refugees coming to this country will be legitimate. Speedy family reunification for immigrants allowed into Canada, encouraging immigrants to come here who have the skill and capital that Canada needs, and positioning those immigrants in the geographic areas where they are needed in this country and finally, tough new rules to keep criminals and terrorists out of Canada.

These are simple requests from the people of my riding and I would like to thank the minister for listening. As we all know, the government that listens is the government that lasts.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, on April 6, 1992 I placed a question on the Order Paper related to projects funded by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and requested a response within 45 days.

Today is the 72nd day since I made my request and I have not yet received a response.

People throughout my riding and the rest of Atlantic Canada have the right to know what projects ACOA has funded. People want to know what the agency is doing with their tax dollars.

With unemployment in Prince Edward Island over 18 per cent, it is hard to see how ACOA is helping Prince Edward Island.

I call upon the minister responsible for ACOA to shed some light on the situation and answer my question.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to make the House and all Canadians aware of the courageous effort of 13-year-old Virginie Larivière following her young sister's violent death. Virginie has undertaken to have a million Canadians sign a petition to reduce violence on television.

As more and more studies show a connection between violence on television and violence in our society, it is our duty to act and ensure that our regulations reflect the kind of society we want.

In the wake of her sister Marie-Ève's horrible death, Virginie Larivière gives us a lesson in courage, humanitarianism and dedication that should inspire us all.

I therefore ask for the support and involvement of all hon. members to help distribute Virginie Larivière's petition throughout the country and to work to reduce violence on television and violence in all its forms.

* * *

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons unanimously declared that the federal government should reinstate the Court Challenges Program, which was abolished in the most recent federal budget.

The Court Challenges Program, which is to end in September 1992, enables disadvantaged groups to have their cases heard in court. The committee notes that without this program access to the recourses provided in the Charter will no doubt be limited to groups and individuals that are already favoured financially and politically.

The government must recognize its responsibility to this country's minorities, like the French-speaking minorities, and restore the Court Challenges Program which has proven to be a fundamental tool for recognizing the rights of francophone and Acadian communities.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, the residents of my riding of Sarnia—Lambton will applaud the government's proposed changes to the Immigration Act. My constituents will recognize that the changes respond to the realities of the 1990s and provide the government with tools to maintain the integrity of the system.

My constituents will welcome the news of proposed measures which will streamline the refugee system and provide better service, curtail the abuse of immigration and refugee systems, including better controls at the border, as well as impose time limits and standard processing time to help eliminate the backlogs.

At the same time, I know they will also applaud the government's renewed commitment to reunite families, protect refugees and promote economic development.

Finally, I know my constituents will appreciate a reformed and revitalized immigration program which is fair, balanced and effective, a program designed to best serve their interests.

* * *

HENRIETTE HADDAD

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, Madame Henriette Haddad disappeared in the streets of Beirut.

Today, for the first time, there is encouraging news suggesting that Henriette Haddad may indeed be alive. Her family and friends have worked tirelessly for her release over the years and have often expressed their frustration at the lack of support of their government.

Today Angeline Fournier, co-chairman of the committee to free Henriette Haddad, said that a high official of the Iranian embassy in Paris had told them the fundamentalist Iranian group was prepared to release her on humanitarian grounds. This group is the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

As Madame Fournier said, this is the opening of the door for the first time. They are calling upon the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs to provide help in this very delicate matter.

I would urge the government to provide full assistance to the family and friends so that very soon Henriette Haddad will indeed return home to Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Provincial health ministers are meeting in Ottawa with their federal counterpart to discuss the increasing costs of our health care system and looking for ways to deal with this problem. We are very worried at this point, because Canadians know the health care system we have in this country is the best in the world. They are afraid that provincial governments want to introduce user fees which will have a very negative impact, especially on the poorest members of our society.

I therefore want to ask the Prime Minister whether he can give Canadians assurances that our national health care system will remain universal and free for all Canadians and especially for the neediest members of our society.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have said many times that the federal government's position on health care has been the same ever since the Canada Health Act was passed.

Last September in Winnipeg, at a meeting of all Canadian health ministers, the first principle to be reconfirmed by all provinces was the guarantee that the five main criteria—universality, accessibility, portability, and so forth—would be maintained. The federal government's position has not changed.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the minister.

I am glad to hear the minister say the government's position has not changed, but will the government make the necessary arrangements to ensure the provinces will not have to change the system?

As a result of the 1990 and 1991 budgets, the Minister of Finance has created a situation where, in a matter of just a few years, the provinces will no longer receive direct payments from the government for health care. Could the minister inform the House that the government will review this situation in order to keep in place the necessary mechanisms to maintain the integrity of our health system by continuing transfer payments to the provinces, as well as transfers of tax points?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I may remind the Leader of the Opposition that cash payments in the form of tax points were requested by the provinces when he was a member of the government, if I am not mistaken.

However, in September the provinces also admitted that considering the $60 billion invested in the health care system in this country, which makes it the costliest public health care system in the world, it was agreed that in fact it was not a problem of resources but rather of better managing the funds available.

• (1420)

Last night, the Minister of Finance and I met HEAL, a health care lobby group. They too agreed that the problem with the health care system in Canada is not, basically, a resource problem. The money is there—$60 billion—so it is more a matter of management. The provinces, from New Brunswick to Ontario and from Newfoundland to British Columbia, have on the whole taken on a number of responsibilities, which leads us to believe that we are on the right track. Together with the

provinces, we are trying to maintain—as the Leader of the Opposition said, and I agree with him—the main criteria for the system, with the knowledge that the capacity to finance the system is there, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question of the minister. In the discussions he is having with the provinces at this moment, will the minister tell them very clearly that there is absolutely no possibility in Canada that we will go for user fees in medicare for Canadians and that hospitals in Canada are for sick people, not for rich people and that this very important regime will remain as it is for the benefit of all Canadians?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, all the provinces in light of the resources we provide are subjected to the Canada Health Act which directly forbids any province charging what we call a user fee. There is no problem at that level. We would have to amend the legislation to be able to do that.

To the credit of the provinces also, we have to say they are trying to do a lot, trying to manage the resources they have in spite of increasing costs. It increased during the eighties about 12 per cent, which is too much for the capacity we have to pay today.

We give the guarantee that the law will not be amended, that we will keep it. At the same time, Canadians have to know, and I think they share this view, that all efforts have to be made to protect the best system in the world, but within their capacity they have to pay for it.

* * *

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health.

This week's report on breast cancer highlights a social problem of near epidemic proportions. Last year, this government gave the Medical Research Council $849,000 and only $189,000 of that money went to direct research for breast cancer.

Will the minister and this government recognize that funding for this research is a matter of urgency and provide the recommended funding now that is recommended in this report?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I gave an answer to the same kind of question to my friend from British Columbia yesterday.

I said we definitely have to look at all the questions of research on cancer and breast cancer in a particular way. I repeat what I said yesterday. I believe that all those issues dealing with women and health have been seen too many times from a man's perspective.

Having said that, the hon. member has to know, and it is easy to know, that funding for breast cancer is not predetermined. We can fund $3 million, $4 million or $5 million now if the project submitted to NHRDP and the Medical Research Council has the quality to warrant funding. Yes, I am ready to give more money and to at least consider the possibility if it can be confirmed that any project dealing with breast cancer has been turned down because of a problem with money.

It never happened to my knowledge or to the knowledge of the Medical Research Council.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, yes, I heard the minister's comments yesterday. If you ask any pure scientist, $189,000 is not enough money.

There are five women whom I know in the Pratt family, two with breast cancer and three of them very high risk. We know that cancer runs in families. We know that there is a shortage of radiation technologists. We know there is a shortage of radiation equipment. We know there is not enough research money and this is a women's issue.

Will the minister indicate to this House what this government's action plan is going to be to deal with this very serious situation?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, once again, I think that I confirmed twice yesterday and again today that I am ready to listen and look at what we can do. Immediately I see a kind of slippage of the member when she says we have to provide more equipment. She knows that at that level the provinces have full responsibility and the federal level cannot go to the province of Ontario and say it will supply equipment.

Once again, I repeat what I said, we have to be more sensitive to breast cancer particularly. I am ready to look at the full report provided yesterday and to do my best. We have not predetermined money. Maybe $800,000 is not enough, but it has not been determined by the department or by the Medical Research Council. It is based on projects submitted by researchers. Maybe we

should support more research, particularly among women, and maybe it would help to supply more money.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the minister of health.

The joint meeting of the federal-provincial ministers of health and finance is extremely important for the survival of our national medicare program. It is no secret that the minister's colleagues are primarily concerned about the unilateral federal withdrawal from the cost-shared partnership in financing health care.

Does the minister agree with the statement by the Newfoundland minister of health, Chris Decker, that the federal government cannot afford a universal health care system or, in the words of Mr. Decker: "They talk about it but they cannot deliver".

What has happened to the federal government's commitment and obligations under medicare to all Canadians?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong when he says that the provinces are particularly upset by the unilateral withdrawal of resources.

If he looks at information that we released in September in Winnipeg, all the provinces, except Quebec because it was not there, but including British Columbia agreed at the time that the problem is not a question of money. Once again, it is the most expensive public system in the world. We have to use the resources we have. In that respect we work with the provinces and continue to do that in light of the fact that we can improve the management and the system and keep the best system in the world.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

The minister of health for B.C. said: "I think medicare is being threatened and largely responsible are the federal cuts in transfer payments to the provinces". The National Council on Welfare, the government's own advisory group, has calculated that the cuts to the federal financing formula for health will amount to more than $60 billion by the year 2000.

Can the minister tell the House what kind of a health care system will result from these unilateral cuts? Will it be a patchwork with different standards in each province, including user fees, higher premiums, extra billing by doctors or a two-tiered U.S. style health care system?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times I have to tell the member that there were no cuts. There were reductions in the way we transfer payments. Of course, that is the usual language of the NDP and we are used to that. I would appreciate having the same kind of interesting question I got from the member for Nepean.

I repeat, $60 billion in the health care system in Canada is a lot of money. It is the most expensive in the world. We are trying to work within those resources. I can say that the provinces are encouraged to do that. I will continue to work with the provinces which want to work in that respect.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister.

Can the minister explain how medicare can still be considered a cost-shared program when the federal share has declined from 50 per cent in 1980 under successive Liberal and Tory governments to 31 per cent that it is today? How much lower will the federal share shrink in the remaining three years of the present freeze? Will it be 25 per cent, 20 per cent, 15 per cent or even lower?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the member should know that maybe the direct transfer payments have been reduced, but the tax points have increased since 1982-83, which means that we give more money today than we gave 10 years ago.

The meeting tonight between the ministers of finance and the ministers of health will not be to say we will put in a billion dollars more. We will be there to determine how we can keep the system working the way it does, keeping in mind that we have to protect the system in light of the fact that we have reduced resources at the federal level. The ministers agree with that. They agreed last September and they will continue to agree.

• (1430)

If we put in more money as the member wants, we would just have the same problem we face today because we inherited a $500 billion debt. Fortunately the NDP is not there or it would be $1,000 billion.

* * *

REFUGEES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday the Minister of Employment and Immigration tabled his voluminous immigration amendments which included extensive management and enforcement measures but paid little attention to humanitarian concerns.

Since the minister had the opportunity, why did he not provide an appeal on the merits for refugees whose applications have been rejected, as recommended by many NGOs, churches and the legal community?

The Refugee Board is not perfect, and without an appeal process the system is seriously flawed. Now is the time for an appeal process.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite should read the bill carefully and he would see that in subsections 114(2), (6) and (5) we seek the authority to apply selection criteria.

The bill tabled by my colleague responsible for employment and immigration maintains Canada's humanitarian tradition as it pertains to economic requirements and employment that we must use in the immigration model. I wish to assure this House again that we will continue to respect refugee claims.

The bill tabled yesterday simply adapts the act to the realities of 1992 so that we can have a fair, equitable and efficient system.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not even answer my question. I was asking about an appeal on the merits process. She did not address that question.

[*Translation*]

As an alternative, why did the Minister of Employment and Immigration not specify and provide objective criteria for admitting refugees on humanitarian grounds? The minister almost eliminated this useful provision that allowed the most deserving cases to appeal. Will the minister or the government consider amendments to the bill to make better use of this provision and provide a fairer appeal process?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, the amendments made to the bill yesterday—or rather the suggested amendments, I should say, because we will have an opportunity through the parliamentary process to express our point of view—make procedures into regulations. So regulations rather than procedures will make it possible for applicants to appeal using the regular process. In any case, everyone in Canada will be able to exercise their right to appeal and each case will be heard on its merits.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Last night we saw the spectacle on national television of B.C. vegetable producers ploughing down their crops because United States farmers are dumping low priced, low value vegetables into the Canadian market.

We know that the government in the free trade negotiation gave up the right to have a seasonal tariff. I want to ask the minister what the government is going to do. What action is going to be taken to keep these producers in business?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. friend did not deliberately misinform the House.

We have a snap-back provision that was negotiated in the trade agreement between Canada and the United States which has been used by the government when necessary.

The hon. member should be aware that the association which represents these producers requested a hearing be held into the dumping allegations. They have been working with the Department of National Revenue to assemble that information. The Department of National Revenue is co-operating in presenting this case. We have worked hand in hand with our sister departments and we will work with the producers.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows, as every producer across this country knows, that the snap-back provision is absolutely useless. It just does not protect the industry.

The Department of National Revenue published a press release last week saying it would be making a determination in 90 days. That is simply unacceptable. The crops will all be ploughed down within 90 days.

Will the government bring in a determination for an anti-dumping duty by June 23 when the House rises? Will the minister give that kind of commitment to those producers today?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as beneficial as that might appear, the hon. member would be the first to complain to our trading partners if they attempted to run roughshod over a process that was established to allow it to take place.

Those critics of doom and gloom who identified that the free trade agreement would cause the destruction of agriculture have to recognize fact. The fact is that the number of farms has reduced at a lower rate in the last five years in Canada than any time since 1941.

Another thing the hon. member and other colleagues should know is that agricultural food exports to the United States since the free trade agreement have increased 29 per cent, almost 10 per cent a year. The hon. member should recognize that.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Both the Nova Scotia government order establishing the inquiry into the Westray mine disaster and the provincial statute authorizing the order specifically restricts the inquiry to matters, and I quote, "in relation to which the legislature may make laws".

In other words, every aspect of the disaster within federal jurisdiction, such things as federal government investigations and safety assessments or regional development funding or cabinet assessment, is beyond the scope of the Nova Scotia inquiry.

Will the Prime Minister now admit that all the government's assurances for the last month that no federal inquiry was needed were in fact completely incorrect, that the Nova Scotia inquiry cannot inquire into strictly federal actions and responsibilities in the disaster?

An hon. member: He should go to Hollywood. The walk would do him good.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): That is not entirely comforting, Mr. Speaker, so I would ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister.

The inquiry commissioner, Justice Richard, himself said yesterday when talking about the huge volume of documents his inquiry already had to review:

> I have no jurisdiction as a provincial inquiry over documents outside the province.

The justice himself recognizes the restrictions on his inquiry.

Will the government now stop trying to hide its own actions and responsibilities behind a provincial inquiry which cannot investigate them and call a federal inquiry which can?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly true the judge did say that he did not have jurisdiction over documents issuing from a federal jurisdiction, but we sent them to him anyway.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It concerns a matter of paramount importance to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador: the state of the fishery.

Yesterday in St. Anthony, Newfoundland nearly 1,000 men and women marched and demonstrated, calling upon governments and calling upon politicians of every stripe to acknowledge and to deal constructively with the crisis in the fishery. These people have been without income since May 15 and have no prospect of future income in the face of the imminent moratorium on northern cod stocks.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether or not the government is prepared to consider now making available assistance to sustain these families until such time as a long-term program to rebuild cod stocks is put in place by the minister of fisheries and long-term assistance made available to those who are going to be displaced because of conservation measures.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government is very concerned about the situation of the fishermen not only in St. Anthony but throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada where their incomes have dropped quite dramatically because of the problem of cod stocks and fishing stocks generally for reasons that we are acquainted with.

• (1440)

One of the reasons why the government in 1990 responded with a $584 million Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program, and I think almost a $40 million catch failure program the next year, was precisely to accommodate this sad reality. The situation has not improved and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has been working on a program that we think will be helpful and constructive.

I have been talking to some of the union leaders in Newfoundland as late as last evening. The minister of fisheries, who is travelling in Atlantic Canada, will be talking to me again tonight. We hope to move forward and respond to this very real problem that is hurting all the fishing families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House from Newfoundland, indeed members from Atlantic Canada, appreciate that the government has put assistance programs in place in 1990 and 1991. Federal governments going back over 10 years have had to assist the Atlantic fishing industry on occasion.

I want to make clear to the Prime Minister what the families are asking for now. What they are saying is that they understand that whatever action must be taken to rebuild those stocks must be undertaken no matter what the cost, including the cost to families. Until such time as the long-term plan is put in place, as it must be, and until such time as long-term compensation measures are worked out, as we are confident they will be, in the interim, just to sustain the basics of life, to put bread and butter on the table, can Atlantic fishing families, in particular in Newfoundland and Labrador, expect this government to intervene to provide them with some economic assistance soon, now if possible?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my friend quite properly divides the problem in two. The long-term problem will partly be resolved as a result of the UNCED conference in Rio and other long-term initiatives to revive the cod stocks off Newfoundland and Labrador. That is certainly a long-term problem. I think we are in general agreement that the minister of fisheries, for example, did a tremendous job in Rio in regard to the protection of the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador.

With regard to the more immediate problem, as we know Rick Cashin is chairing a task force in regard to the specific problem. The minister of fisheries and the member for St. John's East have been making specific recommendations to the government as to how the Government of Canada can assist the fishermen and the communities in the short term, which I think is the problem raised by my hon. friend.

The record indicates that when the people of Newfoundland and Labrador needed assistance this government, the Government of Canada, did not fail to respond. I am waiting to hear from the minister of fisheries in regard to his ideas. When he has a specific program I am satisfied that the government will respond in a fair and I think helpful way to the fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a Newfoundland inshore fisherman from Fogo Island, Mr. Larry Donahue, trying hard to catch fish, watched helplessly as 50 of his nets were dragged up and destroyed by a factory trawler from France in the northern cod zone.

How can the Government of Canada not only give France cod quotas in the northern cod zone but now notify the Canadian Embassy in Paris that it is going to give France more quotas in the northern cod zone from July 1 until September 30 when the boundary dispute has been settled?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the boundary dispute has been settled. I think it has been settled very much to Canada's satisfaction and in the interest of the Newfoundland fishery. I should point out in terms of what is happening right now, the quotas that have been granted now until the end of September follow directly from the agreement of March 1989. There is a legal obligation to continue with that.

No one will be happier than the minister of fisheries and the Government of Canada once this obligation is completed. We will be in a position to fully manage as a result of the decision that was made by the boundaries commission.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, the 1989 agreement signed by the Government of Canada gave France northern cod quotas for two years "in proportion to the Canadian offshore allocation".

Does the government not realize that there has been a moratorium on the Canadian offshore allocation for the past six months and any proportion of zero is still zero even for France?

Why is the government giving northern cod quotas to France illegally?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the way article 5 reads is not the way the hon. member has described it.

The 15 per cent that was granted was based on the law. The decision did not come down before May 15. The hon. member is trying to over-simplify what has been a difficult and technical problem for us. After September 30 we are going to be in an excellent position, thanks to the fact that we won a very important international case which has the best possible implications for the fishery in Newfoundland.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the distinguished Minister of Justice.

Increasingly, Canadians are becoming quite disturbed by the punishment meted out to young offenders under 17 years of age, especially if they have been convicted of a homicide or brutal assault.

What action does the minister intend to take to stop the giving of a slight slap on the wrist and young offenders being told to be good and go back home?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member who is a man of rare discernment and good taste for the question.

The question is a serious one. It has been dealt with to some degree already by members of this House in passing amendments to the Young Offenders Act and of later statutes which provide a greater range of options available to judges in transferring young offenders' charges on very serious crimes to adult court thereby providing a larger range of sentence and parole options.

As the hon. member will know, there is considerable concern in this country with the Young Offenders Act. Some of it is more a reflection of how the act is implemented than what is in it itself. We are undertaking with the active participation of members of this House, in particular members of our caucus, a review of the Young Offenders Act in order to try and address the concerns the hon. member raises.

Confidence of the Canadian people in the justice system is absolutely vital. We wish to address the concerns of Canadians with respect to the Young Offenders Act and we are geared to doing that.

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CHRISTINE LAMONT AND DAVID SPENCER

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Many Canadians are deeply concerned about the continued imprisonment in Brazilian jails on 28-year sentences of two young Canadians, Christine Lamont and David Spencer.

I want to ask the Prime Minister to confirm that he raised the plight of Lamont and Spencer with Brazilian President Collor during his recent trip to Rio for the earth summit.

Will the Prime Minister indicate to the House and to the families of Christine Lamont and David Spencer the nature of the representations the Prime Minister made and the response of the Brazilian president?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to confirm to my hon. friend that I did indeed raise this very serious case with the President of Brazil in a meeting with him a few days ago in Rio.

I put forward views that I thought would be helpful and appropriate in regard to that situation. He is taking them into consideration and I would expect that we will be advised of the decision of his government.

• (1450)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly be interested to know what the views were of the Prime Minister with respect to an appropriate resolution of this.

I would like to ask my supplementary of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. She knows that last week the House of Commons justice committee unanimously agreed to urge the minister to request the expulsion of Lamont and Spencer in accordance with Brazilian law and in accordance with Canada's obligations under international human rights conventions.

My question is straightforward: Will the minister now accept this unanimous all-party recommendation, show leadership on behalf of these young Canadians and seek their expulsion from Brazil and their return to their families in Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the minister has been very troubled by and interested in this case. She called me in Brazil to advise me of the unanimous report that had just been released, I think it was that night, by the committee.

I examined with Brazilian officials the concept that they were sitting around waiting for a request for an expulsion to which they would respond immediately. This is not the case. This is not an accurate assumption and people ought to set it aside.

I did raise with the President the opportunities under Brazil's constitution available to him and to the Government of Canada in considering the plight of these two prisoners, for whom we all feel a great deal of concern and anxiety. After a good discussion with the President, I left with him an invitation to communicate with me as quickly as he could regarding a resolution on it.

* * *

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I had the opportunity at the request of the then minister to chair the last national recreational fisheries conference in 1989. Another such conference is being held in September of this year.

I am concerned to hear there are signals emanating from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which indicate a diminishing priority for recreational fisheries in that department. The most important signal is the apparent termination of the national recreational fisheries survey.

That survey is one of the most important tools we have for managing the recreational fishery in Canada. Among other things, it indicates that sports fishing is a major contributor to our economy to the extent of about $5 billion directly and it involves six million citizens.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary whether the recreational fishery survey has actually been cancelled and if so, why? Does this reflect or reveal a diminishing priority for recreational fisheries in the department?

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the recreational fisheries survey is done every five years. The preliminary results of the 1990 survey were already issued in the fall of 1991. The final results will be issued this fall.

The hon. member is also aware that the conference which takes place every so often will take place again this fall. It will be co-sponsored by the federal and the provincial governments involved.

I can assure the hon. member that the 1995 survey is already committed to and will be carried out by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

* * *

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General.

Media reports today allege that the names of CSIS informers are "now routinely given to politicians". If this is accurate, it is scandalous.

Will the minister tell this House whether this report has any foundation? If so, will he immediately investigate this serious breach of national security and report to Parliament on the precise steps he is taking to rectify it?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this matter has been raised in the House. I want to assure my friend that names of CSIS sources are not and in fact in the course of my tenure as Solicitor General have not been revealed to the Solicitor General.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): These reports indicate very clearly that even the government's own officials are questioning the minister's authority to be in possession of this information.

Will he give this House his assurance that this sensitive informant information in his hands will not be shared with fellow politicians and that information gathered by CSIS will be monitored closely within the rules of law?

Will he commit now to report to Parliament either to the national security subcommittee or to the Security Intelligence Review Committee on this serious matter?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I repeat my previous assurance to the House and to the Canadian public.

CSIS sources are not revealed to me in the course of the conduct of my operations as Solicitor General. From time to time, I am made aware of the circumstances surrounding a particular sensitive operation, but never the name.

CANADA POST

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for Canada Post, my question is to the Prime Minister.

Canada Post Corporation announced its plan to rationalize the nation's mail sorting system. That announcement identified 92 communities where some 295 jobs are in jeopardy as well as service to those communities.

Reports suggest this is the beginning of many phases. Will the minister admit this is the tip of the iceberg and that more reorganization affecting some 500 jobs, employment and local economies are in jeopardy?

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 the hon. member has indicated, the minister responsible for Canada Post is absent on important government business.

I will take notice of the question and I am sure that he will report to him very quickly.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I think that we are looking at jobs across the board.

On July 1, Canada Post will start with a new program of collecting tax and duty on mail products from foreign countries. Some work previously done by Revenue Canada will be transferred to Canada Post.

How many jobs will be lost there? How much work will be contracted out? How much will Revenue Canada be paying Canada Post for this program?

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 will also inform my colleague of that particular question.

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BANK SERVICE CHARGES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

There is an awareness out there in Canada by consumers and small businesses that what the banks lose on their real estate investments they will pick from the pockets of consumers and small businesses.

Some banks have announced a freeze. That is like closing the door after the horses have eaten all the hay, all the oats and then left.

My question to this minister who is also the Minister of State for Agriculture: Will the minister call in the banks and tell them to roll back their service charges and then freeze them?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, a week ago or maybe a little more, the Minister of Finance and I said in this House that we had told the banks that there was no question of making consumers pay for any losses incurred by any of them in real estate transactions. We reassured the House on this point several times.

My colleague also knows that I personally met the bankers' representatives to ask them to lower credit card interest rates—this is the subject that concerns him. Rates have fallen nearly 5 per cent and are now about 7 per cent, the lowest in the past 20 years. This is quite something and is due to this government's economic policies. I believe that it is all to the good for consumers.

[*English*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have only one thing to say to the Minister of State for Agriculture and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, that is horse feathers.

My question had nothing to do with credit card interest rates. We are talking about bank service charges. I will repeat again to the minister, will he call in the banks and order a roll back on the service charges and then a freeze, not for three banks, but for the six biggest banks?

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague just mentioned, several banks have already said that they were freezing these charges for some time. This shows that there is very keen competition now. It is common knowledge that the financial institutions are competing fiercely with one another. Interest rates are at their lowest level and the banks are outdoing each other to get customers, which only benefits consumers. Instead of blaming the government, my colleague should thank us and congratulate us on our economic policies.

* * *

[*English*]

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who has indicated that he is looking for ways to help Canada compete by improving our municipal infrastructure as long as it is within the existing fiscal framework.

About one-third of the green plan budget or $1 billion has not yet publicly been committed.

I want to ask the minister if he is prepared to help the environment improve our competitiveness by using and spending the remaining green plan funds to put Canadians back to work, building and rebuilding our municipal infrastructure, rather than spending the money on more studies?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it allows me to point out that in the green plan $.25 billion over six years is going toward infrastructure for Indian peoples in this country, for our native people to upgrade their water and sewage systems. We are helping in an area where it is badly needed and the green plan is doing that.

As far as infrastructure for municipalities is concerned, I remind the hon. member that we are working in our airports to improve the infrastucture there which creates employment and activity, and is our responsibility. We are helping with the fixed link, for example, to P.E.I., which will have private industry financing, but at the same time encouragement from the government.

As the first ministers mentioned in their meeting of the Prime Minister and the premiers, we are taking a look at the the Trans-Canada Highway and the national road system as a possibility of an area where we may be able to co-operate with the municipalities. That is ongoing with the provinces at the present time.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Jim Snow, Member of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STATEMENT PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During Statements Pursuant to Standing Order 31, the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing made reference to and criticized the procedures on a bill, Bill C-80, which is currently in committee.

My position is that it was inappropriate and should not have been done at that time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 response to 111 petitions.

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

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF RELATIONS BOARD

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have two series of documents to present today.

On behalf of the right hon. President of the Privy Council I am pleased to table in this House today, in both official languages, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992 a copy of the annual reports to Parliament of the Public Service Staff Relations Board; the first one concerns the management of access-to-information legislation and the second the protection of personal information.

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TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, also on behalf of the President of the Privy Council I wish to present to the House the annual report to Parliament of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, as required by the Access to Information and Privacy Acts, for the period ended March 31, 1992.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House the report of the heads of delegation meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the CSCE, on May 22, 1992, in Budapest, Hungary, in both official languages.

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[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, REGIONAL AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval—Ouest): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Regional and Northern Development, I wish to present the committee's second report concerning the tourism industry.

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

[*English*]

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to submit a petition with regard to the Court Challenges Program. A number of individuals from the province of Ontario signed the first petition, as well as individuals from elsewhere in the country including the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, who are all objecting to the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to reinstate the Court Challenges Program which has benefited Canadians and minority groups across this country. They hope the government will act promptly in terms of reinstating the Court Challenges Program.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to table ten more petitions today, further to a campaign by Canadians, urging the Parliament of Canada to review the government's decision to abolish the Court Challenges Program. As you know, this program enabled Canadians to go before the courts to defend their constitutional rights, to have them clarified and sometimes obtain recognition of those rights from the mostly provincial authorities.

The Court Challenges Program did not cost much—only about 10 cents per Canadian per year. It enabled Canadians to seek equal justice for all.

The people who signed these petitions call on Parliament to reconsider reinstating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Mr. Speaker, we are happy to see that a committee of this House has unanimously supported the action taken by all these petitioners.

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of constituents of the riding of Macleod resident in the area of Claresholm and surrounding area, sponsored by the Kinsmen and Kinette clubs of Canada. It is a petition to promote pride in being Canadian, something which we are all proud to be.

Included on this petition I note the signature of a minister of the Government of Alberta as well. We are all proud to be Canadians.

AIRPORT POLICY

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to table a petition under Standing Order 36 from a number of residents of Calgary North who are concerned that the Department of Transport may amend the present airport policy which has insulated the citizens of Calgary North from noise generated by the airport since 1986.

• (1510)

The petitioners urge that the Department of Transport maintain the present airport policy regarding runway No. 28 which requires that all departing flights make a 15 degree turn to the north.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions from constituents in the Scarborough area.

They feel strongly about the imposition of the GST on books and call upon Parliament to reinstate the tax free status for the printed word by reinstating the zero rate in the GST regulations.

HOUSING

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition from constituents in the east metro Toronto area which calls on the government to participate in shared cost provincial and federal co-op housing. It calls on the government to maintain its participation in the field and to maintain the existence of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present nine petitions from Portage la Prairie, Carman, Oakville and surrounding municipalities signed by hundreds of people in the area.

The petitioners ask the government to replace or to change the Young Offenders Act so the right punishment and a stronger punishment would go to young offenders who are accused and found guilty.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

M. Mac Harb (Ottawa–Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting to this House a petition signed by residents of the Ottawa—Carleton area. The petitioners are asking the government to table a fairer bill for people seeking refuge in Canada.

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition under Standing Order 36. It was co-ordinated by Elizabeth J. Dutton of Thornhill. This petition calls for the government to enact legislation providing for:

(a) a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government; and

(b) the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments to be determined by:

(1) a majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada together with;

(2) a majority vote in a majority of provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize more petitions, the Speaker has a ruling to make. If I may impose on the House for a minute, let us hear the ruling and then I will come back.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

FISHERIES

Mr. Speaker: I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52(1) from the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte on an application for an emergency debate.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice of my intention to move the adjournment of the House pursuant to Standing Order 52, to discuss a specific matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the plight of fishermen and fish plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who have been without any source of income since May 15.

These individuals require urgent interim economic assistance to sustain the basics of life until such time as the Government of Canada, under the guidance of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, makes final decisions on a fisheries management program and provides compensation for those who will be displaced as a result of conservation measures.

I have a brief comment. Members of the fishing community in Newfoundland and Labrador and, indeed, throughout Atlantic Canada, are aware that Parliament is scheduled to adjourn within a matter of a few parliamentary sitting days. They are aware that dramatic and drastic action must be taken to sustain the cod species, the cod stocks. They are prepared for the consequences of those decisions but they want, I believe legitimately, their voice to be heard before the House rises for a scheduled summer recess, and that both the problems and the potential that exist in the current environment be discussed in this place.

They sense that the deep calamity they are experiencing is one that has been discussed and has been understood and has been acknowledged and has been dealt with by the Parliament of Canada. It is in that spirit and in the spirit of the exchange in Question Period today that I make this request on an urgent basis, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: First of all, I want to thank the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte for his notice. I want to say to the House that the House will understand that in other obligations I have had in the past, I would have a very real understanding of the issue, as brought before the House today by the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte. I know that concern is shared by other members.

I listened very carefully today to the exchange between the right hon. Prime Minister and the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte and I noticed the member referred to it in his intervention at this time. However, I feel that I must adhere carefully to the rule. Despite the fact that this is not only a serious matter but is a matter of intense concern to a lot of people, I am not disposed at this time this afternoon to adjourn the House

business for a debate, but I shall be watching the matter very closely.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

POVERTY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition to the House of Commons and the government from Ellen Sommerville. This a petition of largely senior citizens from my riding who point out that some 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty and that hundreds of thousands of Canadians across the country who are senior citizens live in poverty.

The petitioners therefore appeal that it is undignified to increase Old Age Security by 37 cents a month. They would rather have the government keep that 37 cents each month than be humiliated in that fashion. They are requesting the Government of Canada to try to make the Old Age Security not only dignified but realistic to meet the aspirations of senior citizens in this country.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to present petitions on behalf of constituents of Winnipeg North with respect to the Old Age Security pensions and the Seniors Independence Program.

My constituents are concerned that there are still thousands and thousands of Canadian seniors who live in poverty, that in fact the 37 cent increase in their pensions in April 1992 not only ignores the needs of many of them but is an insult to them, and that moreover the federal government has a primary responsibility to ensure the adequacy of seniors' pensions.

Therefore, these petitioners humbly pray and call upon this House to ensure that the Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of our seniors and that the government restore a strong support for the Seniors Independence Program.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and honour to present two petitions by good constituents and especially good Nova Scotians on something that exists right at the grassroots of one's riding, and that is the concern that my petitioners have about the variance between federal truck rates and provincial truck rates and the problems that this causes in predatory pricing.

My petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation for the adoption of minimum rate schedules for dump trucks on federal projects at rates not less than the minimum truck haul rates and conditions set by each province where the federal project is to be undertaken. I so humbly pray on their behalf.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present to the House a petition from a number of my constituents living in the Ernestown and Napanee areas situated in my riding of Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

These petitioners are supporting the government's commitment as stated in the Speech from the Throne on May 13, 1991 to introduce legislation which would permit a national referendum on the Constitution if necessary.

• (1520)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which is signed by residents of Ottawa, Gatineau and Hull collected by Janice Manchee from the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Human Rights Division.

The petitioners note that in October 1985 the subcommittee on equality rights of the justice committee unanimously recommended to Parliament that the Canadian Human Rights Act be amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

They note that the government promised in March 1986 to implement this recommendation but that some six years later the government has yet to act. They point out that the Canadian Human Rights Commission has called for this amendment and that a number of provincial governments have acted.

Therefore, they call upon Parliament to ensure 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.

STEVEN OGUNWUYI

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): I have another petition which is signed by residents of Vancouver and Burnaby which notes that Steven Ogunwuyi, a Nigerian of 23 years of age, was unwittingly implicated in an unsuccessful coup attempt against the unelected president of Nigeria. It notes that prison conditions in Nigeria are appalling and that other people implicated in the coup have been executed after totally unacceptable trials.

The petition notes that he has escaped from Nigeria and is seeking refugee status in Canada and he fears for his life. Therefore, the petitioners urge the House of Commons to request the Minister of Employment and Immigration to allow Steven Ogunwuyi to remain in Canada on compassionate grounds.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 210 students and staff from Sir Frederick Banting Junior Secondary School in Coquitlam.

The petitioners say that Dupont is the world's largest producer of CFCs with a major plant here in Canada capable of producing up to 18,000 tonnes annually. For almost 20 years the company has continued to produce these chemicals, despite scientific evidence linking them to the destruction of the ozone layer. They say that ozone in southern Canada will be depleted by 15 per cent this year, resulting in a staggering 26 per cent increase in skin cancer, and that the only real answer is to stop producing those ozone-destroying chemicals now.

The petitioners demand that Dupont stop its production of ozone-destroying chemicals now.

PROUD TO BE A CANADIAN

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure and the honour to submit a petition signed by a number of residents of Brandon—Souris, including a number of young people who believe very strongly that it is important for Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada, and noting that very often we are too reserved and we thus conceal our patriotic feelings.

They have signed this petition in which they support the Kinsmen and Kinette clubs of Canada, specifically in their *Proud to be a Canadian* project. They indicate that this project is an opportunity to nurture a positive life-long relationship, whether based on heritage or whether based on the flag, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles, and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

HOUSING

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today under Standing Order 36 to present two petitions signed mainly by people in my riding of Edmonton—Strathcona.

This first petition calls upon Parliament to recognize housing as a shared provincial-federal responsibility, to support the federal non-profit co-operative housing program, and to maintain the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): This petition calls upon Parliament to consider removing the goods and services tax from women's sanitary products.

NORTH THOMPSON RIVER

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and indeed an honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents from British Columbia who now, in total petition numbers, total well over 10,000. They point out that a firm called Multinational Resources intends to divert water from the North Thompson River in British Columbia in order to sell the water in southern California.

They are going ahead with this plan. They are spending millions of dollars on pre-engineering studies and feasibility studies. These residents are saying it is time that we say "forget it; scrap your plans because the waters of Canada will not be sold to California through river diversion".

TAXATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have petitioners from Manitoba who ask for a fairer and simpler taxation system. They feel that the current system is unfair toward the poor, too onerous for middle class Canadians and business people and they want to ensure that it is non-discriminatory. For example, they refer to taxable child credits. They point out that certain people get them and others do not.

RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): My other petition, Mr. Speaker, asks Parliament to ensure that the CRTC monitors very closely the use of foul language on radio and television. They point out that it is not necessary to use that type of language to inform or entertain.

The petitioners point out as well that it counteracts efforts of the family in this regard.

CHRISTINE LAMONT AND DAVID SPENCER

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which is signed by residents of Kamloops, Vancouver, Burnaby and other cities and municipalities in British Columbia which notes that two Canadians, Christine Lamont and David Spencer, who have been sentenced to 28 years each in a Brazilian prison, have suffered miscarriages of justice, cruel and unusual treatment in Brazilian prisons and discrimination in sentencing and parole.

The petition notes that the only relief which is available from their severe punishment is for Canada to request expulsion in accordance with Brazilian law.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the Secretary of State for External Affairs to request the Government of Brazil to expel Christine Lamont and David Spencer and return them to Canada.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have one other petition. It is signed by a number of people from Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. The petitioners ask Parliament to amend the Income Tax Act to allow all wage earners to be eligible for the goods and services tax rebate, regardless of age, because taxpayers under 19 years of age cannot get the rebate while awaiting the repeal of the tax itself.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if I could get unanimous consent to go back to Private Members' Business because there is a bill I wish to introduce.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PENSION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–352, an act to amend the Pension Act (pension commencement date).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for the unanimous consent.

This bill is based on a basic fundamental principle which is as follows. If a citizen owes the government money, the government can come at any time and collect that money, obviously according to the laws and procedures which exist. There are a number of programs to which citizens are entitled, particularly in the domain of pensions where it does not work that way, where retroactivity exists for a very limited period of time.

The intent of this bill is to ensure that retroactivity is permitted when a citizen merits a particular pension and he or she did not ask for it at a particular point in time, perhaps because of lack of knowledge. That is the intent. Hopefully, we could look at other areas besides this one later.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mr. Duhamel moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister 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. Paproski): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Barbara McDougall (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved that Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act, be read the third time and passed.

• (1530)

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to open debate on third reading of Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act now that the legislative committee has completed its study and reported its findings to this House.

First I would like to thank the member for Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold who chaired the legislative committee and the hon. members who studied the bill very closely. Second, I would like to express appreciation to the witnesses who took time to appear before the committee to make their views known.

As a result of the committee's thorough and thoughtful work, a number of amendments have been made to the bill and I am pleased to note that these clarify and strengthen the intended effects of the proposed changes in the pension programs.

All members will recall that the President of the Treasury Board has already described Bill C-55 as an important step in the evolution of the various pension plans in the federal Public Service. It is a bill that makes a number of improvements to the plans, thereby responding to some of the long-standing concerns of the plan members.

It fulfils the government's commitment to ensure that its pension plans, like all other employer-sponsored pension plans in Canada, comply with the new Income Tax Act rules for registered pension plans and it moves to improve the funding and the financing of the benefits provided under the pension plans.

Bill C-55 is a relatively complex bill in that it proposes amendments to the existing pension statutes, provides for details of some program improvements to be established by regulation and enacts two new statutes.

The principal statutes the bill would amend are the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the RCMP Superannuation Act and the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act. The new statutes that would be enacted by Bill C-55 are the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act.

I would like to take a few minutes to remind all members of the various fairness proposals and improvements contained in Bill C-55.

First, the Public Service Superannuation Act would be amended to provide pension coverage for part-time employees who work more than 12 hours a week. Coverage for existing part-time employees would be optional but it would be compulsory for employees engaged on a part-time basis in the future.

In addition, employees could choose to buy back periods of part-time service up to and including January 1, 1981. While providing all employees with increased flexibility to balance work and family responsibilities and still continue to accrue pension benefits, this proposal is expected to be particularly helpful to women, since they are most often the ones who decide to work on a part-time basis while their children are small.

Similarly, women with young families will be among the plan members most likely to take advantage of the bill's proposals with regard to paying back pension contributions for periods of leave without pay.

Current provisions can impose financial hardships which the bill would alleviate by allowing plan members to elect not to count periods of leave without pay in excess of three months. Later on the plan member could choose to count such periods and pay for them over a more extended elective service period.

The bill's proposal to establish an early retirement program for the operational employees of the Correctional Service of Canada would honour a long-standing commitment of this government and of previous governments.

I believe that all hon. members will support this initiative which would provide those individuals who work in the highly stressful environment of the various correctional institutions and associated programs of this country with the flexibility and financial resources to move on from that environment after a reasonable period of service. Such a program would contribute to the general public's security by ensuring that the corrections work force continues to be effective.

I am particularly pleased that the bill proposes improvements to the life insurance plans, known as the supplementary death benefits plans provided by the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act. Coverage would be doubled from one year's salary to twice the salary of the participant and the paid-up benefit—that is the benefit on which no participant contributions are required and the only benefit remaining after age 70—would increase from $500 to $5,000.

These improved benefits would be funded solely from the reserves in the death benefit account. There would be no extra cost to either the plan participants or to the taxpayers.

Most of the improvements in the pension plans I have mentioned so far have an important bearing on family financial planning. One of the new statutes that would be enacted by Bill C-55 would also assist in this area. I am speaking of the Pension Benefits Division Act which would allow benefits accrued under federal pension plans to be recognized as family assets that could be subject to a division on marital breakdown.

In most provincial jurisdictions and under the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act, plan sponsors are required to honour court orders for separation agreements that specify such a division. Up until now there has been no mechanism under the federal plan to permit what is commonly referred to as credit splitting.

The Pension Benefits Division Act would, subject to provisions of a court order or spousal agreement, permit a lump sum of up to 50 per cent of the value of the pension benefits accrued during this specific period to be transferred to a retirement savings vehicle for the legal or common law spouse. The plan member's pension benefits would then be adjusted accordingly. I believe that the Pension Benefits Division Act and regulations once enacted should provide valuable assistance to couples who are endeavouring to arrive at a fair and satisfactory property settlement.

One other improvement which responds to requests made over the years by retired Public Service employees, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and members of the RCMP is the opportunity afforded by Bill C-55 for pensioners under all the plans to provide survivor benefit coverage for a spouse married after retirement or after age 60 in the case of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP.

This elective opportunity would be accompanied by an actuarial adjustment to the plan member's own pension, an adjustment made necessary by the need to maintain the actuarial soundness of the pension plans and in keeping with the principle that the liabilities of pension funds are normally not extended to cover individuals who become family members after the plan member has retired.

I would also like to remind hon. members that the bill contains two provisions that would affect members of the Canadian forces and the RCMP only. One is the extension of the pension coverage to full-time members of the reserve force who left the regular forces without entitlement to a pension; the other is the standardization of age and service requirements under the RCMP Superannuation Act for voluntary retirement of officers with the requirements for other ranks.

I would not wish to go further without mentioning Bill C-55's proposals, which would apply to all the pension plans for the full funding of the plan member's benefits as they are earned. This means that the credits made to the various pension accounts, representing employer and plan members' contributions together with interest earn-

ings, must be sufficient to cover all future benefits of plan members as they are being earned.

As part of this exercise, the basic pension accounts of the PSSA, the CFSA and the RCMPSA would be combined with the relevant portions of the supplementary retirement benefits account. The responsibility for any unfunded liabilities would be assumed by the government. Employee contribution rates would remain the same and the government would contribute at whatever level is necessary to maintain full advanced funding of the benefits as they are earned.

• (1540)

I must emphasize that the bill's provisions for full funding increase the security of the plan and mean that there must also be sufficient funds credited to the account to cover the cost of all benefits acquired as of any given date. I trust that this will reassure those public service unions and pensioner organizations who voiced concerns at committee that the effective date of combining the accounts would allow the government to take a contributions holiday.

I have already mentioned that Bill C–55 would ensure that the federal pension plans comply with the Income Tax Act rules for registered pension plans in the same way as any other employer sponsored pension plans in Canada must comply.

Compliance would be achieved through a combination of statutory amendments to the existing plans, regulation–making authority and the enactment of a new statute, the Special Retirement Arrangements Act.

For example, statutory amendments would limit the level of salary on which benefits can be based so that those benefits would not exceed the maximum accrual of $1,722 for each year of plan membership permitted by the Income Tax Act and regulations.

At the same time, the bill provides a mechanism to continue elements of the program that exceed the income tax rules through retirement compensation arrangements. With the exception of the members of Parliament pension plan, these arrangements would be authorized under the proposed Special Retirement Arrangements Act. The retirement compensation arrangement for members of Parliament would be provided under the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act.

I am happy to report that Bill C–55's proposals have largely been welcomed by plan members. However, some public service unions and pensioner organizations have been critical of the regulation–making authority contained in the bill and have caused what I feel to be undue alarm by alleging that the authority for continued Income Tax Act compliance could be used by this government or any future government to change the indexing provisions of the pension plans.

I want to assure hon. members, as the President of the Treasury Board has assured the organizations involved, that there is no intention on the part of this government to use the regulation–making authority for any purpose other than Income Tax Act compliance. A thorough review has confirmed that the authority would not be used to modify or alter acquired rights including indexing.

However, in recognition of the concerns felt by plan members, the government proposed a motion to the committee, which was carried, that would explicitly limit the scope of the authority to compliance with the Income Tax Act and regulations as they read on January 15, 1992.

As well, an amendment has been included to reinforce the fact that no regulation under this authority can have a negative impact on accrued rights. The question of meeting future income tax requirements would be addressed as part of the promised stakeholder view of the fundamental elements of the pension plans.

Union criticism has also been directed at the proposed early retirement program for operational employees of the Correctional Service of Canada. While welcoming the program, the unions have let it be known that they would prefer to see all the details of the program set out in the statute as the authority for establishing a program instead of being left to regulation.

However, hon. members are well aware that the regulation mechanism is surrounded by safeguards to ensure that regulations are within statutory authority and that they are made public both before and after enactment. Regulations are, of course, also subject to a review by the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

In addition, unions may rest assured that the regulations of the Correctional Service program will not be developed without prior consultation.

The subject of consultation brings me now to the question of the stakeholder review. I have already indicated that Bill C–55 is one step in the Public Service reform process. The next step will be a review of the outstanding issues involved in the Public Service plans and the plan of members of Parliament.

Among the issues to be resolved for the Public Service plans are plan management, the rate of return to be credited to the funds, future inflation protection arrangements, and questions related to plan design including such things as conformity with the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act and the possible redesigning of survivors benefits. These are matters that were spoken about by witnesses before the committee.

As soon as Bill C–55 is passed, the president intends to meet with his advisory committee on the Public Service Superannuation Act to embark on the next step of the pension reform process. I know that the President of the Treasury Board is looking forward to working with representatives of the various stakeholders in the plan so that together they can come to a consensus and reach solutions that will be as satisfactory as possible to all parties concerned.

I therefore urge hon. members to expedite the passage of Bill C–55 so that we can implement the improvements it proposes and so that there will be no further delays in providing pension coverage for part-time employees, paying out the increased supplementary death benefits to the appropriate beneficiaries, or affording separated and divorced spouses a fair division of the pension benefits accrued under the federal plans.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, this bill has come to typify for many of us who have been involved intimately in every clause, every section and every word of it and in every moment of lengthy committee hearings and debate on the bill the approach of the government. It presents one thing and actually does another. It takes small improvements and surrounds them by a bush of unpleasant, unwelcomed and damaging changes. It looks after those who have the most but not those who have the least.

I want to go into some specifics to put some flesh on those contentions. Last December 10 the minister announced that there would be changes to the pension legislation. He announced that there would be improvements to remove some unfairnesses in the pension situation and that there would be changes to bring the act into conformity with the Income Tax Act. Nobody could disagree with those intentions. We as the Liberal Party did not disagree with those intentions and those principles at the time the bill was debated at second reading stage.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sorry to interrupt the member but I just want clarification. We are questioning the member who just spoke. I hope she is not starting her debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Under the Standing Orders there are no questions or comments. The first two speakers receive 40–minute speeches without questions or comments. Then we will go to the third speaker who will be from your party and who will get 20 minutes plus 10 minutes of questions and comments.

Mrs. Catterall: However, as the committee began its deliberations and finally had time to look at what the bill had to say, it became evident that the government had brought in some improvements to the bill as it had promised, some very minor improvements, but was then using this bill to hijack in a complete takeover of the management of the pension plan, contrary to the promises by the minister back in December that no changes would be made to the management of the pension plan except following a thorough and complete review in consultation with all the other stakeholders.

Those stakeholders include members of the Public Service who contribute 7.5 per cent of their income to their pension plans. It also includes hundreds of thousands of retired Public Service employees who collect benefits based on the contributions they made during their working years.

Despite the promise of the minister that any change in the management of the plan would be dealt with through a thorough and consultative review, this bill has been used to attempt to take over the management of the plan to an even greater degree than the government already does.

• (1550)

I want to go through several very specific aspects of how the government has approached this bill to explain clearly why we are voting against it despite some long awaited improvements in pensions, especially some that relate to charter rights of certain groups in society.

Pension reform has a long history going back over a decade. In the early 1980s there was a major parliamentary review of pension plans in Canada in recognition of the fact that Canada had an aging population and that in the very near future we would have a much larger proportion of our population in the retirement years.

There was genuine and legitimate public concern about how people would support themselves in retirement and whether the country's pension plans were adequate for people to live with dignity, decency and comfort after a lifetime of working.

That commission reported and recommended some major reforms to numerous pension plans and to legislation governing pension plans in Canada. Shortly after there was a review of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to see how pension plans in Canada, among other things, conformed with the charter. That committee also reported and recommended major changes to pension plans in Canada, including the public sector pension plans.

The government of the day responded to those two committee reports. It brought in the Pension Benefits Standards Act which applies to all federally regulated employers and their pension plans and told them what standards private sector pension plans had to meet. It did not and has not to this date brought its own public sector pension plans into conformity with that act.

Once again it is the government saying to everybody else in Canada: "This is what you have to do, but we can ignore our own laws; we can ignore our own rules".

It changed the Canada Pension Plan to meet the standards the committees having reviewed the plans had recommended. But while Public Service employees, Armed Forces employees and RCMP personnel continued to contribute generously to their pension plans, those pension plans continued not to meet the basic test of fairness that the government imposed on private sector plans and that it had implemented for the Canada Pension Plan.

The government continues to say "trust us". The government continues to say that it will sit down with employees, will review the pension plans, will see where changes and improvements need to be made, and will do it jointly and in partnership. Those are words the government uses very nicely but seems to have a hard time living by.

Let me make it clear why there is no trust on this issue. There is no trust because it is now close to a decade that people have waited for the pension plans to be brought into conformity with the recommendations of two major parliamentary committees and into conformity with the government's own legislation.

It is now nearly a decade that they have been waiting for the government to legislate a fair rate of return on the $73 billion worth of pension funds that Public Service employees, Armed Forces personnel and RCMP personnel contribute. It is now nearly a decade they have been waiting for some say in the management of their own money. But the government unilaterally continues to decide what the benefits are, what the contributions are, what the rate of return to the fund is, and continues to cheat people contributing to these plans of a fair rate of return on their own money.

It is now seven years since the President of the Treasury Board promised the review, five years since he promised it again, three years since he promised it the third and fourth times, and now six months since the latest President of the Treasury Board has promised a review.

Not one step has been taken to consult with the pensioners or to consult with the people, whose money we are talking about, to conduct that review. Why should there be any trust?

It is no wonder that people who have watched this process carefully and who have waited patiently for improvements and fairness in their pension plan, as the government has dictated for other pension plans, say that this is a government that operates by stealth, by hidden agendas, by secretive decision making, by subterfuge and by double-dealing. This bill demonstrates that very clearly.

The government likes to say that it wants to co-operate with its employees, it wants to co-operate with its partners in these pension funds. It has failed to listen to the testimony that was put before the committee. It failed to respond to the concerns of the pensioners and future pensioners and to members of the opposition. Very legitimate points that were raised in committee were not responded to and were not addressed.

There were numerous amendments put before this House in a last minute effort to try to get the government to live up to its word on this bill and on what it was supposed to do. Those amendments were unanimously turned down by the government.

Finally, the bill shows a complete lack of fairness. It is almost as if the government has trouble passing up any opportunity to profit from human misfortune. That is most evident in the comments I will make shortly on how divorced and separated wives of Public Service pensioners, armed forces or RCMP personnel are treated.

I want to talk about some of the specifics of the bill. The government has done, as we say and as we admit, a couple of minor improvements in the pension arrangements. For instance, the improvement in the supplementary death benefit is certainly a step forward. For a number of years now there has been a tremendous surplus in that supplementary death benefit account as people's salaries have improved and as their contributions have grown. The supplementary death benefit payment has remained at a paltry $500 for many, many years.

The fact that the government has finally chosen to give people the supplementary death benefit that they are paying for and that they have generated a surplus to pay for is not particularly credit-worthy except to say that it is a tad overdue.

The major claim the government has made to giving us a fairer pension plan is that it will now allow pension splitting. In other words, it will allow in its own plans a tiny portion of what is allowed under the Canada Pension Plan or what is required under private sector pension plans. Behind this small provision in the bill lie thousands of lives of misery, thousands of years of poverty, mostly for women and their children. The government has failed miserably to resolve that situation.

This bill continues to leave in the hands of not even parliamentarians but Treasury Board officials the discretion to deem somebody to be dead just so they do not have to pay them a pension. This means that somebody who is married to an armed forces officer or an RCMP officer—I refer to those services because that is where the situation arises most often—for the entire period of time that the pensioner was accumulating the pension, may be left without any pension. The government, despite knowing for a decade that this is a serious failure of this pension plan, has entirely failed to correct that problem.

• (1600)

There are women who have participated throughout a marriage in the accumulation of a pension benefit being denied that pension benefit. This bill makes it worse for the spouse of a member of these plans because it now reduces from three years to one year the period in which a second spouse or common law spouse can be recognized for pension purposes.

Someone who marries a pensioner later in life who had no part in the accumulation of the pension plan may benefit, where a long-time spouse is denied the pension, even when there is a separation agreement or a support order entitling that person to half the pension when the pensioner dies.

Treasury Board has the right to totally ignore the wishes of the pensioner and the needs of a lifetime spouse and to deny any pension whatsoever to that person.

Where is the family compact when we are talking about women who followed their husbands around the world in military service, who gave up any opportunity to develop their own careers, who in essence became part of the military in supporting the career of a military member, who never were able because of that to develop their own pension plans and who could be left in poverty by a government that would bring forward a bill like this and leave that unjust and unfair situation in place?

The government will say it is allowing court orders to say that a spouse can get a capital value. That is a help. It makes it easier for a couple separating to divide an asset without putting both of them into poverty. However, there is no guarantee that the spouse will have an asset that will anywhere produce the pension that the spouse has earned by being married.

In other words, this bill totally ignores the principle which has been well established in the courts that a pension acquired during a marriage belongs equally to both partners. Until we start dealing with those issues, any time a bill like this comes before us we are still going to have, as a member of Parliament said during Question Period, 80 per cent of women alone after the age of 65 living in poverty. How can we possibly justify that? How can the government possibly justify not correcting that situation when we have spent three months on this bill and it has spent nearly a decade on it?

The bill does not deal at all with the problem, of which the government is well aware, of a disabled person getting a pension and then being deprived of a full pension if their marriage breaks up because of the disability.

Regarding correctional services, this is one very positive step forward, long overdue. I can only ask the minister if this legislation allows correctional services workers to take early retirement, why is the government afraid to spell out clearly in the legislation what that is going to mean, how much it is going to cost them and what they are going to be entitled to?

Why do I get an answer back from the President of Treasury Board that we cannot include northern correctional services workers in this provision because they have not asked for it? If it is fair for correctional services workers in southern Ontario, it is fair for correctional services workers in the north.

Why is the government unsympathetic to including airport fire-fighters in this same provision? Their work is dangerous. It is stressful.

For all the reasons that early retirement is provided to correctional services workers it should be provided to others who are engaged in similarly dangerous, stressful work in which virtually the quality of their work cannot be maintained after a certain period of time.

The government is including part-time workers but it has failed to listen to pleas to include seasonal workers. These seasonal workers may work the equivalent of a year and a half in eight months every year, yet they are not allowed to contribute to the full value of the work they have performed for the Government of Canada.

For seven years this government has been promising a thorough review of the pension plans, for seven years it has been promising action on these items, yet we are presented with a bill that does not deal with these issues.

I spoke about fairness and about treating people with some equity. Therefore, I can only ask the government why officers in the Armed Forces and the RCMP, senior management and members of Parliament—in their bill—are allowed to have a 60 per cent survivor pension for their spouses but public service employees, regular run-of-the-mill RCMP personnel and Armed Forces personnel are not?

The government knows perfectly well, although it refuses to produce studies on what it would cost, that providing a 60 per cent survivor benefit for pensioners of public service employees, RCMP and Armed Forces personnel would probably cost less than one-half of one per cent. Yet it would be the difference between living in comfort and dignity and living in poverty for the survivors.

The government has even had trouble living with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this bill. It has perpetuated and continually failed to accept amendments to remove a clause that is so offensive to the Charter because it is based on discrimination according to age. It is offensive to women because it is based on the concept that women only marry retired pensioners to get their money, and offensive to retirees because it is based on the concept that nobody could possibly be interested in marrying a man over the age of 65 except for his pension. This is the famous gold-digger clause. If one is over 60 one cannot be presumed to have a wife who has married that person over 60 simply because she loves him and wants to spend the rest of her life with him.

Therefore, the government has to protect pensioners against women like that by saying that if someone marries somebody after the age of 60 when they are retired that person does not have any entitlement to the survivor's pension, even though that retiree has contributed to that pension and to the survivor's rights under that pension for an entire career.

I think we all know that people are living longer now, they are healthier longer and they are active longer. Life goes on, and people do get remarried. A person came before us whose wife had died when he was somewhat younger. He married again after the age of 60 and expects to live a long and happy life with his second wife, but she will not get any survivor's pension when he dies. He is worried and concerned about that because it is pretty difficult when on a pension to provide a second pension for a second spouse.

I want to talk about part-time employees. The government has claimed that one of the major victories of this bill is that it would allow part-time employees to contribute to the pension plan. It does and that is important. It is important for a lot of women who work for the Public Service and choose to work part-time for a portion or all of their careers because they like to balance their work with their family responsibilities. They may work part-time for a short period after they have been on maternity leave, or for a longer period as they help their children get established.

Yes, this bill does allow, in a very limited way, part-timers to be included in the pension plan.

• (1610)

If the member for Ottawa—Vanier were to enter the Public Service at the age of 60 he could contribute for service in the private sector back to the time when he was 18 years old and he entered the labour force. He could then have a full pension when he retired. However, part-timers are not going to be able to do that. They are only going to be able to go back a limited number of years.

What right do we have to say that the work of part-timers is less worthy than the work of the member for Ottawa—Vanier if he were to enter the Public Service and to say that they do not have the right to go back to the beginning of their working careers and contribute for all their part-time work because it is deemed to be less valuable and less worthy? That is straight discrimination.

It is even worse than that. The bill says that unless a person was contributing to the pension plan the day this bill is passed they cannot contribute for part-time service. In other words, the vast majority of the part-timers now in the Public Service will not be able to take advantage of this despite the glorious announcements by the minister and the government.

Once again duplicity and deception, trying to pull the wool over people's eyes, seem to be the way this government operates. Give me one good reason why somebody who is working full time today and contributing to the pension plan should be able to contribute for their part-time service in the past or in the future but somebody who is working part time today, even though they may have contributed for ten years to the pension plan, cannot contribute for their part-time service. How can that possibly be fair?

The parliamentary secretary himself said that it is mostly women who are part-time workers. Why does he want to continue to discriminate against mostly women?

While the member for Ottawa—Vanier could enter the Public Service and decide 10 years from now to buy back his service back to 1940, part-time employees have only a year to decide that they want to buy back their service.

As I said in my speech on second reading, even when the government tries to do something a little bit good it does a very little bit and it tries not to go too far.

This concerns the issue of trust and honesty with people. The government said clearly that issues about the management of the pension fund would be left to a complete study and review that would be made in consultation with the employees and with the pensioners. Yet in this bill it has failed to set up any kind of management board that would give employees any stake in the management of their own money.

Six months after the minister's announcement not one step has been taken to meet with those pensioners, to meet with representatives of the employees and talk about how that review is being done. After waiting seven years, since 1985, through successive presidents of Treasury Board, for a promised review is it any wonder the employees and pensioners do not really believe that a review is going to happen now, any more than it has happened in the past?

On the other hand the government, having promised that review, has used this legislation which it said did other things to try to shoehorn in a complete takeover of the rules by which the pension fund is managed: how much is contributed, how much in benefits are paid, whether indexing is paid, how much the government contributes, what the employees have to pay. The government has tried to take all this over in this bill.

How can the government tell people: "We want to sit down with you and we are going to work out the management of the plan"? It has tried to do those things that are in its own interest.

Let me give some examples. The current amount of money in the pension fund is over $75 billion. The surpluses in the three funds in 1991 were $23.5 billion.

Now by doing as the government tried to do by saying: "We will just contribute what is needed to meet the requirements of the fund", it would have essentially been taking over that $23.5 billion of surplus money which does not belong to it. Public Service employees have contributed more year by year for over 30 years than has ever come out of that pension plan.

With this bill, the government thought it had a sneaky way of getting its hands on some of that money rather than keeping it to pay out pensions. But these figures also give a lie to statements of various ministers over the last seven years that somehow we have to bring the Public Service pension plans more into line with the private sector, that they are underfunded, that they are a huge burden of debt on the Canadian taxpayers.

I read the figure again, a $23.5 billion surplus last year. Who do you think gets to use that money and pay interest on it at less than market rates? The government. Who do you think benefits? The Canadian taxpayers because that is a direct reduction off the debt and the deficit. Who do you think loses? The pensioners and the contributors because this government refuses to treat that fund as any other well-invested fund and return to it a suitable rate of interest and rate of return.

The bill sets up something I consider far more dangerous than what is in it and that is what is not in it. It follows a consistent pattern of the government to do more and more by regulation. In other words, government takes out of the hands of Parliament the right to review legislation and puts it into the hands of administrators to decide what should happen.

When I look at a bill like this and Bill C-26 which is going to be coming before us later today, I wonder why we have a Parliament at all. Why do we not just have a growing number of bureaucrats to administer, devise, design and print a growing number of regulations? We would never need to meet in this Chamber at all. You and I, Mr. Speaker, could go out and play golf four days out of five and never be missed.

When reading a piece of legislation, people are entitled to know what their rights and obligations are. People are entitled to know that in a democratic government decisions are made in this Chamber about what is in legislation, not in closed rooms and not by administrators who are not accountable to the public. People need to know we are not going to have an army of administrators administering a growing volume of regulations.

I simply cannot understand the contradiction of a government that says it wants to deregulate and then brings in a bill like this, which does not really say anything except it will pass regulations to do it.

That does not let people know what their rights are. It does not let them know what their obligations are. It removes from Parliament the right to decide how public money is going to be spent and what public policy is going to be.

One of the big contentious issues has been whether or not this legislation touches indexing of pensions and other rights that people have under the bill now. I want to quote from a letter from the President of Treasury Board to the committee: "There will be no change to the indexing benefits except by statute. The amendment to be proposed will make it absolutely clear that this is the case."

That amendment does not make it absolutely clear. The minister has not met his commitment to this House, to the committee, to the pensioners and to the contributors for whom he is the trustee of their money. It is not his money, not the government's, not mine and not the member for Carleton—Gloucester's; it is their money.

• (1620)

On Friday, the government refused to accept a number of amendments that would have met the minister's commitment to make it absolutely clear. The government had amendments before it which said "for greater clarity, standard provision in many bills". It refused to accept that amendment. Is it any wonder the pensioners do not trust the government? Is it any wonder Canadians do not trust it?

Finally, if we have any doubt about whether this government still believes in democracy and whether it still believes in this Parliament's right to set the laws of the land, there is a provision in this act that is the most shameful and most shocking I have ever seen in a piece of legislation. It undermines the right of Parliament and the right of Canadians to have their laws made here by their elected representatives.

Let me state what the provision in the bill says and then ask all parliamentarians who believe in democracy whether they want to vote for it. That provision of the bill says: "For greater clarity, where there is any conflict between the regulations and the legislation passed by this Parliament the regulations prevail, not the legislation".

That is a wide open door for a future government, a future cabinet to make regulations contradicting the legislation passed by Parliament. Is that acceptable to anyone in this House? It is not acceptable to me. It is not acceptable to the Liberal Party which believes that the laws of the land should be made by Parliament and the elected representatives of the people.

Others members of the Official Opposition will have a great deal to say about this bill. I personally find it regrettable that the government, after having a Charter of Rights and Freedoms for 10 years, could not at least have chosen to ensure that pensions in its own domain are fair.

It has passed laws to create fairness in the CPP. It has passed laws to impose fairness on private sector pension plans. But it has totally ignored the needs of people based on gender, age, marital status, and disability in this bill. It has failed to be honest about its intentions with this bill.

On behalf of the members of the committee and certainly members of the Liberal Party, I personally want to thank all the employees' associations, private individuals, women fighting for fair pensions, fighting to be recognized as still being alive even though they are separated or divorced, and retirees, many of whom have worked in government and are very knowledgeable and expert in pension matters. I thank all of them for the work they have done on this bill and for the expertise that none of us individually could have brought to it.

I express my regret that the government chose not to table with the committee its studies on pension matters which made it more difficult for us to do our work thoroughly and well.

I express my great regret that at this point in time we do not have a bill before us that all parliamentarians can support enthusiastically.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure to speak on Bill C–55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact a special retirement arrangements act and the pension benefits division act which I have examined very carefully for the New Democratic caucus. We will be voting against this piece of legislation.

First of all, I want to recognize in a very serious way the people who came before the committee.

The comments made by the member for Burlington certainly do not reflect the hundreds of letters that I have received from across Canada with regard to Bill C–55. He said that there is general agreement from the members. I certainly have not heard that.

We did not hear that from the witnesses who came before the committee. The Treasury Board Secretariat was the first one who came before the committee and outlined the bill. Then we got into the real disturbing parts of the bill when the Professional Institute of Public Servants came before the committee with a very well documented presentation, and I commend it for that.

The Federal Superannuates National Association came before the committee and also expressed its concerns with regard to this piece of legislation. The Public Service Alliance of Canada also recommended numerous amendments, some of which the government did accept.

Others who came before the committee were William Lewis, Robert Battram, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans Association, the Association of Members of Division "C" of the Mounted Police, A.J. Campbell, Organization of Spouses of Military Members, Canadian Pensioners Concerned Incorporated, the Armed Forces Pensioners'/Annuitants' Association of Canada, and the Committee of Spousal and Children's Pensions Survival and Related Benefits.

I want to say that each one of those groups outdid itself in its presentation in explaining very clearly to the committee the very, very serious ramifications of this piece of legislation.

I think it only fair that I start by talking about several of the good features of the bill. The bill proposes some changes which we are very pleased to see, such as federal part-time workers now being covered in pension plans. Finally, after years of lobbying, federal part-time workers can now become members of the superannuation plans. This will especially help women, who form the majority of part-time workers. They are an important target group for pension reform and this new provision will help give them more income after retirement.

There is also the new early retirement for correctional workers. We are pleased to see the new early retirement act for correctional workers, another idea that has been pressed for at least a decade. Correctional workers have highly stressful jobs and deserve the kind of unreduced early retirement plans that air traffic comptrollers have had for some time now.

Regarding the new pension splitting, the new pension division act instructs the federal government to enforce court ordered divisions of federal pension credits under marital breakdown. This idea is very good and very late. It is good to see the government has finally responded. There are many problems with the method the government has chosen, however.

On behalf of the NDP I proposed over 25 amendments to this bill in committee and in the House. I and my colleagues moved many more amendments, attempting to make this a better law. The government agreed and proposed modified versions of several of our amendments. I commend it for that. Despite these improvements, however, many serious problems remain.

I would like to talk about the five major areas of concern: one, the new regulatory authority; two, the new early retirement plan for correctional workers; three, supplementary death benefits; four, MP pensions; five, the new division benefits division scheme.

On the new regulatory authority, although simple for compliance with the Income Tax Act, the bill also gives the government new regulatory authority over fundamental aspects of federal employee pension plans. This is a new fundamental shift away from the scrutiny of Parliament. Such a change is, at best, unnecessary and at worst highly dangerous and open to abuse by the present and future governments.

As the member for Ottawa West has indicated, what this House is allowing and what this government is doing is taking authority away from the House of Commons and putting it into regulations and through Governor in Council it can make changes to pension plans in the future. This is a very dangerous method of dealing with pension plans.

• (1630)

It was set out that the following were proposed to be determined by regulations. Here are the kinds of regulations we are going to be getting into when we get into this type of thing: Rate of interest on superannuate account will be done by regulations; periods of amortization, regulations again; amount of government contributions, regulations again; control of account surpluses, regulations again; general authority to comply with the income tax whenever necessary, regulations again.

I put forward 15 amendments to take away the sweeping grab for regulatory power and restore these fundamental issues to Parliament.

The government came forward with some amendments due to NDP pressure and lobbying by federal employees' unions. The government has agreed in committee to amend the bill to restore into law the existing provisions for: calculating the rate of interest on the superannuate account, the fixed periods of amortization, guaranteed matching employer contributions and compliance with the Income Tax Act as of 1992. These issues are far from being resolved because they do need to be reviewed urgently, but the amendments to the bill at least reinstate the provisions which exist in the current acts.

Turning to indexing, despite assurances from the minister to make it absolutely clear that there would be no changes to the indexing benefits except by statute, there remains general regulatory authority for future changes to and reductions in federal government pensions.

It is a matter of trust. The legal wording of the regulatory clauses is ambiguous enough to give us reason to doubt this government's intention. Even if this government could be trusted, the point is that this law will be around long after this government. Federal employees must be protected from future abuses as well.

Unfortunately we have many reasons to be sceptical of this government.

Turning to advisory committees, the government has not consulted with the advisory committee of the Public Service Superannuation Act for five years despite the drafting of this legislation. We had a member of the advisory committee come before the committee on one of the presentations who told us that they had not met for over five years. That is shameful, with new legislation coming to the House and it has not even had discussions in an advisory capacity with the advisory committee.

The NDP urges the minister to fulfil his promise to consult with all stakeholders and to review the fundamental issues of rate of return, inflation protection and planned management.

The federal government is both the employer and the administrator of the pension plan of federal employees. There is a need for greater involvement of all stakeholders than in the past.

The NDP further urges the government to replace the ineffective advisory committees with a more authoritative joint management board. A management board should be comprised of equal representation of employers, employees, retirees, and at least one spousal representative. It should be chaired by an appointee of the Treasury Board. The board should be required by law to meet and to consult regularly.

Turning to government resistance, the government steadfastly refuses to establish such a board despite growing pressure. With Bill C-55 the Governor in Council appears to have even more power to change federal pensions unilaterally despite employee and retiree concerns. This is unacceptable.

The original bill threatened to take a huge step backward. As amended, the bill is less dangerous but remains regressive.

There was a clause in the bill, clause 32, which I asked to have removed. It read:

> The Governor in Council may, for the purpose of ensuring the practical and fair application of this Act in any case where regulations are or have been made under subsection (1), make regulations
>
> (a) adapting any provision of this Act or of any regulation made under this Act;
>
> (b) respecting the application of any provision of this Act or of any regulation made under this Act; and
>
> (c) generally as the Governor in Council may consider necessary for that purpose.

These are excessive powers being given to a group of people to sit down, to make recommendations and to make changes without even consulting the House of Commons. It is dangerous indeed.

The early retirement for correctional workers clause is new. I commend the government for recognizing them, but it has serious flaws. The bill creates a new early retirement plan for correctional service employees in recognition of the highly stressful nature of their work. This is a good idea that the workers have demanded for many years.

However, the plan is seriously ambiguous. The government had promised that correctional workers arrangements would follow the model of the current act which prescribes the rules for early retirement of air traffic controllers. Mysteriously most details about specific arrangements for correctional workers have been left to regulations which the government has yet to reveal. Again, regulations that we know nothing about.

I have recommended that the government provide the regulations outlining the conditions of early retirement or adopt amendments which give legislative sanction to the March 8, 1982 agreement reached between the union of Solicitor General employees and Correctional Services Canada. The government has refused to do either.

I also attempted to amend the bill to include former employees of the the Government of Canada who are employed by the governments of Yukon and the Northwest Territories. This would have laid the legislative basis for future agreements between these governments and their workers.

In committee we pressed the government to raise the benefits from the current 50 per cent limit to at least 60 per cent, which is the case with many other plans such as the privileged group of RCMP senior officers and MPs. The government promised that this issue would be dealt with when the superannuation plans were reviewed. This is another urgent reason to set up the review and we look forward to the government taking action on this matter.

Turning to ex-spouses deemed dead, the bill fails to delete the clause that gives Treasury Board the power to deem ex-spouses dead for the purpose of survivors' benefits. Treasury Board argues that this is simply a way of handling cases where ex-spouses cannot be located.

However, witnesses believe the government wants to keep this clause in order to exclude former spouses from their share of death benefits based on the continuing assumption that ex-spouses have chosen to be disenfranchised, to opt out. How ridiculous can it be? This is archaic and unfair and should be removed from the legislation.

On a preferable system for prorated division, the NDP prefers a system that recognizes the period of contributions during cohabitation under the marriage contract and respects past divisions of assets under separation or divorce court settlements. The death benefit should be divided on a prorated basis to ex-spouses based on the length of contribution during years of marriage, not the moment of death.

The Canada Pension Plan provides for the length of time that the husband and spouse live and work together. It recognizes it. Why can we not do it in this piece of legislation?

Spouses at the time of death now, including post-retirement spouses, should not be allowed to be elected by the plan member as their sole beneficiary. The beneficiary should be irrevocably designed by law on a prorated basis.

With regard to MPs' pensions, the Leader of the New Democratic Party has called for this to be handled by an outside group.

• (1640)

I applaud her efforts to get the government to have this done by an outside group. I am not going to comment with regard to that issue. I am sure when it has studied fully it will come back with the kind of recommendations that will probably satisfy the House of Commons.

On the new pension divisions act, the bill creates a mechanism for federal employees pension credit splitting upon marriage breakdown. Former spouses will have the option of applying for a court ordered share of the plan members pension.

On constituency, this is an idea that has been a long time coming. The Canada Pension Plan has for years provided for the automatic division of pension credits. Since 1987 with the passage of the Pension Benefits Standards Act, federally regulated employees in the same sector have been entitled to various methods of pension credit splitting.

Now, five years later, the federal government has extended the same protection to its own employees. Divorced and separated spouses of federal employees have lobbied for years to achieve such a law.

I remind the House that older single women are the poorest citizens of Canada and one of the major reasons for this poverty is the inferior pension benefits provided to them. I commend the government for finally responding to this need.

There are problems, however. I am extremely disappointed to say that the method of the division proposed in this bill is deeply flawed and does not provide consistent treatment of federally regulated employees in the public and private sectors.

The government had the obvious models of the Canada Pension Plan and the automatic division system of the flexible provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act, the other model. The government chose neither.

Instead, the government decided to limit benefit distributions to one method, the much more restrictive, cumbersome and less fair lump sum transfer. This method is not easily accessible and has many built-in time delays and court costs. An evaluation of those lump sum amounts fails to take into account many important factors.

There is a better option; namely, the imposition of a trust. A trust would be imposed on the plan administrators to immediately convey an interest to a spouse on a portion of the pension. The non-member spouse would be considered to be a pension plan member who has terminated employment. There might be an option of keeping the benefits in the plan and being entitled to a deferred payment from the plan.

The federal superannuation plan would provide monthly pension cheques to the spouse when the spouse becomes eligible to receive them. Ex-spouses could pay an administration fee for the services of the trust.

On committee amendments, the NDP had four of our amendments accepted by the government in committee. The government proposed its version, disclosure. The bill will now ensure that non-plan member spouses have equal access to their spouses' pension information. This will help former spouses to obtain a fair settlement of a pension they helped to earn.

On period of co-habitation, this ensures that the absence of a court order specifying the period of co-habitation. The minister must use provincial family law guidelines in determining the period.

On valuation regulations, two amendments provided direction to regulations of pension valuations to follow sound and fair methods.

There was another motion with regard to surpluses. I tried to have that motion introduced in the House. It was moved out of order. It was a very important motion because the issue of surpluses in the pension fund is one that should not be done by regulation. It should be done by legislation. The NDP's motions tried to identify those various areas.

In summing up, I want to say how really enthused I was as I entered into deliberations on this bill and looked at the possibilities of many changes where we could have had a management board set up at no cost to the government. A management board could have been brought together with some government people, the employees, the retirees and spousal representation so they had some input as to what was going on.

When we failed at that we tried to get them on an advisory board, but we could not even get them included on that.

It is not the intention of the government to allow input from the outside. This is clearly a regulatory bill. It has moved away from legislation into regulation and it will be regulated by the government.

Because everyone seems to feel that there is protection there with regard to indexing, let me stress that all it would take for this government to make those changes would be some changes in the Income Tax Act that would nullify benefits within the indexing of pensions.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on third reading on Bill C-55 with great disappointment. I believed the government in its first communiqué to the people of Canada, that this bill was to correct certain anomalies and improve the pension of our public servants, RCMP and armed forces personnel.

Those of us who have a special interest in Public Service pensions have been well aware for some time that many changes are needed to make the regime of Public Service pensions fairer, even to simply bring it in line with the rules governing other pension plans.

I want to pay special tribute to a few members of this House. It strikes me that we had a rather good contribution to the debate last Friday when the member for Restigouche—Chaleur tabled I believe about 77 Liberal amendments which were all debated but defeated by the government. I want to pay tribute also to the member for Carleton—Gloucester who has a deep interest in pensions, the member for Ottawa South and his great knowledge of the whole question, and especially to my colleague from Ottawa West who has made a good contribution to this debate today in the beginning of the debate on third reading, an important stage of any bill.

I recognize that we will have to persevere and continue in this work of ours to try and improve the pension plans of public servants to make them fairer. That is the theme we should try and development.

Unfortunately the Conservative government has not taken the opportunity to make the Public Service regime fairer. An opportunity to amend this pension regime does not come every day and one must recognize that. It is astonishing to me that the government has not taken its responsibility in this area more seriously. It gives us hope but it did not produce anything of any substantive change, in my view, to make this plan fairer.

Perhaps I should not be surprised, given the attitude this government has shown toward the Public Service of Canada. Over the last seven years it has targeted the Public Service unfairly, mostly for political gain. It has made the Public Service of Canada the scapegoat for its own mismanagement and destroyed morale in the Public Service.

The Tories have been negligent in their responsibilities. As members of the Official Opposition, my colleagues and I have done our best to counter this negligence. Our efforts were obvious in the number of our amendments in committee, which were mostly defeated by the Conservative members. We tried in the House to come back with some substantive arguments to convince the majority of this House that the report stage

could change things and make an improvement but it was to no avail.

I want to go on to explain some of the amendments that we wanted to make to the bill to make it fairer, more current, to improve the future for pensioners and to make them more confident in their ability to meet the challenges of the coming years. The government will now be giving pensioners who marry after the age of 60 the option of arranging for survivor's benefits. We wanted to amend this provision so that pensioners would not have to reduce their own pensions to do so. It was defeated.

• (1650)

We asked the government to provide the option of remedial action to employees to give them the same option provided to deputy heads, senior military personnel, RCMP and political appointees. We asked for fairness for most of our public servants. We asked that they be treated as well, if not better, than the leaders of the services, who are usually the big-shots in the system and have access to the regulations in the legislation and can change them to fit their purposes. However, this is not available to the average public servant. The remedial action was important and it was defeated by the government.

We asked the government to consider establishing a structured way to receive advice. God knows it needs advice. We asked that the regulations receive the approval of the pension committees of the Public Service, the RCMP, and the Canadian forces. We asked that the government listen attentively to what they had to tell them with regard to pensions.

Pensions are non-negotiable, and public servants would like to have some kind of contribution to the betterment of those plans. That was defeated.

We asked the government to consider the concerns of spouses. We have to commend groups like Canadian Pensioners Concerned Inc. and Group Action for Individual Needs. Many people in my riding wrote to me and gave advice and the benefit of their experience in this field, and I thank them for those efforts. Again, the government turned a deaf ear.

These people to whom I have just referred have made significant contributions to their families over the years, giving up their own careers and in many cases chances for employment. Pension building was not allowed for them, and because of that they have been impoverished.

Sometimes they even sat with their spouse as representatives of this country in other countries. Many spouses choose to take their share of a pension as support rather than as an asset in order to have enforcement. These spouses should be able to apply for benefits under the new Pensions Benefit Division Act. We made an amendment, we proposed that and the government defeated it.

Another amendment my colleagues and I suggested to make this bill more fair would require that a legal spouse be informed should the other spouse, living in a different location, take on a common-law relationship. Measures can be taken to avoid having innocent people hurt by these kinds of developments. We wanted to add a clause to the bill which says that the spouse who is legally entitled to pension benefits should receive half of the contributions she and her spouse made. That is fair, and it was defeated.

We introduced an amendment to enable the government to award the amount of pension stated in a court order regarding division of assets. The bill provided that the amount of pension to be transferred was to to be 50 per cent or less, regardless of the court order. We believe the government should award what is in the court order. That was defeated.

We wanted to delete sections which gave the minister the power to declare a period as the period of co-habitation, even in the absence of a court order or spousal agreement specifying such a period. We believe that spouses should not lose part of the pension because the minister did not exercise his power to declare the period of co-habitation. Again, that was defeated.

We also wanted to delete the part of the act saying that pension credits cannot be divided in the absence of a court order or agreement. In our view, it gave the minister the power to ignore a provincial court order or agreement between spouses as to the division of benefits for unnamed reasons. This provision could be unconstitutional since marital property is under provincial jurisdiction.

We put forward an amendment to ensure that the government consult interested parties about regulations, in particular organizations representing spouses or former spouses. Again, that was defeated.

Did the government listen to suggestions made by us in committee with an open mind? Did it agree that fairness is an objective that we should all seek? It would appear not, since it defeated all of our amendments and all the amendments that were proposed by the witnesses.

We called on the government to bring the Public Service pension regime into line with the standards established by the pension benefits standards legislation, introduced in 1985 by this government.

We told it: "Abide by the law, abide by your own standards that you imposed upon the private sector". The pension benefits standards legislation introduced in 1985 established the minimum standards that private sector employers have to honour in managing their employee pension plans. One of the main provisions of the pension benefit standards legislation was to ensure that private sector employers observe the 1966 Canada Pension Plan rules regarding widows' pensions. These rules state that widows must receive a minimum 60 per cent pension. This has been part of our law for 25 years under the CPP. It became a requirement for private pension plans five years ago.

However, under the Public Service pension regime widows receive 50 per cent. Bill C–55 makes no effort to change this. Are the Tories concerned about the large number of older women in Canada living in poverty? Why is it that a public servant is entitled to only 50 per cent and all the others are entitled to 60 per cent by legislation?

It is clear to me that the government should treat its own employees according to the rules it has established for other pension plans. It is only fair to do so.

In 1985 the President of the Treasury Board said the Public Service pension regime would meet the rules of the Pension Benefits Standards Act. I was here when that statement was made. Why did it not happen? Why can't this Conservative government be fair to its own public servants? It is no wonder that many public servants are suspicious of the government's intentions regarding their futures and their pensions, and have serious hesitations about this legislation.

Public servants do not trust the government's intentions. Many are worried about the government's management of their own pension fund. Some even leave the Public Service before their pension fund is "locked in", so they can cash it out because they do not trust the government.

Once again, in the management of this pension plan the government does not follow the rules it has established for other pension plans.

The most recent report of the Auditor General sheds light on this issue. It notes that the four key standards established by the Pension Benefits Standards Act are relevant to the Public Service pension regime. Those four conditions are:

1. An employer ensures that the pension fund moneys are held in trust for the members and former members of the pension plans;

2. A pension fund shall be administered by a board of trustees pension committee, one member of which shall be a representative of the employees;

3. The administrator shall have a clear fiduciary responsibility for the fund;

4. The fund shall be prudently invested.

These four criteria do not apply to Public Service funds.

• (1700)

The report notes that these standards are "intended to protect the interests of plan members by ensuring that meeting pension promises is not dependent on the good will of employers". This government acts as plan sponsor, custodian, trustee, administrator and investment policy maker for its Public Service pension fund. This violates the standards established by the Pension Standards Benefit Act, an act of this Parliament, a bill of that government and it does not follow it.

The government borrows from the pension fund to finance its own needs at rates it sets itself. The member from Ottawa West mentioned the amount. It is above $71 billion. These rates are below what other pension plans earn. The difference in return, and it is not me saying it, Mr. Speaker, it is the Auditor General of Canada, the bookkeeper of this country who says it, has varied on average from 1.5 per cent to 2.3 per cent between 1959 and 1990 from plans which were market invested.

Furthermore, the government's largest internal borrowings are from the pension fund. As of the end of 1989–90, $71 billion was owed to the pension accounts by the Government of Canada. It is obvious that the government is in conflict of interest. It should be prudently managing the Public Service pension fund, but it wants to minimize the cost of its borrowing. Why would it pay a higher rate of return for the money it borrows from the Public Service pension funds when it is obliged to minimize its borrowing costs.

Under Bill C–55, the government proposes that the minister alone shall decide how much the government will contribute to the various pension plans, what rates of interest it will pay and that this will be done through regulation. Will the government consult the employees about this? Past experience tells us that it will not. This bill basically allows a government to reduce its deficit in the short term, but prepares the way for a much larger deficit in the future as pension obligations come due. A whole speech could be made on that. I have not got the time to do so today, but I will some day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, while the negative aspects of Bill C–55 outweigh the positive ones, certain provisions do show some improvement, and I acknowledge that. Take for instance the combining of retirement benefits and supplementary benefits in the Public Service superannuation account.

At the present time, supplementary benefits are invested at a rate of interest for five years, while the superannuation account is invested based on a 20–year rate, which means that there was indeed a difference between the supplementary benefits fund and the pension fund.

Once combined, the indexing factor would apply to all Public Service pensions, which could mean an improved yield, given the more favourable rates on 20–year bonds.

Although I have some reservations about the future regulations, I am happy that employees who work 12 hours a week and more will now be allowed to contribute to the fund and entitled to pro rata benefits. Employees will have the option of buying back previous years of part–time work since 1980.

On May 15, 1991, I tabled before this House a motion to put in place for correctional staff an early retirement package similar to that of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I figured that the Canadian men and women who work in correctional services deserve to retire early if they so wish. So, I am pleased to see that Bill C–55 incorporates this objective and calls for such a package to make early retirement available to the correctional staff.

While these few provisions are positive, Bill C–55, as I said, is totally flawed. Government failed to deal with the most controversial and contentious management issues. For instance, it did not deal with the rate of return on investments in pension plans similar to those in the private sector. It did not provide for safeguards against inflation like indexation either. It did not deal with the issue of how the plan should be managed, designing a basic plan or raising surviving spouse benefits from 50 to 60 per cent.

This bill is a real disappointment for us. Instead, the Conservative government has given itself many regulatory powers. You only have to flip through the bill to recognize that a lot of things in it are not right. In fact, one of the more scary provisions of the bill provides that the provisions of the regulations will prevail in the event of inconsistencies between the act and its regulations. This sets a dangerous precedent for any other future pieces of legislation. Some will even say that it is *ultra vires*, undemocratic and contrary to the Constitution. I am going to read Section 80(3) which is as follows:

> (3) In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) and the provisions of this Act or any other regulations made under this Act, the provisions of the regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

Laws are made here, in this Parliament, not through regulations. We are opposed to this provision which intends to change the way we deal with pensions. In view of the negative aspects of—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the member's time has expired.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to this debate today and at report stage on Friday. I find it extremely informative.

I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to have a public meeting on Public Service issues in my constituency of Edmonton Southwest. Prior to doing so I consulted with Mr. Daryl Bean, the president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Iris Craig of the Professional Institute of the Public Service and of course with Mr. John Edwards of PS2000.

My objective was to inform myself on Public Service issues. It became very clear that there was a fair amount of interest and an alarming amount of misinformation about the provisions of Bill C–55. I think the debate and the record of the debate will in some cases have clarified that and in some cases, without naming the sources of the confusion, have confused the issue.

The objective of the bill of course is to bring Public Service and members of Parliament pensions in line with the requirements of the Income Tax Act. That is truly the objective of the bill. There are those, and I do not fault them for their motives, who have sought to have the bill reach out beyond its own capacity to include other areas of operation of pensions, some worthy and some questionable.

The President of the Treasury Board gave an undertaking on Thursday last which I think is a comfort to all Canadians; that is that the whole question of pensions of members of Parliament will be referred to an outside committee for review and recommendations. This move I think is overdue. I am pleased that the President of the Treasury Board has agreed to it at this time. He had given some earlier indications that he would be prepared to do it, but he made the formal undertaking last Thursday.

That will have the effect of sending a message to the Canadian public that we do not think we are above the law or we do not think that we are in a position to always operate without some other input. I have found it interesting that many critics of MPs' pensions who have been stimulated by the ads of the National Citizens' Coalition, which my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell referred to the other day in debate, have been badly misinformed.

The fact of the matter is that regardless of the merits of that scheme or the lack of merit of the scheme, there is a basic question that remains in the minds of the Canadian public. That is, how is it you folks can deal with these matters on your own without some other input, and how is it that it can happen regardless of the merits?

• (1710)

Mr. Summerville in his ads of course does not point out that the scheme has been in place since 1952 and in its present form since 1972. He seems to indicate it is something that has been foisted recently upon the Canadian public.

Regardless of those facts, the review will begin and all of us, regardless of party and regardless of our approach to the issue, will welcome that review.

The debate is proceeding rather well and I do not propose to intervene much longer other than to move:

That the question be now put.

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the government is at it again. We now have a motion that the question now be put. That prevents any amendment from anyone in this House to be put once this is adopted. The government is imposing closure on pension plans. That is what it is doing. It is trying to prevent the democratic expression of this House on matters of great importance to many of us. I find that absolutely abhorrent.

I see the government Whip laughing. Maybe he will want to speak in this debate. He knows a lot about pension plans and I would like to hear him defend the government on this issue. I know him to be a fair man and being a fair man he will have a hard time defending this legislation.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary a simple question. Why does this government—and he represents government—exclude itself, exempt itself, from the standards established by the government under the pension benefits standards legislation passed five years ago?

What has the government got against fairness? Why is the government saying to Canadians: Do as I say, not as I do? Why is this parliamentary secretary at this time

cutting off debate—he knows he is doing it—to prevent his own members from explaining, defending, and possibly even convincing some people as to the merits of the government continuing its unfair campaign against the pension plans of public servants? What has the government got against Canadians?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, may I have an opportunity to respond to the question?

An hon. member: On a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member on a point of order after the parliamentary secretary finishes his comment.

Mr. Edwards: It is my understanding we are now debating the motion which I just moved.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): This is just the questions and comments on the speech. I have not put the question.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, to respond to my hon. friend's question and his comment and for the benefit of the public which is watching, the motion I moved does not cut off debate. The debate proceeds. There will be a great many opportunities for contributions to the debate. The hon. member has just made a worth-while one himself, one with which I do not agree, but one which is nonetheless worth while.

He asked why the government excludes itself from the Pension Benefits Standards Act? My friend will find the provisions of Public Service pensions stand up well against those within the federal domain, which are outside the Public Service, and any fair and any disinterested test would bear that out.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have been here all afternoon and I certainly share the quite proper indignation of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has come into a new job and has been doing very well. He had very diplomatic language at the start as he led to the blunderbuss that he just loaded on to the floor of this House with that type of motion after four speakers, knowing full well there are many other members with a great constituency of federal public servants who want to contribute to this debate. He also knows full well that on the main issues of this thing he is trying to sugar-coat the issue that these are simply amendments to the Income Tax Act, which is part of the problem.

The hon. member is not a stupid man although he has done a very stupid thing for his own credibility in trying to cut off debate now because of the interest of summer recess or whatever. He is a very intelligent man ordinarily. When there are serious questions to raise on this, how can the parliamentary suggest—I think his discipline was broadcasting—with all the best intentions of letters from the President of the Treasury Board, that there is going to be this type of discussion or there is going to be this type of study?

We already heard from the member from Kootenay East that it has been seven years since the advisory committee on the superannuation fund met. In first-year law I found out, and I defy the parliamentary secretary to challenge this, that regardless of the best intention, a ministerial statement, even in the House, is not worth the price of the paper in a legal sense until it is put into some form of regulation or legislation.

As the parliamentary secretary well knew, I had a motion on the two things that interested me fundamentally. The member from Ottawa West canvassed the history of this legislation in a most inclusive and objective manner, pointing out the pluses and the minuses. The hon. member for Kootenay East pointed out some pluses. There are two fundamental things.

I know the parliamentary secretary wants to do well in his new job and is going to try to uplift the standards of the public about this institution, but by cutting off debate with that motion he has stopped any further amendments from being put forward. The fact of the matter is that one of the serious things in this bill referring to the income tax amendments are the legal opinions from the legal counsel which create a real uncertainty—that is a kind word.

When you really interpret these two letters of June 3 and 4 presented before the committee and debated in the committee, amendments by regulation on the Income Tax Act can affect the indexation of these Public Service pensions. That is something that should be properly reviewed now before this bill becomes law. It is not good enough to say there is going to be commitment to understand and have further consultations about these matters or have the stakeholders get together when we have already heard the history that they have not got together for six or seven years.

In conclusion, because other members may want to comment, and this may not make me too popular with all members, I was away last week and I apologize for being away when this thing came up because I know things speed up here very much in the latter stages as we see the midnight sun and as summer seems to beckon. I understand that and I apologize because I knew when C-55 came that it would move fairly quickly normally. With all the tools of the government under new procedures it does move well normally. This debate should move pretty normally tonight and have the full expression of members.

I got my ire up when I read *Hansard* on Friday. This great House of Commons is exposed to public odium. We have the courage and intestinal fortitude to do so many things affecting so many other people. This bill affects all the public servants. It is the bible for the Public Service from coast to coast. It may seem pretty dry and pedantic but not to the RCMP, the armed services and the federal Public Services from coast to coast. I wanted to participate in this debate to show that it is just not the Public Service around the Ottawa area but that there are public servants from coast to coast affected by this bill. I have not received so much mail on an issue as this bill which is 159 pages. You are going to cut off debate after three speakers here in report stage.

I apologize to my constituents that I was away on Friday, but I was not prepared to accept what happened on Friday, after Private Members' Hour at three o'clock, when the House was even more empty than it is right now.

• (1720)

Under extended hours the House continued and I compliment the government for its Machiavellian delight and success in coming to some of the controversial issues in this bill, particularly members' salaries and pensions. It only takes five members to force a vote. We had five members stand to extend rights to the gay community. For those interested in that, it is a controversial subject and I give full credit to the member for Burnaby—Kingsway for having the honesty and the persistence in the things he believes in to force a vote for the provisions for the gay community. We had other amendments on which we forced a vote on things affecting members, Parliament and the Public Service.

I got my ire up and decided I was going to participate in this debate and do anything I could procedurally to force a vote. I really am beyond it because of time and because of age and the years I have been here. I felt that this House of Commons had to stand up for once and face the issue the hon. parliamentary secretary talks about. I do not care how well-intentioned the President of Privy Council is, whomever he may be. I accept the word of my hon. parliamentary secretary.

I could not believe how the leader of the NDP got seduced by these letters of intent from the President of the Treasury Board saying that Treasury Board was going to look after members' salaries and vesting and double-dipping later in the day.

We could not get five members to force a vote on some very good amendments by the member for Don Valley East and Edmonton Southeast. I was not here and for that I apologize.

On Monday night when we had all those votes at least it would have pin-pointed where members stood.

I can argue about pensions. Frankly, there has been a lot of misinformation on pensions. I am a person from a family in which a man put 40 years in public life and thank God Prime Minister Pearson got widows involved in the pensions for members. Therefore my mother got a pension of $104. In my riding there has not been a pension for members for 47 years.

There is a Liberal member who sits pretty close to me from a riding in which there has not been a member's pension for 50 years because the members keep getting defeated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member will have an opportunity to debate.

An hon. member: Debate, not put motions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that is not possible. I would like to allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to rebut the hon. member's statement and then carry on with debate because we have now passed the time.

Mr. Nowlan: I would like the opportunity for an important debate in this Chamber for the next few hours because the government is going to move amendments and force the issue and we know the government has the numbers and all government members have stood. You cannot accept double-dipping. You can make an argument for pensions.

With all seriousness, I really am disappointed that the parliamentary secretary has moved this motion. He was quite right, the debate was moving along. It was not going to get hung up. If I had made a motion which was going to be in order, we would have voted some time. Members could have chosen how to vote. You would not have cut the thing off.

Is the parliamentary secretary prepared to stake his parliamentary seat on the commitment in the letter I have not read yet between the President of the Treasury Board and the leader of the NDP that this enquiry into member's salaries, be it vesting or double-dipping and all the other ramifications, will start? There is no criteria set for the enquiry by the way; no time limit, no notice of who will be on the enquiry. Will he stake his seat that it is going to start by Labour Day?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, to respond to the last question put by my friend, I do not believe that the President of the Treasury Board did stipulate a date but he has made a commitment. He is an honourable man and I believe that commitment will be carried out. I am sure my friend would agree that the commitment will be carried out.

With regard to the question of amendments before us, it is not true that amendments have been choked off in this debate. There have been more than 100 amendments put forward and debated during the course of the study of this bill at report stage and I am not sure how many dozens of amendments at committee stage.

The debate is not being cut off. It is important that the public of Canada realize that this debate can continue until 10 o'clock tonight. There is no question of that. In fact, because of the motion that I put, it frees up members who have spoken to speak again. That is a marvellous liberty which has now been extended to the House. I just wanted to set the record straight.

I am sure my friend, who had a distinguished career in the law—I knew him in Vancouver when he was in the pursuit of that profession—and has served in this House for 27 years now with great distinction, would not want to leave an incorrect impression with the public of Canada.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. Because of the exchange that took place I wonder if I could have the consent of the House to ask a short question. I did not have a chance for a question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We will have a lot of speakers here today and we had pretty close to 15 minutes in questions and comments. I had better just say no at this stage but I will ask for unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is no unanimous consent.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that debate is continuing and that I will have an opportunity to speak at third reading of Bill C-55 which is the Public Service pension reform bill. For a few minutes I must admit it looked very tenuous as to whether I was going to be able to achieve this.

Bill C-55 is a very large, technical omnibus bill that will amend five pieces of federal legislation which deal with federal pensions. The first one is the Public Service Superannuation Act which is the pension plan that currently covers approximately 312,000 federal government employees from every province and territory in this country; the Canadian Armed Forces Superannuation Act which covers nearly 88,000 Armed Forces members; the RCMP Superannuation Act which covers some 20,000 RCMP members; the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act which covers the pension plan for members and senators and the Pensions Division Benefits Act which provides for the division of benefits if a marriage or common law relationship breaks down.

This bill would also enact two new acts, the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act.

There are two main thrusts to this legislation, the first being the technical changes to ensure that federal pension plans comply with the new Income Tax Act; second, long-standing fairness issues such as pension credit splitting on marriage breakdown, allowing part-time employees to contribute to the pension plan, improving the leave without pay provision *vis-à-vis*

pension contributions and an early retirement program for correctional service officers.

We have long recognized that this legislation would bring a few minor improvements to the Public Service plan. We cautiously supported it at second reading in February in order that a detailed study in committee could be undertaken. However, we in opposition have realized after close study that there is far more that is negative than positive and that Bill C–55 contains major flaws.

I might add at this point that this bill probably has created more letter writing and more phone calls to my office than any bill that has come before us for quite a number of months. Obviously it is of great concern to many people.

I have received dozens of phone calls and letters from constituents in Nepean and not one person, I might add, supported this bill. Many were concerned that this legislation as it now stands would give the government the power to change critical financial aspects of pension management by regulation instead of legislation.

Does the government understand the significance of this? Does it think that Canadians will not know the difference? It means that major policy decisions will now be removed from the realm of this Parliament. It means that the government will not be accountable to the people of Canada and that secret deals can very well be made, but I would certainly hope not. It is an infringement on one's democratic rights.

The government says we should just trust it and it will look out for the rights of pensioners. Well, I think we have all seen too many things in this House and therefore a great number of Canadians no longer trust this government.

• (1730)

If it were really going to do what is right, it would enshrine the management of pensions in legislation. Yet it refuses to do this.

During committee stage, opposition members listened to countless witnesses who appeared before the legislative committee. All proposed reasonable changes to the legislation, and yet the government has chosen not to listen to any of them.

I just wish that I had the opportunity or the time allocation to comment on all the wonderful changes, reasonable changes, that many people had requested. One of the most often requested changes, and I will quote from one person's letter, is this:

> I do wish to stress that the benefits provided for in Bill C–55 should be preserved so that all financial management of it be delayed with current financial benefits being protected until a proper management board is established. This will ensure that amendments receive fair and complete review by all parties.
>
> Furthermore, the bill should be amended to include all the provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act as is required of other pension funds in the civilian sector.

That is from a resident of my riding, Mr. Robert Black. Many, many other people said something similar along that line.

The government has hardly moved on the legislation at all since it was tabled in February. There has been slight movement, but very very slight. It is more interested in pushing through a bill, any bill, than it is in ensuring good governance.

The reality of Bill C–55 is that it is flawed, and the portions that may be beneficial are too little and too late.

Over the past decade two parliamentary committees have examined pension reform from the point of view of the adequacy of public and private sector plans, to meet the retirement needs of Canadians, and from the perspective of equality rights established in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Legislative changes arising from the reports of these committees have been made to the Canada and Quebec pension plans and to the Pension Benefits Standards Act, which defines minimum standards for federally–regulated employers.

Bill C–55 addresses to some degree the following outstanding equality issues:

It provides for splitting of pension credits on the breakdown of a marriage or common–law relationship.

Current legislation does not allow for the splitting of pension credits, so the new bill would permit the division of a plan member's pension benefits at source. That obviously is a good move.

A spousal agreement or court order would be required providing for the division of the benefits. Up to 50 per cent of the credits would be transferred to a retirement savings vehicle for the spouse, and the plan member's benefits would be adjusted accordingly.

CPP provides for the automatic splitting of pension benefits at source. The government has a report in hand in 1983 entitled *Report of the Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform*. It recommended that this be extended to Public Service pensions.

While the provisions in Bill C–55 are an improvement over the current legislation, a number of problems are not resolved by this bill.

It places a portion of the pension benefit under the direct control of the ex–spouse, rather than having to rely on the good will of the former spouse to make pension payments every month. For example, the pension is split by valuing the contributions at the time of the divorce. The ex–spouse receives the value of the plan at that time. As a result, the only increase in value from the time of the divorce to the time of retirement will be what interest it earns in a retirement savings vehicle, such as an RRSP.

As pensions are based on the best six years of service, the final value of the pension benefit payable to the ex–spouse on retirement will likely not even come close to the value that the contributor spouse will receive.

Moreover, the value of the ex–spouse's pension benefit will not benefit from continued government contributions over the years. Whatever the value of the benefit at the time of the divorce is, it will not increase in those years.

With regard to survivor pensions in the private sector, a pension benefit standards bill introduced in 1985 ensured that widows would be provided with 60 per cent of pension benefits. This minimum standard is observed in the MPs' pension plan but not in plans that apply to members in the civilian Public Service, the Armed Forces, and the RCMP. These plans only provide 50 per cent widows pensions as they have over the last 40 years.

This government has tried to sell this bill as legislation which addresses several longstanding fairness issues. If ever there was such an issue, the survivors benefits should be considered so.

This provision has existed in the Canada Pension Plan for over 25 years. It now exists in the MPs' pension plan and was made a mandatory requirement for private sector pension plans over five years ago. Survivors of public servants should be afforded the same treatment as those in the private sector.

Bill C–55 also addresses the issue of pension coverage for part–time employees. Currently employees who work less than 30 hours a week cannot pay into a pension plan and therefore cannot draw a pension when they retire. Bill C–55 changes this. Employees will now have the option of buying back previous years of part–time service as far back as 1980. All current and future part–time employees will be required to pay into the pension plan.

Coverage for part–time employees was recommended in *Equality for All*, and the report of the parliamentary task force on pension reform. In short, it is an item whose time has come. However, there is concern that forcing part–timers into buying in could cause financial hardship for some. It should be optional.

There are several areas this bill does not cover: the rate of return of pension plan investments comparable to private sector plans; the future security of inflation protection arrangements, or indexing; plan management; increasing survivor benefits from 50 per cent to 60 per cent as in CPP and MPs pension benefits and consistent with recommendation 6.9 of the parliamentary task force on pension reform in 1983; several outstanding issues surrounding pension entitlements of divorced and separated spouses; disclosure of information relevant to the member's plan.

In 1991 the government announced its intention to conduct a review in 1992 which it claimed would address most of the above issues not covered in the current legislation. Further legislation would likely follow the review. The government has been promising a review since 1987, yet its pension advisory committee has not met since 1987, and that is disgraceful. This Bill C–55 was tabled without consultation and the government has made every effort to push it through with the minimum of discussion. I think all members on this side of the House have spoken of this disgraceful action.

The process has been shrouded in secrecy and confusion. The government would like to see major policy decisions removed from the realm of Parliament and placed in the backrooms of the Treasury Board with its push for regulatory powers.

In my last few minutes I would like to add that this bill is probably going to create more of what I would call pork–barreling, patronage, call it whatever nice word you want to call it, than we have seen in a good many years within the Public Service.

I think that we have been fortunate in Canada to have had probably one of the best public services in the world and we should all be very proud of that.

It is a shame that the merit system is going to be pushed aside and that managers will have the right to appoint whomever they wish to appoint. This concerns a great number of people in this area and it is a very regressive step.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I must say I am a little calmer after the motion of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader to have the question put which in effect lets us continue to debate until time runs out at 10 p.m. but no motions can be made, even at third reading.

• (1740)

I just want to dwell on that very briefly because now it is done, and I compliment him in a back-handed way because he certainly cut me off at the pass. I certainly intended to move a motion that I think would have been acceptable to the Chair.

I had some assistance with the motion to recommit Bill C-55 to the committee and reconstitute the committee for many of the same reasons that members who have already spoken on the bill have mentioned.

One of the reasons is this very question of indexation of pensions. Bill C-55, 159 pages with schedules, is in effect the bible for federal public servants, RCMP officers, and people in the military. It makes for a very dry and pedantic discussion here in the House of Commons, but it affects the monthly cheque that goes out to thousands and thousands of Canadians.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader came into this House with a suspicion that some of us were going to move an amendment, and he asked me if I was going to move an amendment, and within two minutes he caught the eye of the Speaker. After a nice little address for three minutes he put his motion, which procedurally cuts off any possibility of moving an amendment, a reasoned amendment or a recommital to a committee, which was what I was going to do. It should be done for the reasons mentioned here already by members who know more about the bill than I.

In terms of cutting off debate on third reading he said that the debate was proceeding nicely. Yes, there was a legislative committee that worked on it for a few days. It just came from the legislative committee last week and last Friday afternoon Bill C-55 came onto the floor.

We are under extended hours and on Friday afternoon, after private members' hour at 3 p.m., the debate started to peter out. Questions were put on a lot of the motions at report stage. On Monday of this week we voted. We were going to vote for many hours, and we did vote on many amendments. I think there were 37.

On something so complicated as a pension bill affecting all federal public servants, military and the police, to debate it in this House, after committee, on Friday and Monday, with the votes on Monday night, have third reading today, and then after four speakers move to put the question is really unfortunate.

In effect it means the guillotine is going to drop at 10 p.m.

I said earlier that I have been surprised at how many letters I have received from concerned public servants. The public servant has not been worried about the members' pensions, it is the public that wonders about the members' pensions.

This great institution, the House of Commons, could not even get five members last Friday to stand to force a vote on several reasonable amendments on members' pensions, whether vested too soon or double-dipping.

We can argue about vesting too soon, but there is not any plausible explanation and excuse for the double-dipping that we all know about. I am not going to mention names but I could mention many people who have sat in this House with distinction.

Let us leave the House. My amendment and the amendments from the hon. members for Don Valley East and Edmonton Southeast just affected members of Parliament, not the whole Public Service.

Let us leave the House of Commons, this odious place where everyone thinks we are the bad boys, and let us examine the next ex-president of the Privy Council who is evidently going to become the president of Canadian National. We all know roughly what the president of Canadian National gets, $200,000 or $300,000-plus dollars.

I am sure that the pension the president of the Privy Council has earned is very substantial.

If we are going to get into double-dipping—and that is more than what the President of the Treasury Board said in a letter that was swallowed by the leader of the NDP about reviewing members' pensions, then get into it for all public servants.

Whether we are talking about Erik Nielsen, Ed Broadbent or Ian Deans, we are talking about Canadians who have served with distinction in the House of Commons, but they have all double-dipped. We have judges in the Federal Court who have double-dipped.

That is completely unacceptable because members get good pensions now. Therefore, they should not be getting pensions and full salaries from jobs taken with the federal government after they retire from here. That is completely wrong.

If there had been a vote on those amendments, it would have given some direction to this unnamed committee which had no criteria set up, no dates for holding hearings. Yet this was the plausible thing that put all members who were nervous about the issue off the issue. We could not even get five members to stand and force a vote on the amendments that were properly moved by members.

I compliment my friend and colleague, the member for Burnaby—Kingsway. He quite properly had amendments to extend pension benefits to the gay community. He has been honest and persistent in that and he has the human rights legislation very much on his side in many ways and there were five members to stand for that. There were five members to stand for a lot of other amendments.

It was a sad commentary on this House of Commons when we had amendments on our own pensions, which were in order, moved by a couple of members of Parliament. With all the discussion and all the nervousness that invoked and all the embarrassment that it may have caused and certainly the scorn that it could create in the public domain, we could not get five timorous mice to stand in their places. They scurried away as though the old Hallowe'en were over.

I give full credit to the government. It knows the rules. I confess, I was not here. I confess my absence, not that it would have made much of a difference. It would have made a difference in that at least I would have asked a couple of members to stay around.

After Private Members' Hour on Friday at three o'clock, most members know that is the end of the sitting, but not in extended hours. The Speaker was in the Chair doing his duty and it was done very well. That is all I can say about that.

I am sorry, my amendment would have been to recommit that issue along with the whole question of indexation, which is the main question concerning the public servants. It would have recommitted it to the committee. Certainly, a strong vote from the House would have given direction to this vague inquiry that the President of the Treasury Board says he is going to commit someone to.

I say this kindly because I believe the minister is most likely sincere. I believe the parliamentary secretary is sincere. But we deal in realities here in this world of hard knocks in politics and government. The reality is a letter from a minister which is not worth the paper it is written on in a legal sense. It does not bind anybody. That is learned in the first year of the legislation. Do not take anything by print or by word unless it is put in the regulations or in the law.

Who knows who will be the next President of the Treasury Board? Certainly after an election there will be a change and there could be changes even before then. Then we will go through the hocus-pocus again.

It was a great way to take off. I just could not believe listening to the debate here on Monday and having friends on my left praise their leader for accepting this letter and for getting all members off the hook on something that has caused a little concern in the country about the fat cat members and their own pensions. We can always talk about and solve other people's problems but we do not want to touch our own.

That is enough on pensions. I have been forestalled on my motion. I do not know how much more time I have.

The member for Ottawa West, in her review of this bill on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition made one of the better speeches on a complicated bill that I have heard in this House in the years I have been a member. Who knows about pensions? Who knows about indexing, payments and interest? She went through it very well in

an even manner, pointing out some pluses and also raising some questions.

My concern and my constituents' concerns are not funny. It is not funny. It is rather horrible that in effect through this bill there can be regulations under the Income Tax Act about special benefits and by changing those regulations the indexation of members' pensions under the Public Service Act can be changed because that is a special benefit.

• (1750)

This caused great concern in the committee, as it should have. This is why Daryl Bean and the Public Service Alliance and many other Public Service associations said: "Hey, this bill is going to attack the indexation feature of Public Service pensions". Certainly, if the indexation of members' pensions were being attacked we certainly would be a little more concerned.

I know the member for Kootenay East was a very able and consistent member on the committee. I read much of the testimony of the committee. If there is any question about this indexation and why the Public Service should be concerned, it is that the committee came up with the question there were some amendments that were turned down by the government, again with assurances. I understand from the committee evidence that the government was going to take a look to see if there was an amendment from government to clarify this issue of whether indexation could be affected by a change in regulations of the Income Tax Act.

Without getting too rhetorical in the time I have left I just want to read into the record some letters I have read as a lawyer and I must say I reread the first one because I could not fully understand it. The man who wrote the first one wrote another the day after, trying to give his opinion to the committee on the implications of clause 50 of the bill involving indexation.

In a letter dated June 3, 1992, R. R. Walsh, the general legislative counsel of the House of Commons, wrote about Bill C-55 to Mr. Farrell as follows:

> At its last meeting on May 21, 1992, the Committee asked that I provide an opinion in respect of the Government's motion No. G2A amending the proposed section 71 found in clause 30 of Bill C-55. Similar amendments are proposed for clause 58 (motion No. G3A) and clause 80 (Motion No. G4A). The Public Service Alliance of Canada has criticized the proposed amendments and I was asked to consider PSAC's concerns as well.
>
> At committee, Mr. Macdonald explained that the proposed amendment clarifies that the power to make compliance regulations under section 71, PSSA, would be limited to prospective changes and would not allow retrospective changes in relation to what employees had already earned. It seems to me Mr. Macdonald is correct in his view that the proposed amendment would prevent "retrospective" compliance regulations.

Those are regulations that might affect the past.

> In his letter of April 14th, however, the Minister assured committee members—

Another assurance by the minister, I guess by verbal commitment or by letter.

> —that the Government's amendment to the proposed section 71, PSSA, would make it "absolutely clear" that there will be no change to the indexing of benefits "except by statute" (statutory amendment). To this end, the proposed section 71 as amended by motion No. G2 allows compliance regulations only in relation to section 147.1 of the Income Tax Act and Part LXXXV of the Income Tax Regulations, as they read on January 15, 1992.
>
> Subsection 147.1(2) of the Income Tax Act sets out the rules applicable for registration of pension plans, one of which is that a plan comply with prescribed conditions for registration. Part LXXXV of the Income Tax Regulations allows as "permissible benefits" periodic cost of living adjustments based on increases in the Consumer Price Index. If, after January 15, 1992, the Income Tax Regulations were amended to remove indexation as a permissible benefit, the amendment could not be carried over to PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA by means of a compliance regulation because a compliance regulation could only be made in respect of the Income Tax Regulations as they read on January 15, 1992.

That is the guts of it but I am going to continue to read the letter because my time is almost over.

> According to its news release of May 11, 1992, PSAC says the Government's amendments do not make it "absolutely clear" that there will be no change to the indexing provisions "except by statute" (statutory amendment). PSAC suggests that motion No. G2A be worded to read as applicable to any pension, annual allowance, etc., that is payable to any person to whom PSSA applies. [PSAC also suggests a new subsection (6) requiring consultation with the Advisory Committee.]
>
> It is not clear that amendment of the PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA would be required to reduce or remove indexation as a permissible benefit, notwithstanding motions No. G2 and No. G2A. An amendment of the Income Tax Regulations by the Governor in Council (without the involvement of Parliament), made applicable to all pension plans, might be sufficient to reduce or remove indexation without amendment of the statutes governing the plans.

I am going to conclude this letter:

> Perhaps Government legal experts in the areas of income tax and pensions could shed some light on whether or not this is possible under the Income Tax Act or PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA. It seems to me that it would be, but I stand to be corrected should legal counsel having expertise in these areas demonstrate the contrary.

That is the letter of June 3 trying to advise the committee on this very technical and important point affecting indexing of pensions of public servants and cannot be affected by regulations in the Income Tax Act changing special benefits.

As I read that, the legal counsel advising the court, which was discussed by the members of the committee, could very well affect the indexation.

The interesting thing, and I would like to be able to file this, the very next day, June 4, the same legal counsel wrote a clarifying letter which was a little shorter but I guess I do not have time to read it.

In effect it clarifies it. But then it says it may not do it for the pension plans already in place but it could very well affect pension plans in the future. It is a shorter letter and is not so technical, so I will read it.

It was written June 4, the day after the first one, trying to help the committee. It pin-points the confusion of something that is so fundamental and important:

> Dear Mr. Farrell:
>
> I write to clarify my letter of June 3, 1992 in respect of Clause 30. A Justice lawyer acting for the Treasury Board spoke with me earlier today and it would appear that some clarification is required in respect of the last paragraph of my earlier letter.
>
> When I said in my earlier letter that it is not clear that amendment of PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA would be required to reduce or remove indexation as a permissible benefit, I was referring to permissible benefits as they are known under the Income Tax Regulations for purposes of the Income Tax Act. The amendment that I suggested could be made to the Income Tax Regulations, applicable to all pension plans, would only be applicable for income tax purposes. Such amendment would not and could not have the effect of removing or reducing indexation as a benefit under PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA.
>
> Indexation benefits have been placed in PSSA (proposed s.69 in cl. 30), CFSA (proposed s.78 in cl. 58) and RCMPSA (proposed s.39 in cl.80) and a regulation under the proposed section 71 in Clause 30 could not remove or reduce the benefits available under these Acts. Removal or reduction of indexation as provided under PSSA/CFSA/RCMPSA could only be effected by amendment of the relevant statute by Parliament.
>
> My earlier opinion meant to indicate that the removal or reduction of indexation as a permissible benefit under the Income Tax Regulations for purposes of the Income Tax Act could possibly be effected by an amendment to the Income Tax Regulations. This amendment, however, would only affect the income tax position of the pension plan and would not directly remove or reduce the indexation benefits as benefits under the pension plans.
>
> I trust this further clarification will assist the Committee in its consideration of the relevant clauses of the Bill.

We can see the problem of something so fundamental as indexation. As I read the committee, it was supposed to get further clarification from an amendment from the government on this important subject but it did not get it. That is another good reason why we should vote—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments, the hon. member for Halifax West and then I will recognize the hon. member for Kootenay East.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the remarks made by my good friend and colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants.

I hope he will not lose sight of the general principle involved in this bill. I know he has dealt in the course of his speech with a number of details. I want to hear him comment on the general principle of pensions and pensions as deferred income.

The rule in Canada for many years now, over 30 years, has been that the basic pension benefits should be 70 per cent approximately of a person's income. That would allow them at the end of their working careers to maintain the standard of living for themselves and their families that they had earned over the course of their careers.

There are difficulties with time frames, whether it takes 35 years to earn that kind of benefit or some lesser period of time. The case can easily be made for a member of Parliament or an elected person that they do not have the opportunity to serve for that normal career period of 35 years. They go from one career to another career.

It is not only members of the House of Commons, it is members of the legislatures; provincial magistrates in the province of Nova Scotia earn a full pension after 15 years.

I want to ask my colleague if he thinks it is fair that members of Parliament after a period of service or any other person during their working career should not be able to earn a pension which will more or less allow them to maintain the standard of living they have enjoyed through their careers for themselves and for the benefit of their families.

I know he is interested and concerned about indexing and I have no disagreement with what he said.

• (1800)

However, I want him to focus on some of the remarks and comments that have been made by organizations like the National Citizens Coalition that focus on the most difficult of the cases and use those cases to detract from the basic idea that people, by way of deferred income, are entitled to some kind of benefit as they terminate their career and go into retirement.

I wonder if the hon. member and my good colleague is in any disagreement with the basic idea of the pension program.

Mr. Nowlan: I thank my hon. friend from Halifax West for his questions.

Earlier, in reply to the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader when he moved the order to put the question so we could not put any amendments, I offered a *dicta*, my thoughts about the pension.

It is academic to me, in view of my time and years here, therefore I feel the same embarrassment as other members in talking about our own pensions. So I certainly am glad that the President of the Privy Council has given some indication—I wish it was a tighter and more committed indication—about just what type of inquiry, when it was going to happen and who was going to do it, rather than just a letter that was easily accepted, because we are all nervous about the issue.

Two points on members' pensions. On the question of double-dipping, there is absolutely no justifiable reason why that should be allowed to continue.

The question then is do we grandfather it? There are good people who served under certain rules, and then we retroactively try to do something. I guess this is what the inquiry is going to find out about. But certainly for future situations I think that all members who are elected should appreciate that if they get a government job after they serve in this House of Commons they are not getting their pension from the government for their House of Commons service and also a pension from whatever Crown corporation or court they may be appointed to.

I cannot find anything to justify double-dipping in pensions. I was hoping that one of the amendments that was moved by the hon. member for Don Valley East might have been put so it would have been a clear indication to this inquiry not to fool around much with that because that can be disposed of.

In terms of pensions, I said earlier that there is an argument to be made for pensions to members vesting earlier than normal pension plans. As I said, my mother was very glad that Prime Minister Pearson was around to even include widows of members, because otherwise they would not have had a pension. After 40 years of public service my mother got the grand pension of $104 a month.

I am fully aware of the concern with pensions. I think the public has been so bombarded by a lot of extreme situations, more in theory than in practice, that it automatically thinks all members are receiving pensions after six years and there are a great quantity of members out there who are drawing full pensions, which is not the reality at all. There are many ridings in which there has not been a member's pension paid for 40 to 50 years because members have been getting defeated all the time and/or they have been re-elected for quite a while and therefore pensions do not click in.

On the pension issue, that is something that certainly must be looked at. It is healthy in view of the public focus on this, the bad odium that we are all in about it, and perhaps the defensive attitude that we have about it that in effect some outside agency—I cannot think why a vote in the House of Commons would have hurt at all.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I do want to question the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants because I can understand how frustrated he is with regard to the procedure of what

happened here. However at the same time, as a member of that committee, I want to say to this member very clearly that if he had been at that committee and had seen the activity that took place and how the government conducted themselves there he would understand what happened in this House.

There were over 40 or 50 amendments put forward in committee, and each time the government's hands went up and they were defeated. There were 112 amendments that came back to this House to be debated, which we tried to get through in committee. At the same time not one government member was getting up in the House. I understand the hon. member was not here Friday because of commitments in his riding. He should take into consideration what took place in the committee and the kinds of frustrations we were going through and what went on in this House when we were debating the amendments. The government was simply not listening.

With regard to MPs' pensions, I am very proud and I take no exception to the remarks of the leader of our party. When this bill was introduced, she identified the very problems the hon. member is talking about. We called for an independent study and our leader got that in a letter from the minister. That is more than we got in all the amendments that we put forward. At least we have a letter stating that he is going to prepare an *ad hoc* committee and start putting the process in place.

I just want to say to the member that I understand his frustration and I fully understand the concerns that he has. I have those same concerns. I only wish the government would have listened to us, but it was not in a listening mood.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has a minute to wind up.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I did not read all the evidence of the committee, but I did read the last few days of it when committee members were moving amendments and talking about the indexing problem which produced those two letters that I read into the record. The member was there and very active in that. I also noticed the amendments that did not find favour.

As a lawyer, in terms of legislation, letters are not law or regulations so I will be a lot happier when I see the letter fleshed out giving the criteria and a time.

The NDP leader did make a speech and it ruffled a lot of feathers. It even ruffled a few feathers in their caucus. It certainly ruffled a lot of feathers around here because she was the first leader to come out very directly on this issue which has caused a lot of concern in the public domain. I do give his leader credit for that, but I felt members should have forced the issue a little more. I was away so I am guilty, but it would have taken five of us only to force the issue a little more. That still would not have impeded the commitment for the *ad hoc* inquiry if some of those amendments had carried on Friday.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, it is actually quite interesting to rise in this House and speak after the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. He was referring to MP's pensions and spoke about his father being a member of this House.

My father was also a member of this House. He retired in 1979 with a pension of $12,000 to $13,000 a year, I think it was, after 17 years of service. He had been a lawyer. He came here at about age 55. He was at the most productive period of his law practice when he gave it up to become a member of Parliament. He died a few years later so my mother's pension is half of what his was. It is not exactly a princely sum. There are other stories than the ones that David Somerville peddles across this country for his own profit.

This inquiry we are going to have hopefully will reveal to the country as a whole the full story of the issue of pensions.

It is long overdue that we have this inquiry. It is important that trust be developed in this place and that we are dealing at arm's length with these issues. It is a step forward that we are getting the inquiry referred to earlier. We, as members of Parliament, have to be prepared, along with everyone else in the country, to take a look at our working conditions. We also have to be prepared to have those undergo public scrutiny.

When I had a chance to look into the issue of members' pensions I was surprised to find two facts which you do not see in the Somerville ads: that the pensions paid out so far are more than covered by the MPs' contributions and the interest on the funds. In other words, the government's matching contributions have not so far been touched. While he tries to claim

that the MPs' pension fund is unfunded, in practical terms it has not been unfunded.

The second fact that is interesting is that there are only 500 to 700 people who have received pensions under the plan, most of whom are widows or spouses as well as retired MPs. The suggestion that somehow this is a terribly rich privilege, upon examination is probably not correct.

• (1810)

The concerns about double-dipping do need to be looked at. Examples need to be reviewed, but I also think we should keep in mind the kind of pensions the private sector pays. Some of those should be put in perspective. Not that pensions for MPs should reach those levels, but the reverse should be so; those who control private wealth in this country should not be able to vote themselves the kind of pensions they do at the expense of the consumer.

Having spoken on that issue, let me deal with the substantive issues included in this pension act and the amendments to that act. Apart from a brief reference to pensions for MPs the bill effectively deals with two or three main areas.

The first is to make substantial changes in the administration of public sector pension funds. Initially, some of those changes look to be not half bad. But on further consideration and further examination it has become clear that this government has been sold a bill of goods by Treasury Board public servants.

Government has not done its own homework in protecting the prerogative of Parliament and effectively is turning over to the government and to Treasury Board all kinds of powers which it ought not to have, given Treasury Board is not just the administrator of public funds but is also the employer of public servants. In that dual function conflict of interest is built in in respect of its duties.

It is therefore critically important that any tinkering with public sector pensions comes before Parliament so that all sides of this House and therefore the general public can have some input into those changes. Those changes should not be made behind closed doors merely by a matter of regulation without public hearing, without input.

The more we studied this bill and the more we reviewed it, we reluctantly came to the conclusion that in public policy terms we will have to vote against the bill. We will do so reluctantly because there are some good elements in the bill.

For the first time, federal part-time workers are covered in a pension plan, although the cut-off date is arbitrary and unfair. In the post office, for example, and in other areas of the public sector there have been those working part-time for years and years. Their service in that capacity is not counted toward a part-time pension. I think the cut-off date is 1980.

Similarly, the early retirement for correction workers is evidently and clearly a good thing and needs to be adopted. On the other hand, what the government has given with one hand it has taken away with the other. It imposed a power over that early retirement plan through regulation that it ought not to have.

We clearly support the thrust of the pension splitting provisions in Schedule II of the act. I would like to use most of my remaining time on that issue.

I represent a constituency that has many military and other government retirees, many ex-spouses of those who worked in the service of Canada. Many of them have come to me and we drafted petitions which have been presented throughout the community and have been tabled in this House from time to time over the last number of months. They have come to me with letters, with accounts of the impact on their lives of the failure of this Parliament to deal fairly with ex-spouses of Public Service personnel and particularly members of the military.

Many of them have clearly given a service beyond the usual to our country. When they married someone in the military service, they undertook to travel across Canada and in fact, to many parts of the world. They tried to raise their families in two, three and four-year segments in different communities. They have suffered through the difficulties, tensions, trials and tribulations of that kind of life. Then at some point along the way, the marriage breaks down. They have been often left destitute or in difficult circumstances.

One of the difficulties they have had to face is that the pension they contributed to, which in the case of the military, the RCMP and others becomes payable on retirement, often when they are in their early 40s, mid 40s or 50s, that pension has not been available to them except occasionally through a court battle as supporter maintenance.

Yet it is a pension which the law for years has recognized that they have earned and have contributed to. In 1986, this Parliament agreed that in the case of Canada pensions, the right to a split in the pension contributions should be recognized. Now, belatedly, we are recognizing that in the case of military and other public sector pensions.

We are recognizing that in the case of a marriage breakdown, where the courts of the provincial and territorial levels have recognized the contribution, as invariably they will now do, or a separation agreement that takes that contribution into account, the minister is obliged to recognize it and to split the pension according to the contribution made during the course of the marriage.

I do not know what it is about the government that when it begins to do something right, it only does it half right. In this case, it has encumbered the pension splitting with all kinds of unnecessary difficulties. We are going to see over the months ahead case after case of unfairness because this government has simply not listened to those who have come before it and raised specific questions about the complexity of this bill.

The government has listened to the officials in Treasury Board and it has not listened to those who have lived with the problem. Amendment after amendment has been moved. The hon. member for Kootenay East has worked very very hard on this bill. Members in the Liberal Caucus have also worked on this bill. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has introduced a private members' bill on this issue and has spoken across the length and breadth of this country on this issue. The government has not listened to a series of very practical improvements that could have been made to make this bill more fair.

For example, there will those who have separation agreements or court orders that pre-date this bill. Because no pension splitting was possible, they may not have included pension split in the separation agreement or had it included in the court order. If they cannot persuade their ex-spouse to change the separation agreement or if they are not allowed to go back to a court because of the passage of time and the issue is closed, they will not have what this Parliament says they have earned, which is a fair share of the pension.

It is all because the government has refused to listen. In committee it accepted a handful of amendments. Basically, it even said to one of its own ministers: "Go see Treasury Board. If you can talk Treasury Board into it then we will do it".

It is an interesting commentary on how the arteries begin closing when a government stays in office too long. This government has been in office for eight years.

Mr. Edwards: Just getting started.

Mr. Brewin: That is what the people of Canada are terrified about. The hon. member says that they are just getting started. Let me say to the hon. parliamentary secretary that Parliament ought to be a place where when there is a complicated bill like this, a thick bill with section after section, 159 pages of very detailed changes in pension legislation, or when members of the opposition and some members of the government themselves, including the hon. member for Don Valley East, have gone to the trouble, after consultation with Canadians who have taken an interest to this bill, to produce amendments, it is an arrogant and thoughtless government that will not stand up and at least give the Canadian people a moment's explanation as to the difficulty of the amendment. The government should explain why it cannot accept the amendments.

• (1820)

I think the reason the government did not stand up and try to defend its reasons for turning down the amendments is because it could not. It did not understand the amendments. It did not take the trouble to try to understand the amendments.

Mr. Kempling: We accepted 28.

Mr. Brewin: Out of more than 150 amendments the government says it accepted 28. That means there were over 100 amendments the government did not accept. Not once did the government do the Canadian people the courtesy of explaining its reasons for not accepting even a single one of those amendments, either in committee or at report stage.

I submit again that it is because the government members responsible for this bill simply did not understand the amendments. They did not take the trouble to understand whether or not the amendments should be introduced.

This is a complicated place. We all have areas of responsibility but those members who were on duty on these bills, who stand up and vote on these bills, have at least some responsibility to try to grasp what the amendment is about and to have someone in their caucus do Parliament and the people the courtesy of trying to deal with the substance of the amendment.

It is not just us who stand here and move these amendments. There are people who have worked days upon days on these amendments and the ideas contained within them. They reflect genuine concerns.

For example, why is it that the government has left in this bill the power of Treasury Board to deem an ex-spouse deceased when she or he is obviously very much alive and kicking? There is an iniquitous turn of phrase in this legislation, an iniquitous power that the government should have the right to deem someone dead to do them out of a survivor benefit.

That is just the language. Look at the substance of the issue on survivor's benefits. The way the law works and the government has refused to address it in this bill is that when a marriage breaks down and the member of the plan enters a new relationship and then dies, the entire survivor benefit goes to the second spouse or second partner. The original partner, who may have been with the member of the plan for years upon years upon years, who in the other parts of the bill is understood to have contributed to the pension, is given nothing by way of contribution to the survivor's benefits and often is left in destitute circumstances.

The government has refused to speak on why it will not address this deep concern of ex-spouses expressed to individual members of Parliament, expressed to committees of this House and expressed through us in the opposition in amendments and speeches we have given. The government remains silent. It is an arrogance on the part of the government that it will not speak to these concerns of the Canadian people.

We are at the final stages of this debate. This bill was introduced in March. It was moved quickly through the House and through committee and the government is moving quickly to have it given third reading.

It has refused to engage in debating the issues. It has become a captive of Treasury Board. I ask any member of the government to pick up any one of those amendments and see if he or she can see some justice or justification in the amendment. Then ask those who are responsible for pushing this bill through Parliament why they did not respond. You can count on the fact that we will be back with further amendments and further legislation to correct the errors in this bill.

This bill is going through. It will go to the Senate in the next few days and become law. It contains much that is good but it is also a flawed bill. It is flawed in the way in which it turns over to Treasury Board and to cabinet responsibilities which should properly be those of Parliament.

It is flawed in the way it has responded to the justice and the claim of those whose rights are dealt with under the bill. It is therefore a bill we will be voting against, with some reluctance because of the good that it contains.

However I say to those who have worked hard on this bill that we will be with them in keeping an eye on the administration of the bill, and see how it works out. We will ask them to keep in touch with us so that we can begin building a file for amendments and changes down the road, because as surely as we are here today the failure of the government to listen to those who came before the committee, the failure of the government to listen to those who applied their minds to this bill and spoke to the people of Canada on it, will come back to haunt this House and we will be obliged within a very short period of time to once again deal with it.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the hon. member for Victoria on his review of the bill and some of its problems. His little vignette of history was interesting. I happened to be sitting here when his father was here, Andrew Brewin from Toronto Greenwood I believe. He was from the heartland, the core, the queen city or whatever you call Toronto. I do not know how the son got out to Victoria, but certainly having been there and practised law myself in Vancouver—he certainly saw a better way in the west and I welcome him back here to the central part.

The hon. member reviewed many sections of the bill. He mentioned how the bill had moved rather quickly and came off the platter in March. Does the member really think that a bill that has 159 pages, that is so complex, and involves the pensions of all the public servants, the RCMP and the armed services personnel of this land—it came out of committee on Friday at report stage when the Speaker gave his ruling. As a result of extended hours it continued after 3 p.m. on Friday until 5 p.m. and it picked up again on Monday. We had all the votes on Monday night, 37-some votes. Despite all those amendments we debated just part of Friday and Monday, and we are in third reading today.

Does the hon. member, with his experience and his knowledge as a lawyer, think that is a very lengthy time to consider something that is so complex?

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

It gives me the opportunity to elaborate on one particular point. The short answer to his question is that the time for debate in the House itself was probably reasonable enough if the government had chosen to participate in the debate itself, although it is a long and complicated bill.

It was in committee over a few months and there were a number of hearings from interested groups, including the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the ex-spouses group and so forth. They tended to be hurried along. I attended a couple of the committee hearings and they packed in a lot of witnesses. They tended to be fairly cursory. They asked a few questions of the government, not very many. There was a sense that it was a treadmill that the government was trying to get through.

The larger flaw in the process, and the one the government ought to take another look at for next time and for any future bills, is that the government seems to have gotten away from the practice of producing a draft bill; maybe even turning over to a parliamentary committee at first the responsibility of drafting a bill, or at least the outlines of a bill or writing a memo to the drafters on the kinds of issues that should be covered by a bill and the positions that should be taken.

Instead, it was all done internally. The first thing that surfaced in March was this big fat bill. At that point the government was already in a defensive mode on the bill. The Treasury Board officials who had overseen the drafting of it were in a defensive mode. They had to justify what they had done to their political masters. There was very little flexibility, notwithstanding the earlier intervention from the parliamentary secretary. Instead of doing what was sometimes done before of circulating a bill in the general community so that lawyers and others who had a capacity to work with the legal language, and it is very technical legal language in this bill, could work with client groups and try to work through: "This is what it means and this is what it does not mean", and then almost to engage in a process of negotiation with the drafters, that process was missed entirely.

• (1830)

I had a chance on one clause of the bill to try to do a subversion of that exercise. I worked a bit with one of the ministers, the parliamentary secretary and the Treasury Board officials and the drafters. We tried to work around it, but it was very hit and miss. I say the government member himself did not understand what we were talking about and was really not involved in the process. He just basically said: "Go deal with Treasury Board". The process was very flawed.

I think what the government should look at in future, when it comes up with a complicated bill like this that will have an effect on a lot of people, is circulating a draft bill and giving the community a real chance to take a look at it before it introduces it in Parliament. That would help in the process.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): I rise to speak on Bill C-55. As you know, Mr. Speaker, when this bill was initially introduced, our caucus voted in support of the bill in order to let it go to a committee so that members of the different pension plans could come forward and make their case known. Today we will not be supporting the bill for a variety of reasons.

Before I start putting forward some of the argument on why we will not support the bill, I want to talk a little bit about the idea of a pension plan. The first thing that comes to mind when we talk about pensions is our senior citizens who have built this country, who have stood by this country during the good times and bad times, those who have been loyal Canadians throughout the years, those who lived during the Depression, those who know

what hard work is all about, those who are not complainers, those who have given us this great country of ours.

Reading through the legislation as proposed, there are a number of good things that deal with their pensions, but simply put, not enough. The vast majority of our senior citizens nowadays still live below the poverty line. A lot of our senior citizens still are deprived of the many good things that other members of our community enjoy. To that extent, I believe that we still have a lot of work to do. We have to do more in order to deal with the question of unfairness.

Having said that, there are some good things in the proposal. I would like to glance through them very quickly. The members of Parliament review question is good. It will put this issue to rest. It will deal with a lot of the concerns that have been raised by those who have legitimate concerns and those who do not have legitimate concerns.

The second issue, which is combining the superannuation and the supplementary benefits for the Public Service pensions account, is a very good move on the part of the government. It ought to be commended on that.

There are other issues in the bill which are good to a large extent, for example, providing for the splitting of pension credits on the breakdown of a marriage or a common law relationship. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the current legislation does not allow for the splitting of pension credits. However, the new legislation would permit the division of a plan member's pension at source. That is not bad, with the exception of the fact that the bill will not make it automatic. If there is a disagreement of some sort, the different parties will still have to go to court. You know, Mr. Speaker, as well as I do how costly our justice system is.

Pension coverage for part-time employees is an excellent move. This is an excellent move. Currently part-timers are not covered. Anybody who works less than 30 hours a week cannot pay into the pension plan.

However, there are those who are on contract, those people who are hired as casuals, and there are thousands of those people in our constituencies, especially here in the national capital region and perhaps other parts of the country. Those people have been working for the government for the past seven or eight years on a contract basis. They have absolutely no protection whatsoever. To a large extent, while all of them are thankful for the fact they are getting those *ad hoc* positions for a short period of time here and there for up to six months at a time, they have absolutely no protection.

Extending the option of survivor benefits to pensioners who marry after the age of 60 is also a good move. However, one would suggest that we have to look at it a little more closely to make sure it is in compliance with the charter of rights.

Another point in the legislation which is excellent is an early retirement program for correctional services officers. This is a very good initiative and it is supported by members of the plans.

Creating a supplementary death benefit is as well a good move and the government has to be commended for coming forward with it finally. Unfortunately, in a lot of cases when we talk about the legislation and what is in that particular legislation, we do not really talk about what is not in the legislation; in other words, the issues that were not covered by given legislation.

In the case of Bill C-55, I am not sure that this legislation is in compliance with the charter of rights in many aspects of it. I am not sure about the way we manage the plan, if it is really a clear-cut case where you have the government which is the employer managing the plan without the full participation of the employee. Even if there is an indirect participation of the employees in the plan, it is not done in a fashion where it is managed without government interference. In fact, many things that are under the present legislation would make any kinds of changes, any manoeuvring, done through Treasury Board and through the regulatory body rather than being done through the House of Commons. This is the highest court of the land. If the House of Commons introduced and passed legislation it should have at all times the final say in terms of what can happen to different parts and different segments of that legislation.

Future security from inflation is a protection arrangement in terms of indexing. While the bill addresses the issue, there is really no mechanism in place where one would be assured that in future all of those issues are addressed.

Also, while the bill itself has a lot of good things, it really fails to address some of the concerns of those who appeared before the committee. In particular, is managementable to ensure that employees and those who are benefiting from the plan are getting the maximum benefit?

Our pensioners, particularly our seniors, deserve a lot more than what we have given them in the past. We have to do our utmost to ensure that we have a program and a plan that deals with our senior citizen population's needs. By the year 2010 we are going to have a lot of seniors around. Many of us in this House will be seniors. If not we will be post-seniors. We have a program in place that addresses their concerns and their needs. It meets what they are looking for, that is to live in dignity, to have access to food and shelter, and not to be worried about what will happen to them tomorrow or the day after.

• (1840)

As I indicated earlier, my colleagues and I supported this bill at second reading, but we will not be supporting it at third reading. It is not because we do not support the different components of the bill but, simply put, because the government did not really do enough to address the many concerns of pensioners *vis-à-vis* Bill C-55.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I only have a few brief comments to make on this bill. First, I have to say that I agree with the comments the hon. member for Ottawa West made in her excellent speech on all the problems civil servants and former armed forces members are facing in terms of pensions.

[*English*]

The points the member made with respect to fairness are worthy of being noted. I am very pleased to associate myself with them.

I want to make just a few comments, therefore, on Bill C-55. It has been the subject of a great deal of correspondence received from constituents of mine who have concerns about it either because they are presently employed in the Public Service or the Armed Forces or the RCMP, or because they have been married or are married to such a person, or because they have been retired themselves.

I will make just a few comments on those points. First, I would like to point out to the House of Commons that the 1991 report of the Auditor General of Canada had some comments to make on the federal superannuation plan. What many Canadians do not understand is that our enormous debt and deficit problems which are continual burdens on taxpayers are likewise a burden on the pension plans of the employees of the federal government. In fact the pension funds that are put aside by federal government employees are borrowed as part of the government's requirement to meet its obligations as they come due.

In his 1991 report the Auditor General made that comment by stating:

> A substantial portion of the federal annual budgetary deficit is financed through internal borrowing from accounts that the government administers on behalf of third parties. The largest internal borrowing is from federal employee pension accounts. As a result, $71 billion, or about 18 per cent of the $399 billion gross public debt, was owed to employee pension accounts at the end of 1989-90.

We all know how reliable are the projections of the Department of Finance. He continued by stating:

> If the Department of Finance's projections that external financing will be reduced to zero by 1994-95 are achieved, it is estimated that the amount owing to employee pension accounts will represent 23 per cent of the total public debt.

That is a very important source of funds for the federal government.

What does that mean for the owners, the employees and the future pensioners of those funds? This is the observation of the Auditor General:

> Interest—credited to the pension accounts is based on the government's long-term borrowing rates. It is widely agreed that these rates are between 1 and 2 per cent lower, on average over the long term, than the rates of return earned by pension plans with marketable assets.

The result of that is the government's requirement in the future to be able to fund the pension obligations under these plans is put at risk and may result in various things: It may result in a higher government deficit in future years; it may result in a future government saying we are going to have to reduce the amount of pension benefits payable to these pensioners because the return on the plan has not been sufficient to fund it fully. I think this is scandalous.

The government ought to be moving forward into reliance on private sector investments to ensure that a properly managed and balanced portfolio of investments would provide Public Service pension plans as profitable as they should be to ensure their future adequate funding.

The second thing I would like to point out, especially for the benefit of Canadians who are not fully informed about the nature of the Public Service pension plan, is that it is indexed. There is a cost of living indexation to the pension benefits that are payable.

What many Canadians fail to realize is that the indexation has been contracted, paid for, by public servants. They pay an extra 1 per cent of their salaries into a supplementary benefits fund, which is the fund to provide the assets available to fund indexing of their pension plans.

Indexing is not some kind of gift from Canadians to retired public servants. Indexing is something that has been bought and paid for by public servants making additional contributions under their plans.

That being the case, it is of great concern that the regulation making authority given to the government under this bill is so broad that in fact the government can even pass regulations that are inconsistent with the act being passed by Parliament itself.

This occurs in a number of provisions of the act. One of them is on page 59 of the bill as reported. I think it is section 80 of the Canadian Armed Forces Superannuation Act. I am referring to subsection (3) as it would read if this act were passed in its present form: "In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) and the provisions of this act or any other regulations made under this act, the provisions of the regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) prevail to the extent of the inconsistency".

In other words, the Governor in Council, the cabinet, can enact regulations without coming to Parliament that are inconsistent with the law being passed tonight, or whenever it is voted on, under Bill C-55. They can pass those regulations without further consultation with Parliament and even if they are inconsistent they prevail as the law.

I practised law for a reasonably long time before I came to this place. I must say I had not been aware of any other statutes that had that kind of regulation making authority built into them.

The ability to pass regulations known as subordinate legislation, subordinate because it is subordinate to the main law, normally is required to be consistent with the act or the law passed by Parliament.

I did a little research to find out whether in fact this was appropriate and legal. I discovered in an old book an old report of a British parliamentary committee on minister's powers dated April 1932 that this kind of regulation making authority has been granted in the past. It's called a Henry VIII clause, and I am quoting from the British parliamentary committee:

• (1850)

> —because that King is regarded popularly as the impersonation of executive autocracy. Indeed it may be considered to resemble the famous Statute of Proclamations, 1539 which gave the King power to legislate by proclamation until it was repealed on Henry's death in 1547. The comparison is certainly far-fetched.
>
> The purpose of Henry VIII was to enlarge his powers to make proclamations having the force of law. The sole purpose of Parliament on the nine occasions when it passed modern enactments was to enable minor adjustments of its own handiwork to be made for the purpose of fitting its principles into the fabric of existing legislation—

The comments of the British committee on this are quite telling. The committee says as follows:

> Even though it may be admitted that Parliament itself has conferred these powers upon ministers and must be presumed to have done so with the knowledge of what it was doing, it cannot but be regarded as inconsistent with the principles of parliamentary government that the subordinate law-making authority should be given by the superior law-making authority power to amend the statute which has been passed by the superior authority.

In referring to this dusty old text of this British parliamentary committee, I want to make this point; that in modern 1992 Canada the government has no more right, in my opinion, to put forward a law that would enable cabinet to pass laws inconsistent with what Parliament has done than did Henry VIII back in the 16th century.

The fact that the President of the Treasury Board fancies himself a 20th century Henry VIII is very cold comfort to the thousands of public servants and pensioners who concern themselves with whether this government, which has done so many things behind closed doors without full consultation, which has proven itself in so many ways to be less than fully trustworthy in its administration of public issues, to trust that it is not going to turn around and put forward regulations that will end the right to indexed pensions that public servants through their own contributions have already

paid for. It should not be tolerated in a modern democracy.

We are spending a great deal of money ensuring that our democratic institutions survive. We spend a great deal of money ensuring that democracy functions in a reasonable way through the holding of elections to choose members of Parliament to come into this place to pass laws. Surely in the face of that, the government ought not to be bringing forward laws which we all know mean that a faceless bureaucrat in the offices of the Treasury Board, a few blocks away from this Chamber, will enact laws different from what the elected representatives have passed and have them prevail over Parliament's own laws. It should not be tolerated in this day and age.

There are many other issues that arise that I will not deal with; the issue of survivors' benefits being 50 per cent rather than that which is prescribed in the Pension Benefits Standards Act having been well commented on by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. This government has a pension plan for its employees that does not meet its own standards.

On the matter of MPs' pensions, I have been on the record as saying I favour reform of them. I do not think this is the appropriate vehicle for doing that and the study that has been announced at least gets us started on the road to it. As a younger member of Parliament, I feel free to say that I do not feel that any of us should be comfortable with the payment of pensions at an early age. Rather than the view taken by my colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants earlier this evening which focused on the so-called double-dipping issue, the focus should be on the time at which pension payments are receivable. If it were changed it would address the issue of double-dipping as well.

These are things that need to be dealt with in an independent review and that is the only way with which they can be dealt with any real integrity on the part of members of Parliament who, after all, are in a very apparent and real conflict of interest in trying to deal with their own packages of payments and benefits. We need the assistance of outside experts in reviewing that.

I do not need to say anything more about that or about this bill. I am pleased that we will be voting against it. Despite the fact that it contains many good things, this is a bill that should not be passed by this Parliament.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to rise and make a couple of points.

First of all I want to ask the hon. member to clarify the position of the Liberal Party with respect to the issue of the pensions of members of Parliament. I recall well in this House when the Leader of the New Democratic Party raised this issue during the course of debate on Bill C-55 that she met with considerable resistance, both from the Official Opposition and from the government.

She raised concerns about a number of aspects of the pension plan, including in particular double-dipping and the age at which the pensions vest.

I am very pleased that the Leader of the New Democratic Party was able to obtain an assurance from the President of the Treasury Board that there will be a full independent review of all aspects of the pensions of members of Parliament.

In December last year I tabled a motion in this House which called for a non-partisan independent commission to review all salaries, pensions and benefits of members of Parliament and particularly to identify inequities in the pension plan by holding public hearings and examining other jurisdictions within and outside Canada. The commission was to report within six months of its establishment.

I am very pleased that at last it seems that, under some pressure, there is movement in this regard toward an independent review.

I would like to get some clarification from the hon. member with respect to the issue of an independent review. I know my colleague from Kootenay East in particular has been lobbying for this for some time now.

Our representative on the committee, my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby, and many others have been calling for this independent review and I would hope that we would have the full support of the Official Opposition as well in calling for this.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight the provisions in the bill with respect to correctional workers. In my previous role as spokesperson for the New Democratic Party on Justice and the Solicitor General I had the opportunity to meet with many correctional officers. For many years these men and women who work in many cases under very difficult conditions have been seeking the opportunity for an early retirement package. For years they have been promised the possibility of an early retirement package. Finally, at long last, we see movement toward an early retirement act for correctional workers.

I want to take this opportunity in the House to pay tribute to those men and women who do serve in the prisons of this country.

• (1900)

Certainly they have highly stressful jobs and they deserve the kind of early retirement plan that a number of other occupations have succeeded in obtaining, including air traffic controllers.

Mr. Speaker, you are signalling 7 o'clock. Perhaps the hon. member will want to return after private member's hour to respond to my comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry but I have to interrupt the proceedings because being 7 o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 36, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

THE DISABLED

PROVISION OF SERVICES

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should convene a conference of the appropriate provincial ministers to promote the adoptions of programs that will ensure that disabled adults across Canada receive the comprehensive services they need to function in society.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is always very unfortunate when the rules interfere with the give and take in the question and comment time. It would be hoped that in a circumstance like this in which a member has raised questions and the reply needs to be delayed for an hour, the member would ensure he was there in order to hear the response.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member would also need to be there for me to revert to the question and comment period.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged to be able to speak to my private member's motion which has been adopted for debate this evening. Rather than repeat it, the fact that you have read the motion is sufficient.

I was motivated to bring this matter before Parliament by parents of handicapped adults, particularly the parents of a particular friend of mine by the name of John, who are faced with a bleak future for their children once they as parents are gone. It is worth pointing out that the mothers are often the remaining parent left to cope with the resulting extreme hardships of caring for their handicapped children. I wish to acknowledge that many services are provided for children and youth and for some younger adults. However, we quickly find that the services wane as the individual gets older.

As well, there remain certain biases against handicapped people no matter how hard we try as government to try to overcome the biases that exist in the work place. I believe the solution to this problem lies in the continued and on-going efforts that will be required by governments of all levels to ensure the rightful place of handicapped adults in our society. It likely goes without saying that in times of fiscal restraint governments of all levels cut spending. While there is a need for this, we need to ensure that those who need our help continue to receive it. Disabled adults across Canada have been experiencing a reduction in the delivery of services such as transportation and home care.

Disabled adults are an important sector of our society. They are productive and able to contribute in many ways. Unfortunately some of what we believe to be life's

easiest tasks are not so easy for them. As a federal government we need to set examples for other levels of government to follow and we need to urge all governments to honour their commitments to every member of their communities. As technology advances, life can become easier for many disabled adults across this country. As the federal government it is our moral obligation to ensure that each and every Canadian has access to this technology.

One way this can be done is by urging provincial ministers and their governments to work with disabled groups and those they represent to find a consensus on services that are needed and wanted. In a strategy by the Secretary of State called "National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities", there are some statistics of interest. In the area of employment it states that in 1986 nearly three out of every five persons with a disability made less than $10,000. Women with disabilities experience an employment rate of 62 per cent to the rate of men with disabilities. Only 40 per cent of the adults with disabilities are in the paid labour force, compared to 70 per cent of the general population.

In the area of transportation, approximately 50 per cent of the people with disabilities who need specialized transportation services have access to them and only one province in Canada has any specialized vehicles for province-wide travel.

In education, only 56 per cent of the disabled population has eight or more years of schooling, compared to 83 per cent of the general population.

In communicating with groups that have a special interest in this area, I have received a response from the Regina and District Association for Community Living. In its communication to me it makes a statement that I feel bears some contemplation.

> Creating a segregated and restricting environment for the person with a mental handicap is like planting and cultivating a garden in such a way that primarily the weeds flourish. So you spend most of your time and energy trying to come to terms with the weeds without fundamentally altering your approach to gardening.

It goes on to say that there appears to be very little comprehension of the magnitude of the issues affecting and preventing people with disabilities from leading more normal, productive and less dependent lives in our society. It further comments that it is its vision, and one that I share, that all individuals will be accepted as valuable and contributing members of our families, communities and society, regardless of the level of support required to do so, and the association offers to work together with us in the resolve of these goals.

It is its feeling that personal empowerment must be the goal, while economic and social changes are the vehicles that must take place if individuals with a mental handicap are going to consistently achieve their potential. Our society now invests 19 to 21 years of mandatory educational services in these individuals, only to watch dishearteningly as they deteriorate after leaving school because of lack of opportunities, support and assistance.

There are two major themes that any significant social or economic change to services to individuals with a disability must address. One is consumer choice, power. The second is community commitment. The collective vision that has begun to emerge is that individual consumers or their guardians with their own purchasing power are deciding what services they need or want and are purchasing these services in a community setting of their choice.

We see the next four components as the framework from which social and economic changes will have a significant impact on personal empowerment. They are disability pension plans, employment equity with long-term support services, enriched/innovative housing that has CMHC support, and addressing the issues of poverty both from a financial as well as from an experiential perspective.

Let us talk about the disability pension plan for just a moment. There are already a number of disability pension and compensation plans available to some citizens. These are limited almost exclusively to people who have been in the work force. The same benefits should apply to people who are or become disabled before entering the labour force. Further, most provincial government assistance programs for adults such SAP are not intended for long-term sustenance for people who are disabled and dependent on the state. Most have serious and substantial disincentives, including employment, built into them.

In the second area of employment equity and day program continuum, more than 70 per cent of adults with a mental handicap are not gainfully employed. If you cannot access employment, you cannot therefore access unemployment insurance benefits or the wide range of employment initiatives through Canada manpower. Regular employment opportunities are seen as a critical part of the process of integration of people with a disability into everyday community life.

As we approach the final decade of the 20th century, a person's disability is becoming the least important factor in preventing them from becoming fully integrated into the labour market. Instead, the real factors denying persons with disabilities full access to employment are elements that are external to the individual. Specifically, some of these key issues are education structures, hiring practices and employment disincentives.

We have the knowledge base and the skills to put the vast majority of people with a mental handicap to work. We lack the commitment to employment initiatives to put them in practice.

On the third initiative, enriched/innovative housing, there is a serious lack of residential services both in spaces and options available in most, if not all, provinces. There has been very little attention to innovative options and/or enriched housing that would address the needs of people with disabilities. There have been some, admittedly, but we believe there is much more. Ghettoizing and/or living on the street is the present reality for far too many of these adults.

As a service to communities, support to adults with disabilities and boost to economies, CMHC should become more responsive to the housing needs of this vulnerable population.

• (1910)

The fourth area is the issue of poverty. The effect of long–term, severe poverty on an individual is more than just economic. There are physical and psychological consequences that are far more difficult to fix than to prevent.

We are talking about people with little or no disposable income, somewhere in the order of about $60 per month. Their basic needs do not include adequate clothing, food or social recreational allowances. Transportation, if available, is extremely limited, the RDACL continues.

The loss of parental support through death or a fight to gain more independence results in a dramatic and drastic lifestyle change for most disabled adults. One of the first visible signs is frequently the use of second–hand clothing in place of the newer more stylish clothing they grew up with and are used to.

Apathy and depression quickly follow with corresponding loss of ability at work or at home. This is in part due to the grieving of this loss, but the ongoing long–term impact has more to do with the change of diet.

Another indicator is the loss of opportunity. Without a strong personal support network and with a lack of purchasing power, most individuals are unable to challenge the service system to do more than basic maintenance support. They actually end up relying on few services with less potential to access and utilize the more generic service system.

Helplessness and hopelessness are the characteristics to best describe the individuals who experience significant and long–term poverty and are unable to challenge service systems or society to understand or address their needs.

There certainly is the willingness of groups to work with government agencies, as can be expressed in the following motion which was adopted by the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living. It reads as follows:

> Be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living meet with other groups of advocates for disabling conditions to discuss suggestions for the Saskatchewan government to establish a non–means disability pension plan which can then be augmented by either work or family help so that our people may lead lives of dignity without the need to go without the basic comforts.

All of this is not to say that nothing is being done, for there are some efforts being undertaken to address this issue. However, my concern is that this matter remain uppermost in the minds of those preparing the agenda for the various health ministers across Canada.

From the *Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act Annual Report of 1989–90,* one can see the level to which some effort is being made. As an example, during the 1989–90 fiscal year, the federal government contributed $106.5 million to the various provinces for expenditures for the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons.

Since the federal government pays half the provincial costs for vocational rehabilitation staff services and special equipment for disabled persons, the total annual expenditure on vocational rehabilitation in goods and services averages between $200 to $250 million per year.

If I just may quote some local figures, the province of Saskatchewan received a total of $5,884,407 or nearly $6 million for a figure that made up the total payments for the year 1989–90. Another way of putting it is it amounts to about $6 for every man, woman and child living in the province of Saskatchewan. This was a contribution toward the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons.

In all of Canada, this figure was $106,515,667 for the same period of time or about $4 for every man, woman and child living in Canada. It is clear, therefore, that the will and the financial resources seem to be committed to this direction. Whether or not there has been enough consultation with those affected and whether or not this continues to be a matter of significant priority is a moot point at the present time.

Solutions to these problems will come about only through legislative initiatives. Financial assistance programs must be altered in a way that will remove existing disincentives. Employment equity legislation must become broader in scope and include a strong enforcement mechanism. We must address the impact of poverty from a proactive, preventative perspective.

Through these changes supports must be built into the system that will ensure people with disabilities have full access to programs and services and that they are able to receive the same quality of services available to the non-disabled population.

I will therefore stress once again that these matters must remain uppermost in the minds of those preparing the agenda for the provincial health ministers across Canada. I truly hope that John has a better future instore for himself.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for bringing forth this private member's motion. It is a good initiative and we agree with it. There are a couple of things I would question him on in reference to his motion.

The motion says "disabled adults". Perhaps that was an oversight. I think perhaps it should just be "the disabled". I do not know why the motion would distinguish them, but I think that could be sorted out.

The motion says "convene a conference". I assume those attending such a conference would be the ministers of health. Now that may not be the case in all provinces, but most of us would accept that is likely to be the case.

One difficulty we have is in the definition of a disabled person. The one that I would like to see is one that I got from this pamphlet prepared by the Library of Parliament. It was updated in 1990 from the original of 1986. It defines disability as "the loss or reduction of functional ability and activity caused by impairment".

That is a pretty broad definition, but it is a good one. Most people would accept it. The difficulty sometimes is that the definition varies, sometimes with the economic times, sometimes from country to country, but basically speaking most of us could accept that one as being general enough to live with.

I had the privilege of travelling across Canada last summer. I visited seven different cities in Canada to have dialogue with the disabled and those who represent the disabled. I found it to be a very enlightening process.

There is a lot of misconception. Disabled people prefer to work. It is a misconception to think that the disabled are always looking for additional benefits. The biggest dissatisfaction they have is when they cannot go to work. Sometimes it is for a very simple reason. For the most part, they prefer to work. They do not necessarily want more protection from society. What they would like society to do for them is to remove the impediments preventing them from going to work or finding a job and staying at it. They want to compete.

In my background I have had some experience with the disabled. They can be very competitive and very good employees, if they are given the chance.

It seems to me what my colleague is trying to bring forth here would be the right thing to do in a civilized society such as ours. This is the right time to do it.

It used to be said that the advancement of any mature society could be measured by the number of libraries or the number of worn out books it had. A good correlation though would be the advancement of a mature society that could be measured on how it reacts, how it looks, how it treats and how it provides for disabled people. That could very well be a definition of a mature and advanced society.

Canada has made tremendous progress. The people I associated with last summer in our task force would admit that. There are all kinds of examples where great

progress has been made. However, we seem to back off every once in a while too.

The year 1981 was a great one. Some of my colleagues who were in the House will remember the International Year of the Disabled. Everybody's hopes, I suppose, were elevated to some degree. In 1988 the government introduced National Access Awareness Week. It is a positive development and usually happens in the spring. It has been in place for four or five years.

I was really disappointed when the government backed off on the Court Challenges Program. If the discussion there is not finished yet, and I hope it is not, I really think it is an indication that we are not too sincere about it. The Court Challenges Program provided a way in which the disabled could challenge some of the legal provisions that are there and not being addressed. That was a bit of a disappointment for me.

• (1920)

The biggest offender in many cases is the federal government itself. Some of the studies that have been done have left us looking pretty miserable as policy-makers if we are not prepared to carry out those same policies to which we seem to think others should adhere.

A commission found that 32 federal government offices that they visited randomly did not meet the national standards for building access, for example. They were missing basic things, structural things, ramps and the like.

Out of 48 government agencies reviewed, 28 agencies did not offer even one publication in any alternate form other than regular print. There were no cassettes, which are not expensive, no Braille, no large print.

The government itself should examine its own motives. It is okay to make laws and determine what you think the practice should be, but surely the first one to abide by that should be the government itself. I do not think you can expect too much positive reaction from private enterprise or private industry if the government is one of the worst offenders. They are pretty discouraging statistics.

If the only thing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is going to do is to be an outlet for somebody who has a complaint, and if all it does is address complaints, we will make even slower progress than we are making now because that body will not be in the position to address all the complaints.

Disabled people whom I have been associated with have told me they do get shuffled around. They get moved from office to office to office and sometimes they think that all we are trying to do is waste their time and everybody else's time because we do not know what to do with them. It seems to me some kind of a national clearing house would solve a lot of the problems if we really wanted to address those problems because they do get shuffled around and they know that.

There are a couple of things happening in Canada which I think would be in keeping with my colleague's motion. We had an opportunity to examine the Premiers' Council in two provinces, Alberta and New Brunswick. I think the Alberta one was based on the New Brunswick one; I think it was in that order.

This is a very positive thing but there is nothing comparable to it at the federal level. The Premiers' Council brought people with disabilities on track when there was new legislation being planned. The legislation would to some extent be tested by disabled people themselves. They would improve on it, add to it, or delete from it.

In this country right now there are about 550,000 visually impaired Canadians. These are people who would have to wear extraordinarily strong glasses all the time. They cannot read ordinary print. Of that number, 46,000 people would be declared legally blind, for whom glasses or print would not be enough and they would have to move to Braille.

This is interesting and a fascinating statistic: 45 per cent of Canadians with disabilities have grade eight or eight years of formal schooling or less, whereas in the general population in Canada it is about 17 per cent.

The disability someone has reflects on their whole way of life. They do not get the opportunity to go to school because schools are not equipped to accommodate them, and the thing sort of feeds on itself.

There are 195,000 hearing impaired people in this country living in poverty. There are 134,000 visually impaired people living in poverty. There are 493,000 who are mobility impaired, cannot move freely and live in poverty.

What I am pointing out is that there is a connection between being impaired, having a lack of opportunity and being destined to a life of poverty. Those are rather alarming statistics and we should address this problem on a very broad scale. It should not be narrowed down to where we think all we have to do is provide a few more ramps or something. It has to be looked at in a much broader context.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is running out. But the best model that I have found for legislation is in the United States, where two years ago it passed what is called the ADA, the American Disability Act. It is a model which I think Canada should look at. It is a model for the world and the world's strongest protection for disabled people is in the United States right now.

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member for Regina—Wascana gave us the opportunity to debate the concerns of disabled Canadians in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, we are not presented with that opportunity often enough.

The motion that has been put forward by the hon. member, and I want to read it for the record, says:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should convene a conference of the appropriate provincial ministers to promote the adoption of programs that will ensure that disabled adults across Canada receive the comprehensive services they need to function in society.

This is not a new notion. The previous speaker referred to the work of the then Standing Committee on the Status of Disabled Persons in preparation for the International Year of the Disabled. That committee, of which I was a member, tabled its report in the House of Commons in 1981 and that report was named The Obstacles report.

I want to say that the *Obstacles* report was considered internationally as the Magna Carta for the disabled into the next century, it was thought of so highly.

In that report there were 130 recommendations, one of which emphasized the need for the provincial governments and the federal government to co-ordinate their activities, on not only services for disabled persons but also employment needs, transportation needs, education needs, recreational needs, all those areas of society that able-bodied persons take for granted but which are denied to many persons with disabilities.

That is not a new recommendation. If the government decided in its wisdom to act on this motion, I would strongly urge it not to do it through convening a meeting of health ministers. That has been the problem over the years. There has been this view of people who may have a disability somehow or other being in need of medical services. There could be nothing further from the truth, in my experience. In fact, if there were anything to be convened, it should be among ministers of justice, both at the provincial and federal levels.

What is really required from legislators and policy-makers in this country is to view disabled issues as matters of justice, economic justice, just plain old-fashioned justice. It has nothing to do with medical needs. Some people may need medical assistance to allow them to participate in the mainstream of Canadian society, but some able-bodied Canadians need that.

What is sorely missing over the period from 1980 until 1992 is a serious commitment to that principle. It is not that anyone says the wrong thing about issues of concern to disabled Canadians. That is not the problem. You can find all kinds of statements over the years where all kinds of people say the right things about what should happen. The problem is that no one does the right things.

It is action that is required, Mr. Speaker, rather than promises. The member who moved the motion made reference to the five-year strategy that was announced by the government last year, a five-year strategy for the integration of disabled persons into the mainstream of Canadian society.

• (1930)

Under that strategy, to make sure that the strategy worked and was implemented, it was proposed that a committee of deputy ministers meet on a regular basis to take a look at laws where they discriminate against the disabled population, to take a look at services that discriminate against persons with disability, to take a look at areas of government policy where we have control to ensure that anything that was of a discriminatory nature that affected persons with disabilities in Canada would be removed.

That was last summer.

I asked in the committee on the human rights and status of disabled persons of which I am a member how many times had that subcommittee of deputy ministers met. They have met twice. I received the written answer last week. There have been two meetings with one deputy minister in attendance and one person assigned by a deputy minister in attendance.

If that is their strategy, it is one I do not want. If their strategy is not to do anything then I would rather not have the darn strategy.

The problem with the strategy is that no one has sat down and worked out timetables of when these things are supposed to happen, when they will come into place. The strategy itself as announced is not a bad strategy but it is only going to be a good strategy if somebody does something about it.

I will repeat what I said a few minutes ago. It is not that anyone says the wrong things about the need for assistance if you happen to be disabled. The problem is getting them to do the right thing. That is the problem.

I will give another example, a very simple matter in my view. We recommended in the Obstacles report that the Canadian Human Rights Act be amended to include a section that said people had a duty to accommodate persons with disabilities. Simple.

The United States, which in my view was a very regressive society, way behind Canada on issues affecting disabled people up until about a year ago, finally did that. It adopted the Americans with disabilities act which recognizes that society has a duty to accommodate persons with disabilities.

I do not recall what was in the calculations. I see the very able chairman of our committee sitting over there. He may remember. It was calculated in the United States that by society continuing to ignore its disabled population it was costing that society in the range of billions and billions of tax dollars in the year. It was calculated that the total population of disabled persons who were not employed in regular work and were not making contributions to American society was costing billions of dollars in American tax money to support them.

That was an incentive. They came forward with a piece of legislation that may not fit in Canada but at least it established some principles. The principles were that a disabled person in American society, and I would argue the same should be in existence in Canada, should have the same access to services as every other person who is able-bodied.

That is why I say it is a matter and a question of justice. It is not a question of hand-outs to someone who is disabled. They do not want that. Disabled people that I know are quite capable of looking after themselves in the main with some assistance.

It seems to me that our society would be much further ahead. In fact, we have to ask ourselves what kind of society we want to live in. Do we want to live in a society where we exclude millions of Canadians because they happen to be disabled, or do we want a society that includes every Canadian and allows every Canadian to live within the mainstream of Canadian society?

I can see that my time has expired, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at the outset that we should be grateful to the hon. member for Regina—Wascana for raising this subject in Parliament. The issue of providing benefits and services to persons with disabilities is one that hon. members know first hand has been in the minds of many, both here and in the other place.

Hon. members will recall that during debate last year on Bill C-38, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan, many of the issues raised and concerns expressed, both by hon. members and by witnesses appearing before the legislative committee, had to do with the disability pension provisions of the Canada Pension Plan.

Hon. members are no doubt aware that in addition to providing retirement, survivor's and children's benefits, the Canada Pension Plan also provides a monthly disability pension to contributors with a severe and prolonged disability. The maximum monthly benefit is currently $784 per month.

The fact that disability issues were the focus of so much discussion during debate on Bill C-39 was quite remarkable, given that the bill was addressing the financing of the Canada Pension Plan and an increase in children's benefits.

In response to these concerns and those expressed about other provisions of the Canada Pension Plan, the Minister of National Health and Welfare made a commitment to Parliament to raise these issues with his

provincial counterparts. Hon. members will recall that although the Canada Pension Plan is administered by the federal government, it is in essence a federal-provincial program.

Major amendments to the plan require the approval of not only the Parliament of Canada but also two thirds of the provinces having two thirds of the Canadian population.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has formally proposed to his provincial counterparts of social services the formation of a federal-provincial committee of income security and social service officials. This committee will review issues relating to the Canada Pension Plan other than financing which will remain the purview of the federal and provincial ministers.

The provinces have agreed and it is expected that the first meeting will be held early in the fall. As the hon. member can see, the federal government is actively working with the provinces to establish a mechanism to ensure that our national pension plan, the Canada Pension Plan, meets the needs of all Canadians. This new process is in keeping with the spirit of the hon. member's motion and should encourage both him and persons with disabilities that their concerns as they relate to the CPP will be addressed.

The other aspect of the hon. member's motion that I would like to speak to is the idea of programs that enable persons with disabilities to function in society. In this regard, the Canada Pension Plan is examining its role in the vocational rehabilitation of persons receiving a CPP disability pension. The CPP's involvement in the rehabilitation area is relatively recent. Previously, it had been viewed that the plan's clientele were not likely candidates for rehabilitation because of their severe and prolonged disabilities.

However, times and attitudes change and disabled people are indicating that what they want most of all is to work. They view this as the only sure-fire way out of the poverty that so many persons with disabilities currently live in. That was certainly the message that came out loud and clear at Independence '92, the International Congress and Exposition on Disability held last month in Vancouver.

In the fall of 1990, a pilot project was started to see if vocational rehabilitation was feasible for the Canada Pension Plan. The goal of the pilot project was to provide 100 CPP disability pensioners with the training, skills and/or education needed to return to suitable employment. This effort was expanded when last year, as part of the national strategy on the integration of persons with disabilities, an additional $6 million over five years was allocated from the CPP fund to the development of rehabilitation initiatives within the CPP.

The results of the initial pilot project which wound up this spring have been encouraging from both the client's point of view and the impact on plan expenditures. The pilot project also provided valuable insights into how an expansion of rehabilitation should take place. The Department of National Health and Welfare is currently in the process of designing the next phase of rehabilitation in the Canada Pension Plan. It is expected to be operational shortly.

• (1940)

In closing, I hope my remarks have provided some information as to the achievements of the federal government in conjunction with the provinces in the area of the Canada Pension Plan.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I too want to take the opportunity to thank the hon. member for Regina—Wascana for bringing forward this motion on a very important issue. The issue really is the value and worth of every human being in our society and how we can ensure that every individual has the opportunity to participate as fully as they are able to in society.

We have just completed National Access Awareness Week. I spent some time at various places in my own riding that are providing those kinds of services. St. Stevens residence has just opened up to provide community living for people with in some cases mental disabilities, in some cases physical disabilities and in some cases a combination of both. It is a great tribute to the people who conceived this project that a number of young people and older people who have spent the largest part of their lives in institutions are now living in the community, participating with others, participating in worship, participating in education and in work experi-

ences for a number of them. They are now able to live more fully complete lives as members of society.

Another facility, the Ottawa-Carleton Independent Learning Centre, is devoted to assisting people with fully independent living, as determined by themselves. I think that is the important thing. For far too long society, families, friends, people who care for persons with disabilities have assumed that we know best and have not allowed them the independence to choose and have not allowed them to have that independence to choose by ensuring that the services are there to give them the fullest possible range of choices.

Also in Ottawa West we have the Disabled Persons Community Resources which again brings together all the resources of this region and ensures that people have access to services. It is not enough that the services are there, that the people know about them, that there are not barriers based on mobility, knowledge, economic ability, language; if the services are there they have to be accessible to people in all the many ways we can think of accessibility.

Perhaps the most important service in that comprehensive package of services that the motion mentions and in the ability to function in society that the motion mentions is the ability to be employed. It is interesting that this motion comes forward for debate tonight, sandwiched between two bills, both of which are relevant to the motion, the bill we were dealing with before this hour on pensions for Public Service employees and the bill we will be dealing with later this evening on reform of the Public Service. It is not enough to bring forward issues in isolation.

What we have to learn to do in this House is to look at every piece of legislation, every government program and say among the other things we say in analysing a bill, does this bill assist or further hinder the ability of persons with disabilities to function fully in society? Both of these bills we are dealing with this evening are relevant, both of them continue or in fact increase impediments to persons with disabilities functioning in society.

I say that because the federal government is the largest employer in this country. As the largest employer in the country it has the obligation and it has the capacity to demonstrate that persons with disabilities can be fully integrated in employment by proper accommodation in recognition of the disability and, more importantly, in recognition of the inherent abilities of that person.

The federal government does not do that very well as an employer, and it is certainly something we in this House have an obligation to pay attention to.

For instance, we just dealt with Bill C-55, which allows some limited access, not full access, to pension plans for part-time employees. Many disabled people cannot work full time, or in order to remain as fully employed as they can with their disability they may be able to work full time for a while and then shift to part-time work for a while if their condition worsens, and then they may return to full-time work when they are able to.

Up until now, and even now, with the very limited provisions for part-timers to contribute to a pension plan, part-time employees in the Public Service have not had full access to a pension plan. Therefore their ability to work and have financial stability, not only during their working years but after they are no longer able to work, is limited by a bill that we are dealing with right now.

We will be dealing later this evening with Bill C-26, which deals with employment practices in the Public Service. That bill again continues some barriers to employment for persons with disabilities.

There is great concern among groups in society who are traditionally disadvantaged in employment—women, aboriginal peoples, people of colour, and people with a range of disabilities. There is great concern with regard to this bill that the Public Service is shifting away from the concept of hiring somebody on the basis of what they can do and giving managers more discretion so that they do not to have to meet that standard of "who has the ability to do this job".

Right now there are programs within the Public Service Commission that allow the Commission to place a disabled person in a job in a department by providing funding for that job for a period of time. The intention is that they will get trained and the employer, the department, will have the experience of having a disabled person working in their department or in their branch, and will discover what this person can do rather than seeing only the disability. Hopefully that will lead to a full-time permanent job for them.

In fact, what happens is that people continually get hired on term because they are disabled and they are never quite good enough to be hired permanently. Rather than facilitating the employment of persons with a disability, we are exploiting them.

What happens is that under the access program they get referred to a position and as soon as the special money that is provided runs out the department finds for some reason that it cannot keep this person on. So they get shuffled around. Now they are working and now they are not working.

It is not enough, and later this evening members will hear amendments to the act that we will be dealing with that would place additional responsibilities on the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Edwards: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I have been listening with care to what my hon. friend has been injecting into this debate. I understand that she has an interest in bills that will be before us later this evening. However I would ask you, sir, to invoke the rules of relevancy and ask her to stay on the subject of this private members' hour.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please! I would remind all hon. members that the rule of relevancy is one of the most difficult that the Chair has to enforce. Therefore, I would call upon the co-operation of both sides of this House. I think it is always useful to keep this in mind.

I recognize the hon. member for Ottawa West again, for 30 seconds.

[*English*]

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I really do resent the interruption.

The employment of persons with disabilities is one of the most crucial issues that persons with disabilities face.

• (1950)

I simply call upon the government, and all of us as parliamentarians, every time we are dealing with legislation, but particularly as an employer, to put into practice those principles that the hon. member's motion tonight talks about.

It is not enough to talk about these things in principle. We must put them into practice at every opportunity. As an employer we, the federal government, can do more for the disabled and their equality of access than anyone else in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to respond to the motion by the hon. member for Regina—Wascana dated May 15, 1991, in which the hon. member suggests convening a conference of provincial ministers. The purpose of the conference would be to promote the adoption of programs that will ensure that disabled persons across Canada receive the comprehensive services they need to function in society.

I want to thank the hon. member for his concern for the integration of disabled persons into society. This concern is indeed more than legitimate since, as we know, disabled persons represent 13 per cent of the Canadian population and, in too many cases, remain an untapped resource, both socially and economically.

I would first like to give a brief overview of the past twelve years which I believe will justify the position taken by our government.

In 1991 the United Nations proclaimed the International Year of the Disabled. This was the kick start for a world awareness campaign.

In 1982 the government enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms a clause on disabled persons which gave them the right to the same protection and benefits of the law, irrespective of any discrimination including discrimination on the basis of mental or physical disabilities.

This first step toward equality was to open the door to a whole series of measures and projects which, over the past decade have helped the disabled community to start taking its place in Canadian society.

In 1983 the United Nations proclaimed the decade of the disabled, an opportunity to insist on their rights as citizens. In 1985 our Prime Minister published a statement on the decade of the disabled, stressing the need to encourage the disabled to become fully involved in society and to be part of social change, in order to develop their potential and accept their duties as citi-

zens. That same year, the Secretary of State was designated Minister responsible for the Status of the Disabled.

In 1986 the Employment Equity Act was adopted, obliging federally regulated employers to file reports on the measures they take to recruit disabled persons. The following year, the government proclaimed a national access week for the disabled, urging municipalities to improve access levels in transportation, the work place, recreation facilities, education and housing.

Between 1988 and 1991 the government pursued its initiatives with federal-provincial agreements on social housing, a policy ensuring that properties purchased or leased by the government include no physical barriers, and the start of a complete review of federal statutes affecting the disabled, to name only a few of these projects.

I am not trying to make the government look good. I simply want to make it clear that we have made progress and, above all, that we have paved the way for future action. We realize that being disabled does not in any way diminish a person's value or, and this is very important, the contribution that person can make to society.

We understood that political action and legislation to change the system would be effective only if we were able to change attitudes. In the past year, much has been done to implement the government's commitment on this issue.

First, in the fall of 1991 the government launched its National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, a five-year project co-ordinated by the Department of the Secretary of State and involving ten federal departments and agencies. The strategy, which is meant to ensure equal access for the disabled, their integration into economic life and full participation in society, appeals to the spirit of partnership and calls on all levels of government to take part.

Since last fall, several departments and agencies have begun to make changes, many in close co-operation with the provinces and territories.

For example, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) set up a program of financial assistance for disabled and low-income seniors who wish to make minor changes to their home. Several provinces and territories have agreed to participate in the program, which will start in July.

The Department of Fitness and Amateur Sport provides another excellent example of partnership. To ensure the commitment and support of the whole community, the department decided to share information on its program with all prospective partners. Fitness Canada thus held information meetings with representatives of the provincial and territorial governments and the voluntary and private sectors. Meetings were held in every province and territory between December 1991 and February 1992, and the results of these meetings are now being distributed to all participants.

Fitness Canada has also shown initiative in the field of education. Working in close co-operation with nine sports organizations and recreation centres for the disabled, the department is developing educational material to help teachers better integrate handicapped students in their physical education classes. In March, it established a steering committee to liaise with the Department of Education in every province.

Finally, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as well is always consulting with the provinces and territories. In the province of my distinguished colleague, Saskatchewan, for example, the provincial departments and organizations that provide services to the disabled participated in information meetings culminating in a conference this past January where they developed a strategy and defined some common goals. Similarly, consultations with provincial representatives were held and will be held in Alberta and British Columbia.

I could continue giving examples of consultation and partnership between the federal government and the provinces. I think that everyone has understood that no government or organization alone can eliminate the obstacles preventing 3.3 million disabled Canadians from having full access to all areas of our society.

I will conclude by thanking the hon. member who presented the motion and gave me the opportunity to discuss this subject in the House of Commons. I trust that I have clearly shown the consultation that exists between the federal government and the provinces. Above all, I had this chance to highlight all that is being done at all levels to give the disabled more opportunity for real control over their lives and to let them take their rightful place in their own provinces and in Canada.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure to speak on Bill C-55. It is a piece of legislation that I have looked over very carefully. It is in fact almost an omnibus bill. It deals with so many different aspects of pension legislation. I listened to the parliamentary—

• (2000)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. We are on Private Members' Business. It has not expired. I gave the floor to the hon. member expecting that she would speak about the private member's motion.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle that Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act, be read the third time and passed, and the amendment of Mr. Edwards (p. 12268).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): At the suspension of the debate there were seven minutes remaining in the speech of the hon. member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, as we reached seven o'clock, the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway had posed a question to me with respect to MPs' pension plans and noted that he hoped I would be here at eight o'clock in order to give the reply.

Regrettably, the hon. member does not seem to have been able to make it back in order to hear my reply. However, I would like to make a few comments, particularly in view of the fact that he seemed to be, in his comments, claiming some kind of victory on behalf of his leader for the fact that the President of the Treasury Board announced that an independent committee would be reviewing MPs' pensions. He talked a great deal about how this had been called for and how it had been promised, which is all very well.

What is unclear is exactly what the position of NDP members is on the issue. One would have thought part of that letter having been given that if they did indeed feel as strongly as their leader claimed to feel in her initial speech, that perhaps in the context of the parliamentary committee they might have moved a few amendments on the issue. Were there any amendments by the NDP?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Manley: No amendments were moved. We have to guess what their position really is. We have to read the rumours that appear here and there about the reaction of their caucus. What we do know is that members of the NDP have succeeded very well in achieving some excellence in the art of double-dipping. We have some very good examples of former NDP members who have accepted very good positions with the federal government on top of their government pensions, including their former leader.

It is very hard to take seriously the question from the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway. He inquires at seven o'clock to run out the clock and then he is not really able to make clear what position it is that his party is trying to defend.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway is at a special dinner on foreign affairs. He is our foreign affairs critic. Maybe I could put the question again since the member did not answer it.

The question was quite simple. What was the Liberal position? The Liberals are famous for being mugwumps. Do you know what mugwumps are, Mr. Speaker? They are people who sit on a fence. They have their mug on one side and their wump on the other.

The Liberals are famous for this—on the trade deal, on the GST, on pensions, on everything. They try to be everything to everybody. At some point the mugwump starts to hurt a little bit, sitting as he does in the middle. So I will put the question again. What is the position of the hon. member's party, the Liberal Party? Or is he going to continue the tradition of mugwumpry among the Liberals.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I certainly made my position clear in my speech. I do not think this member was present for that part. Maybe if we could get the NDP caucus all together at once we could have a discussion about it. What clearly has not been stated is what the NDP position is. I do not think we are accomplishing anything by this, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that when I looked at the clock a few moments ago I thought we were back on Bill C-55, so I apologize to you. I do want to speak on Bill C-55.

It is, as I said earlier, legislation which I have examined very carefully. It is, in fact, almost an omnibus bill. It deals with so many components of federal pensions that it really would have been better, I feel, if the government had split this bill into its different components so we could deal with it in those components.

There are a number of features in this bill that I support and I know that other members of my caucus support. Finally, after years and years of lobbying, federal part-time workers, if this bill becomes law, will be able to become part of the federal superannuation plans. I am sure most of us in this House are aware this is a benefit which will proportionately mean more to women than it does to men because a larger number of women are working on a part-time basis and not in full-time jobs.

This bill also provides for an early retirement act for correctional workers. That is another suggestion that has been made in this House for at least 10 years, another situation for which we have lobbied for a long time. Correctional workers have very stressful jobs and they deserve the kind of unreduced early retirement plan that air traffic controllers have had for some time now.

Another provision in this bill that I support is the new Pension Benefits Division Act which instructs the federal government to enforce court ordered divisions of federal pension credits upon marital breakdown. This idea was also a very long time coming. In fact, since I was elected in 1988 I have been working on this issue. I have received representations from a number of women who have been married to plan holders and have lost totally the benefits they should be entitled to because of the way the previous act was written.

I am afraid there is still a number of problems with the method the government has chosen in its attempt to address this inequality for women in this very large bill. I heard the parliamentary secretary saying earlier today that this is a simple bill that brings pension legislation in line with the Income Tax Act. I would ask the parliamentary secretary why on earth do we have a bill with 153 pages dealing with so many aspects of pension legislation, including the pensions of members of Parliament, which it seems to have just kind of snuck in there?

I would respond also to the Liberal member who was speaking a moment ago that the leader of the New Democratic Party made the position of the New Democratic Party straight and clear when she spoke in the House at second reading. That is the position of the New Democratic Party. There are concerns in this caucus, and within this party, around the provisions of double-dipping and triple-dipping that we know has gone on. We know that the public shares those concerns. There are concerns around the age at which a member is entitled to start to receive pension benefits. Those are the concerns she articulated. She articulated them clearly and this is the position of the New Democratic Party.

I said a few moments ago that I had some concerns with the bill in relation to the pension splitting provisions. Women are living in poverty unnecessarily because of this government's policy on pensions. This bill will only ensure that women who can jump through a number of bureaucratic hoops from now on will get a part of the pension to which they are entitled. It does not do anything for the many women who are retired or approaching retirement after a lifetime of work in their homes. They remain, in fact, doomed to poverty under this new legislation.

What I am talking about here is spouses of contributors to the government's own pension plan, from Public Service employees, Armed Forces personnel, diplomatic service, et cetera. Since 1987, the federal government has required federally-regulated industries to adopt certain pension standards which include pension credit splitting on marriage breakdown. The federal government has exempted itself from the Pension Benefit Standards Act and continues to set a lower standard for itself than for federally regulated industries.

• (2010)

My New Democrat colleagues and I have proposed a number of amendments, contrary to what was just said in the House. I think we have proposed around 30 amendments to this legislation. One of those amendments would have provided for retroactivity so that women who were cheated out of their pensions by government policy would now be able to get that pension. That amendment was defeated by the government majority in the House of Commons.

Another New Democrat amendment moved in the committee studying this bill would have provided for spousal representation on pension advisory committees. That was also defeated by the Conservative majority.

Other amendments that were drafted in consultation with spouses concerning the imposition of a trust on the pension plan, the amount of the pension to be transferred, and so on, were also defeated by the Conservative majority.

I am, however, pleased that the government took some of the New Democrat amendments and proposed them itself, such as the valuation of pensions, the disclosure of pension information to the spouse and a determination of the length of the period of cohabitation.

As I said earlier, this is an issue I have been working on since only months after I was elected to this House of Commons. I have received letters from a number of women in every region of this country who have been very badly treated by the current legislation.

I have written to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women who is also the Associate Minister for National Defence a number of times over the years asking for relief for particular women, married women who had devoted their lives to a husband's career and children and then found themselves living in poverty. I also wrote to the President of the Treasury Board. I asked the ministers to urge their government to support our amendment on retroactivity. Sadly that was to no avail.

The government's record on women and pension is extremely poor and unfortunately so are these women who have been caught in this squeeze. They are also extremely poor. In the area of the Canada Pension Plan the government has failed the women of Canada.

I have been corresponding for years on the case of Helen Marie Davis. This woman was married for several decades to a man and underwent great personal hardship with him. She bore and raised eight children. She left him—she had to leave him later in life—and obtained a divorce. Because of his failing health she resumed living with him and he died within the year that they resumed living together.

Do members know how much she receives from her husband's Canada pension credit? Do they know how much she gets in a pension from the Canada Pension Plan? Zero, not one penny, because according to this government's policy she had been living with him less than a year even though she had actually lived with him for decades. She went through a humiliating and unexpected cross-examination at the appeal hearings and again she walked out with nothing, zero. This policy is cruel and nonsensical and must be changed.

As an example of the federal employment pension, which is the subject matter at hand, I have been working on the case of a woman who was married to a foreign service employee for 38 years. As a consular spouse she was not allowed by government regulation to take employment despite her own two university degrees. She was 63 years old by the time the regulations changed and too old to re-enter her own profession.

In some ways this woman is more fortunate than others I have dealt with in that her ex-husband has agreed to provide her voluntarily with half his pension. But because he is in a higher tax bracket than she, she must pay higher taxes than she would if the pension had been divided at source and provided directly to her.

A woman's right to her share of a pension should not have to rely on the good will of the divorced husband or on tricks provincial courts sometimes use to get around the federal legislation. I have heard so many problems with Revenue Canada's treatment of pension splitting that I urge this government to review the situation as quickly as possible and to take action.

Many divorced women live in poverty and many are saddled with huge legal bills. The government is not making sure that they get their half of the pensions regularly, nor is Revenue Canada sensitive to the situation these women find themselves in. Another woman wrote to me, and I will quote:

I feel that in spite of all the changes for the better in a women's status in this country, we are still in the Dark Ages in many ways. After nearly 30 years of marriage my husband left me after losing everything we had worked for over most of my lifetime.

The court awarded this woman a part of her husband's RCMP pension, but if he dies the pension dies with him and the woman he has been living with gets the survivor's pension. There is nothing for the woman who has raised his three children and had been with him for most of his life. She will get nothing at all.

This woman is now in her later years and loses out for the time that she helped him to earn that pension. The issue of survivor's benefits, which is among the most important of all pension issues, is not really addressed in this bill. It is not addressed at all.

It is appalling that a person can be deemed dead when their ex-partner dies and then they lose any benefits. This is what this legislation does.

I have heard particularly from women whose spouses are in the Armed Forces. They tell me this is a very stressful life which does contribute to marriage breakdown. The woman is sometimes left alone to raise children for long periods of time. Why is there so little recognition of this role that women play, this work that women do for many years in their lives?

More and more women these days have paid jobs outside the home. Yet when a woman follows her husband throughout the world, in many countries it is difficult for her to find a job. The women who suffer most are those of the older generation, many of whom did no paid work and have no pension in their own names. These older women are the ones who will not benefit at all from this new legislation.

I have also been told by women of problems with the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act. One woman was abused by her husband for 23 years. She left him but she has been unable to collect her support under that bill. She receives half of her husband's pension whenever he feels like sending it. What limited money she receives will stop when he dies.

One of the New Democrat amendments would have remedied this situation by imposing a trust on the pension plan so that when it is split, half of the pension is paid out to the spouse directly from the pension plan on time and until her death, not his if he predeceases her. The government again used its majority to defeat this amendment.

The many women who have written to me and to the ministers are forced to open up every detail of their own personal lives in the hope this government will show them some compassion. I sometimes feel like I am banging my head against a brick wall when trying to deal with the government. I get letters and I have conversations with these women and they share the pain, agony, and humiliation they feel. I know the government side gets the same letters, because often the letters I receive have been carbon copied to me that have gone to a minister. Not one of these women who have talked of their divorces or their abuse or other aspects of their personal situations to complete strangers who have power over them will benefit from this bill.

I think that is a travesty. This lack of attention to this matter in the bill certainly does figure prominently in my decision about whether or not to support it.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on an especially excellent speech in that she dealt with specific cases of real people who are affected by this legislation or actually have not been helped by the legislation.

• (2020)

I noticed she referred to an act concerning garnisheed wages. I thought maybe I would just expand on that a little bit. I used to prosecute some of these cases in the courts where money would have to be collected, usually from the husband, so I am somewhat familiar with this matter.

I will translate this into the actual facts. What happens, and it happened more in the past but it is still happening, the husband was out working and the wife stayed home looking after the children. They would get divorced, the assets would be split and she would get half of his pension and that was a big fight.

An hon. member: Not here, not in this bill.

Mr. Waddell: Well, not in this bill but often in some agreements in court or as part of the divorce settlement. The only problem is that the pension, as I understand it, still goes to one person, usually to the man. Then the man does not live up to his obligations under the court order.

What has to happen then is the woman has to go to court. She has to hire a lawyer or line up to get a prosecutor and the man's bank account or wages are garnisheed. It takes time, it is expensive and often times the woman does not get anything. The husband of course sometimes resists. She may get money, but would it not be better if we just split that up and the bill dealt with that and the modern situation and made it easier for the woman? I think that was the principle behind our amendments.

As the hon. member said, suppose the man dies. Suddenly the pension is gone and it is not even—

An hon. member: She is deemed dead.

Mr. Waddell: And she is deemed dead. I am laughing, but it is not a laughing matter. That is what we tried to do on our amendments and I am sorry the government did not accept them.

Before I sit down, I wanted to tell the hon. member that I received a letter today from a woman in Port Moody who is a widow. She wrote saying that she has an 18–year old son. He is six foot six and weighs well over 200 pounds. She was getting a child allowance from the government and then it was cut back. She said that her pension was increased but it was not enough to pay for all the clawbacks and the cutbacks.

We have a government that is not totally reforming the pension system and is out there clawing back different allowances. Here is this poor woman who has to feed this giant of a kid on less money from this government. That really is not justice.

I do not know if the hon. member wants to comment on that. It is another example of a difficult situation for people living in the real world in Canada.

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam, a neighbouring riding of mine. We are very close in the lower mainland of Vancouver.

I want to expand on the pension splitting provisions of this bill. The method of division proposed in this bill is flawed because it does not provide for consistent treatment of federally regulated employees in the Public Service. The government in fact had models to choose from, models that work quite well. There is the Canada Pension Plan with automatic division of credits or the flexible provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act. The government chose neither of those two models.

Instead, the government decided to limit the benefit distribution to one method only, the much more restrictive, cumbersome and less fair lump sum transfer. This method is not easily acceptable and it has a lot of built–in time delays and court costs. The evaluation of these lump sum amounts fails to take into account many factors.

There were a number of options presented at committee stage that would have improved the bill. Unfortunately the government did not accept them.

The key thing to remember in this legislation is that it does in fact make some small measure of improvement because it does allow for pension splitting, even though it is an imperfect model.

My concern which I tried to articulate in the comments I made is that it will not benefit those women who have been cheated out of a fair share of the pensions they, in fact, worked for over the many years they may have been married.

I gave the example of the woman who was the spouse of a diplomat. She was married for some 30 years and was not allowed to work by conditions of her husband's employment. By this government's own conditions, she was not allowed to have employment. When that marriage split up she had no provision to access part of the pension she had helped her husband earn.

Now this bill does nothing to remedy that situation for those women who have been cheated out of a lifetime of earnings and a share in the pension plan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to Bill C–55, which concerns changes in the superannuation plan for the Public Service, the RCMP and the Armed Forces. I estimate that in my own riding of Carleton—Gloucester the majority of my constituents are employed either by the Public Service, the RCMP or the Armed Forces.

These employees have all contributed to the plan, as they would in the private sector. Some people, especially on the government benches, claim that public servants are getting a free ride. I can assure you that public servants, like their colleagues in the private sector, have contributed their fair share to their pension plan.

Public servants are professionals who dedicate their lives, and do so very conscientiously, to serving Canada's communities. They are paid to do this, but they have to consider the future. Public servants must have a pension plan that is fair. It is up to us as parliamentarians to ensure that public servants have a pension plan that is both fair and equitable, so that it can meet the needs of public servants when they are retired.

The superannuation fund now contains almost $75 billion, or it will in a matter of months or, to be more specific, towards the end of the year.

Surprisingly, the government is the self-appointed administrator, comptroller, trustee and manager of the fund. The government has a monopoly. It is the official trustee of this pension plan, so it should be honest and fair in dealing with its employees. It is not a matter of handouts but of being fair.

We all know the government uses this money for its own purposes, either to pay off the deficit or the national debt. Contrary to the provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, employees and retired employees are not included on the Board. The Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 is an act respecting pension plans organized and administered for the benefit of persons employed in connection with certain federal works, undertakings and businesses. This act was assented to on June 27, 1986. The administration of pension plans will, according to the act, include at least one member of the pension committee chosen by plan members.

• (2030)

Let me ask you this, Mr. Speaker: Do employees have a representative on the pension fund advisory committee? Do retired civil servants have one? The answer is no, unlike other programs in various provinces.

This bill also provides for retired contributors to be represented on the management committee by a person appointed by them. "The employer, says the law, will ensure that the amounts deducted are accounted separately from its own." He must keep them in trust. I ask you this: Does government use the money for its own purposes? Does government put it in a trust fund? Does government use it to reduce its deficit or the public debt? The Auditor General has already tabled a report in which he advised Parliament that the rate of return on the Public Service superannuation account was between 1 and 2 per cent under the current rate on the investment market. Pensions are not negotiable, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, there is a need to be fair to these employees in the legislation.

On the death of the contributor, the surviving spouse is entitled to 50 per cent of the benefits. Why is there no provision to allow surviving spouses, generally women, to receive 60 per cent, as provided for in other pension plans across the country? What government did with this 50 per cent entitlement is contrary to the terms of its own 1985 Pension Benefits Standards Act, which calls for 60 per cent. Is government truly committed to the well-being of its employees who, day after day, provide services and see to it that government legislation is enforced?

Why, discriminate against part-time employees, term employees, contract employees? It is unfair to women in particular. Why could part-time and term employees not contribute to the pension fund too? As you know, Public Service 2000 is now being implemented. This government's agenda is apparently to keep shrinking the Public Service indefinitely. It seems to have no respect for the Public Service and to want to privatize it all. Are we to understand that government is not really trying to provide its employees with a fair pension plan?

Then, there is this amendment about indexing. Why did the government vote against this amendment designed to maintain indexing? What is it up to? Does it have unpleasant surprises in store for its employees? Let us not forget that employees pay to get this protection. It is no gift or giveaway.

[*English*]

What does this government have against fairness? Why does it exempt itself from the standards established by the Pension Benefits Standards legislation? Why does it have to use regulations that leave distrust in the minds of public servants?

We are still not sure that these regulations would not be used to change the benefits received even from de-indexed pensions.

I would like to refer to Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act. Subsection 80(3) says:

> (3) In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) and the provisions of this act or any other regulations made under this act, the provisions of the regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

Surely, the government could have done much better in making the Public Service pension regime fairer. It has lost an important opportunity to show the public that it values public servants' contribution to our country and that it believes in fairness and justice.

Why has this clause been put in? Is it for justice? I doubt it very much. Is this a new road we are taking in Parliament where it is not Parliament and the laws that are going to prevail but rather the regulations prepared by—

[*Translation*]

—senior officials who prepare the regulations for the ministers? I think that in future we can expect to have some serious problems in this country if we are governed by senior officials instead of by acts of Parliament.

The government blithely ignored the recommendations of witnesses who appeared before the Legislative Committee. Public servants are treated with contempt and ignored by this government. It has no respect for public servants, whose morale is very low. It is difficult to achieve professionalism. And of course, there is the government's tendency to favour contracting out. As in the private sector, public servants contribute their fair share to the pension fund, and they are entitled to it. They have made a lifetime investment. The government, the self-appointed sole trustee of the plan, must be fair and frank with its employees in every respect.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address an aspect of this bill that I consider extremely important to the affairs of Parliament.

I suppose the area I am concerned with does not directly relate to the matter of pensions. The bill, as described here tonight, is almost an omnibus bill that directs its attention to a number of different types of amendments in pension legislation.

The area I want to highlight has already been referred to by other members here this evening, but I feel I have a very special interest in this area of the law of Parliament. It is an area I work in at the committee level for Parliament. I feel it is essential that the records of Parliament reflect my views, at least. I may be, along with a few other small voices, crying in the wilderness but there is a serious problem here and I want to describe it now.

In clauses 30 and 58 of this bill there are provisions that delegate to the Governor in Council, and therefore the bureaucracy, the right and power to make regulations. That happens in almost every bill we pass here.

It also says in both clauses:

> In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) and the provisions of this act or any other regulations made under this act, the provisions of the regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

That means that when this House passes this law it is at the same time giving the Governor in Council and the bureaucracy the right to make a regulation that is inconsistent with this act, that flies in the face of this act. This Parliament is stating that regulation will prevail over the law that is passed in this House.

I was shocked when I read that and I went to the effort of taking some legal counsel on the issue. I said that surely this House cannot delegate to someone outside of Parliament the right to pass laws and change the law of Parliament. The answer that I got was that it has been dealt with before in history a few times. It is in fact not

unconstitutional. The concept has been universally condemned and is regarded as a constitutional impropriety. I am telling this House now that the concept that it is about to adopt in this bill is regarded by constitutional experts in the western world as a constitutional impropriety.

• (2040)

What I as a member see it as is a situation where the government is continually chipping away at the rights and authority of this Parliament. At the very least, I must make reference to it.

I want to do it because I want to caution this House and Canadians to not take the current equilibrium of checks and balances, constitutional and political, as they exist in this country, for granted. It has been gained at a constitutional history cost over several hundred years beginning with the Magna Carta and going on through the Bill of Rights in the 1800s, the Bill of Rights in Canada under the British North America Act in 1867, the Bill of Rights in 1960, the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights. Here we are in 1992 doing something that, as I have said, has been universally condemned. It was so condemned in the year 1930 when the Donoughmore committee clearly stated on the record for the British Parliament whose system we have adopted here in the following words describing the situation: "It cannot but be regarded as inconsistent with the principles of parliamentary government that the subordinate law-making authority should be given the superior law-making authority power to amend a statute which has been passed by the superior authority".

That is fairly wordy, but what I want to ask here is: do members opposite realize that they are on behalf of their electors delegating to the bureaucracy and the Governor in Council the right to make a law that is inconsistent with the law we are passing here tonight? I do not think they know it. I want the record to show very clearly that when I vote against this bill, this is the principal reason I vote against it. To be sure, there are others, but this is the principal reason I vote against it.

This concept of delegating in this manner has not been seen in a previous statute to the best of my knowledge. There was one occasion in this House last year when in adopting the new copyright law this House in a provision in the statute stated that in implementing an international copyright convention the Governor in Council could make changes to adapt to the international convention; the same principle, but at least tied to an international convention.

In this case there is no parameter, no limit, no guidance, no strictures, no measuring stick, but simply a statement that if the Governor in Council passes a regulation inconsistent with this act the regulation prevails. That is law-making overriding the law of Parliament by an Order in Council. That is a tyranny of the majority on the other side of this House because once given it will be bloody hard to get it back.

I have made reference to the previous constitutional history, what it has been called. My colleagues on this side of the House have already described it as a Henry VIII clause. The concept has been around for 400 years. It has been recognized as I have said as a constitutional impropriety. The only way the British Parliament managed to get rid of the Henry VIII clause was when the guy died. When Henry VIII died they removed the law that let the king make a proclamation that could override the rights and the law of Parliament.

This government is following in the same footsteps as Henry VIII. There is no other way to describe it. There are smiles around, Mr. Speaker. It sounds cute but it is very important. It is a very important principle. I cannot help but allude to the President of the Treasury Board as walking in the footsteps or wearing the mantle of or with the crown of Henry VIII. He might even do it well.

Let me put a scenario so that the record can show some of my real concerns. If there were an inadvertent conflict, inadvertent inconsistency, between the rights that will be passed under this statute and the statute itself, one could understand in some cases where you would want to settle the difference. I think it should be settled. The law of the land says that Parliament's law governs. That is what the law says now.

But what happens over time if the Public Service, the Governor in Council, says to heck with this, we have a provision that lets us make a regulation that overrides it. The member shakes his head, "not in your lifetime". We are talking 400 years of constitutional history here.

What if that happens? I am saying that Parliament has just given the government and the Governor in Council the right to make a law that overrides the law we cast in this House. They are incredulous over there. They do not believe that would really happen.

It is not going to happen tomorrow. I will take their word on that. We have seen it in this one statute, just this one. What happens if this fall we have another statute with the same provision, and another one next year, and the year after that, because the bureaucrats draft these bills; the minister does not. Soon we have dozens of statutes with the same kind of provision. What if there is a problem in this House some day, a constitutional problem? The government can simply decide to go right ahead and run this country by passing regulations that are inconsistent with the statutes because the concept has been accepted if we pass this bill here in June 1992. They will look back and say that it was okay in June 1992, it must be okay now in 1993, in 1994. That is a great danger. Trying to roll this stuff back is very difficult.

Just two years ago there were Standing Orders that governed procedures in this House. Those Standing Orders were significantly, materially, amended over the objections of the opposition. The reason they passed was because the government had a majority. That incident itself showed how the majority could override the rights of the minority in this House. We are not talking about passage of laws. We are talking about the Standing Orders that determine how Parliament works on a day-to-day basis.

The government that did it was insensitive to the issue. This section is a reflection of that same insensitivity, an insensitivity to the law of Parliament, an insensitivity to our constitutional history, and an insensitivity to what I referred to as the equilibrium of the checks and balances in our constitutional law.

I regret that this is going to be law within a few days or weeks. I want the record to show that and I object to it strongly.

• (2050)

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): I welcome the opportunity to present a few comments on this bill.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats are opposing this bill. There are, I would suggest, two main reasons why we oppose this bill and certainly two reasons why I am opposing this bill. The first reason has to do with the fact that for some time now superannuates at the FSNA have been calling for a joint management board to manage the funds of this pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, as you also will be well aware, there is something in the order of $75 billion or $80 billion sitting in this account somewhere that is being managed solely by the Treasury Board and for some time the superannuates have been asking for some say in how this is being managed.

To be fair, there is an advisory board around, but I am of the understanding that this board has not been consulted for some five years. What they have been asking for is something that has some real power, a joint management board that would be made up of the government as employer, the employees, superannuates and of course a representative of a spouse, all of whom would actually manage those funds.

The Auditor General in his report this year said that this fund is losing something like a billion dollars a year in interest alone. It is losing that money because of the way the government has invested it. It is very difficult to get answers from the government. The government has been very, very hush-hush and very reluctant to make any comments with respect to investments, but certainly this $75 billion is not sitting in an account in the Bank of Montreal or a credit union somewhere. It has been borrowed by this government. In fact it is part of this $400 billion debt that exists in this country.

That is all very well and fine if in fact there was a joint management board that decided in its wisdom that it wanted to lend the government *x* millions or billions of dollars on certain terms, but to simply have the government investing and using this money as it sees fit with these promises leaves many superannuates unsure and in fact very frustrated. When you get a report such as the Auditor General's report saying that this account is losing a billion dollars a year in interest and you have the superannuates saying that they cannot find out exactly where these accounts are being invested, in what form and in what fashion and what the plan is for these accounts, it is very frustrating. The government refusing to set up that management board sets a very bad precedent in this country.

In my riding there are a lot of seniors who are CPR pensioners on CPR pension funds and they have a lot of concerns over what has happened with their account. There is a lot of secrecy concerning that fund. It would certainly be important for this government to take some lead in dealing with pension funds in this country. When this baby boom generation reaches retirement there is going to be a lot of need for those funds and by God there had better be some accounting for them and they had better be there and available. Therefore, the fact of a joint management board makes very good sense and

would certainly ensure that these pension funds are being spent and being used properly.

The other disappointing thing is that with the amount of interest and growth that is happening with this fund, I am led to believe that something like only one-half of the interest that is being accrued in this account goes to benefits. That means that the other half of the interest is being accrued to the account itself as well as the employer and employee benefits that are being paid into it. This is a huge fund that is growing at a huge rate. It is paying benefits to superannuates and their death benefits have not risen in I do not know how many years. They have been asking for an increase in death benefits and survival benefits, but this government has been very reluctant and in fact stonewalled them time after time.

The fact that the government has refused to put in this joint management board is one of the key reasons why I cannot support this bill. I know that it is something that pensioners have been calling for and the government has simply ignored them.

The other matter is this business of the regulatory authority that has been given to this government under this bill. I have watched in this House for the last four years and have seen this government show disrespect for this House time and time and time again.

I was involved in a bill called the At and East which had to do with grain being moved by rail cars to eastern Canada. It was announced that this subsidy would be cut in the 1989 budget and it was cut but the law was never changed.

I raised it in the House at the end February in 1990. Within two days the bill was introduced in the House. The government was violating its own law in total disregard for Parliament, in total disregard for this country—no debate in the House; make an announcement and the provision is gone. That is showing complete disrespect for this House, complete disrespect for this country and complete disrespect for Canadian citizens.

We have seen enabling legislation that has come forth and there is a place for enabling legislation. This government has used it time and again to meet its own purposes.

I was involved in the debate on GRIP and we had this enabling legislation in front of us. We never did see the program and we were not getting details that the government knew were going to be in the program. The government pushed the bill through and then implemented the program.

Under the gun control legislation huge control has been given to the minister and to the Cabinet with respect to regulations in areas in which they can make changes to the bill via the regulations. Very important areas in all propriety should be dealt with by this House. The government has again ignored the House.

I never thought I would see the day when the government would put this section in this bill. Others have raised it. It is unbelievable and I am going to read it again into the record. It is amazing. Clause 80(3) says: "In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) of the provisions of this act or any other regulations made under this act, the provisions of the regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) prevail to the extent of the inconsistency".

In other words, regulations can be made by the Cabinet that are contrary to statutes that this House passes.

I am not sure why we are debating a bill. We are debating a bill here that presumably is going to put into law certain legislation regarding pensions. The government can turn around at its will and through the Cabinet make changes to the regulations. If they are contrary to this statute it does not matter and they will not be debated in this House. That is unbelievable. It is actually unbelievable.

What the hell am I doing here on this bill? If this is what Parliament is coming to we should let the Governor General hold little councils somewhere and pass rules, send us out a letter and let us know what the law is. That is what this amounts to.

It is an insult. It is an insult to every member in the House and it is an insult to every Canadian in this country that this type of garbage is going into legislation and yet the government is doing it. It is very upsetting.

I have a lot of seniors in my riding who have been following this bill quite closely. It is amazing, it is dumbfounding, it is a shock. This bill should not be supported. It should be voted against by every single member of this House.

I want to close if I could by making some comments on MPs' pensions. I have gone on record as saying MPs' pensions should be reviewed.

• (2100)

It is very important the way that our leader has handled this area of the bill, calling for an independent inquiry. The government has agreed to at some point set up an independent committee, independent of this House and of the Senate, to review MPs' pensions. That is what our leader called for, that is what we have been calling for. That is appropriate.

I am a new member in this House. I have not reached my pensionable age and I certainly think it is appropriate that there be some changes. If I had the opportunity to be here long enough I would receive a pension at a relatively young age. Certainly it would be appropriate to have an independent committee make binding recommendations to this House that should be implemented with respect to MPs' pensions.

It is important and I only hope that the government sets that committee up soon. There is no date for this committee, it is somewhere in the future. I do hope that the government will get that committee up and running very soon.

In closing, certainly I cannot support this bill nor can any of my party colleagues support it. I would be surprised at any member in the House who could stand up in full honesty and support this bill.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments with respect to the hon. member's speech. I congratulate him, especially on his last comments on the pensions of members of Parliament. I agree that we have to look at it. We should be careful of the National Citizens Coalition. It has a different agenda. It wants to raise money for its own right wing causes and it will do it on the back of this issue. MPs would be wise not to give it the issue to ride. As I understand it, the House is proceeding to an independent committee outside the House on the suggestion of the leader of my party. I am pleased with that.

I wanted to comment about pensions in general. I had raised this before with the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby when she spoke and I raised it with my hon. friend who just spoke. These things are very intertwined; the Canada Pension, the notion of divorced and widowed women concerning pensions and the difficulties that arise.

My concern is that we have not really dealt with a lot of things in this bill when we had the chance. I found the letter I was referring to before and I want to read it and get my friend to comment.

"I am a single mom, widowed since 1977. This year my son, who is 18 now—six feet, six inches and 250 pounds—is out of school and not yet able to find work. He is now disqualified from both family allowance payments and orphans' benefits. I still have to feed him", and at that size you can imagine he eats a lot, "but I have to do so on $150 less a month than I did in January.

I did receive an increase in my Canada Pension in January but because it was directly deposited I have no idea why. I was not sent any explanation, which probably I would have received if it had been mailed to me as previous ones were. I am therefore only out of disposable income by $80. If my son returns to school in September he can reapply for orphan's benefits".

She points out that she has increased taxes as well. She continues:

"Ian, I know I am slightly better off than most single working mothers. I went back to college on life insurance funds and have been able to earn an income in the $20,000 plus range and CPP. However, I own my own house and even though I have had a hard time repairing it, putting it in good repair, I wonder how on earth other single moms even survive.

An article in a Vancouver newspaper recently said that single parenting was not the cause of troubled teens and children as much as poverty was the underlying cause. A friend of mine who is a guard at a juvenile jail agreed her observations there would tend to say that is indeed the case.

Single, impoverished heads of households with children under their roof need immense tax benefits to break the cycle of poverty.

I know I have never hit the average family income. I pay medical insurance, house taxes and income tax as well as car and house insurance at the same rate as everyone else. These amounts come out of my over-strained disposable income. I often feel I have to pay these amounts and maintenance of household amounts only.

As a caring nation we can and should do better for our children".

I thought that was a very interesting letter. It opens up what I would suggest to the hon. member and I ask him, do we not really have to do more than a bill like this? We have to deal with the whole notion of the Canada Pension Plan and how it relates to a whole variety of people.

Mrs. Catterall: This bill has nothing to do with the Canada Pension Plan.

Mr. Waddell: It has to do with pensions generally.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I suppose the hon. member and other people expect the previous speaker's answer.

Mr. Laporte: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments.

It is quite embarrassing to stand here and discuss the pensions that we as parliamentarians have. We have this pension plan that people drool over and yet look at situations such as the hon. member has raised in which there is a single mother who is trying to find enough to get by on. It shows the inequities that exist in this country.

The United Nations named this country the best country in the world in which to live. I think it depends on who you are and where you live in this country.

An hon. member: Until it came to women and then we were eighth.

Mr. Laporte: Single parents, often mothers, find themselves in very difficult financial situations. There has to be a review of pension legislation and our whole social welfare system and income levels of lower income Canadians. Many of them are there, not because they want to be but because they were forced there. They are victims of circumstance.

My friend has pointed out to me that when the UN looked at women, instead of Canada being number one were were suddenly eighth in the world.

There is a huge need for pension reform and a huge need for income reform in this country. There is a need for programs to help these people who are less fortunate than we are, sitting in this Chamber with our benefits and our pension plans.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the last member who spoke referred again to the words of his leader concerning MPs' pension plans. I must say that I am as mystified now as I was the morning I listened to his leader. We in Ontario are getting used to the idea that the NDP knows how to talk when it is not in office but when it has the opportunity to do something it seems to hit a stage of paralysis.

I am wondering if the member could explain to us clearly what the position of his party is on MPs' pensions. The Leader of the NDP spoke on this matter when this bill was first introduced in the House and made all kinds of comments and then failed totally to make any of the many appropriate motions she could have at that time to demonstrate that she meant what she was saying.

Since that time I have sat in committee for nearly three months with a member of the NDP and I have not heard one motion to the effect of the speech his leader gave in the House or that he just gave.

I heard about a letter from the government but we are here as members of Parliament if we truly want to do something. The member and his leader have had ample opportunity to do so. I wonder if he could explain why he has not and why his leader has not.

Mr. Laporte: Mr. Speaker, the member has a lot of nerve to stand in her place and make those comments. She has never made any comments about her position on MPs' pensions. The Liberal Party has not made its position clear on MPs' pensions. It is the New Democratic Party that has taken the lead in this area. Our leader has stated our position on this pension plan. We have called for a committee to look at MPs' pensions and benefits and bring some binding recommendations into this House.

• (2110)

In fact the reason this independent inquiry is happening now is because of our leader. It is not because of what the Liberal Party has done. The Liberal Party has done nothing.

I come from a province that happens to have an NDP government. We have had an NDP government for most of the last 50 years. Under the NDP government we have brought in all kinds of legislation that has helped average Canadians, average residents in Saskatchewan, far more than this hon. member has done either as the federal Liberal Party in power or in the province of Ontario, or anywhere else in this country.

The member need not stand in place and hurl comments at this party. It is the New Democratic Party that has done more for social programs for the average Canadian than any other party in this country.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my few words to this debate on Bill C–55 and speak to some very specific provisions in response to representations which I received from numerous constituents concerning this legislation.

Most constituents are concerned with one thing. They see this bill as a serious threat to their indexed pensions. My constituents are worried and confused about what is in the bill. Although it is thick and complex, they all recognize that it is an obvious attempt by this government to bury its attack on indexation deep within the bill, hoping that no one will notice.

Everyone has noticed, Mr. Speaker; civil servants, the armed forces, and veterans. They have all noticed what this government is doing and they are not going to let it get away with it.

The bill amends four pension acts, public servants, Canadian forces, RCMP, and members of Parliament. This bill could very well be several bills and by all rights should have been separated.

The most controversial element of the bill falls on page 32. It is here that clause 71(3) states that should any of the regulations made under this bill conflict with the act itself that the regulations would prevail.

That is exactly what has caused all the concern. This clause leaves the door open for the government to sneakily enact a regulation affecting indexation, thereby avoiding having to go to Parliament with it.

I know well how much this government hates going to Parliament. The fisheries minister has avoided Parliament for over a year now with his individual transferable quotas and his dockside monitoring program.

Pensioners across the country protested and groups which appeared before the legislative committee spelled out their concerns.

At first the Treasury Board president dismissed these concerns as irrelevant and unfounded but he finally gave in and proposed an amendment in committee. Its text is on page 34, clause 71(5). It protects against a reduction in benefits at the hands of any regulation but it only offers protection for benefits which have accrued before the day on which the regulation is made. Any and all future benefits are unprotected and up for grabs.

Keith Pickering is a constituent of mine from Inverness. He is an armed forces retiree with over 21 years of service in Canada. I would like to quote a section of his letter to me:

> We believed the government, our employer, would look after our pension fund the same as they looked after their own pension fund. I find out now that the government does not really care about their employees or their welfare, as Bill C–55 has shown.

Mr. Pickering and other armed forces retirees recognize that there are some good things in the bill for them such as increasing the supplementary death benefits for armed forces' survivors. But these good things pale in comparison to the potential for disaster should indexation be left vulnerable.

These positive elements in the bill also include pension splitting, coverage for part–time workers, and early retirement for correctional services employees. Because these are long overdue, their presence in Bill C–55 makes it more difficult to oppose the bill as a whole. Their presence pits pensioner against pensioner and is, I believe, all part of the government's "divide and conquer" mentality.

Another constituent called yesterday morning concerned about the pension splitting provisions of the bill. She is worried that this element of the bill will not come into effect in time to help her. She and thousands of other Canadians have been waiting for years for this government to act on this issue. This government has coupled in this bill positive provisions like pension splitting with something as dangerously wrong as dein-

dexation. This is cheating Canadians. It plays political games with their security and livelihood.

All Canadians are realizing that Bill C–55 is just a sneakier version of Bill C–33 in 1985. The government has not learned from its mistake. Indeed, it is pushing ahead with its deindexation agenda despite figures like the following examples: The 1989 poverty line for one person was just over $1,100 per month and for two people, just over $1,500 per month; in 1989 pension amounts were indexed pensions, just over $1,000; unindexed pensions, just over $700. For surviving spouses the amounts are dreadfully less. Indexation is fundamental to people's livelihood following retirement, and these figures clearly illustrate that.

The population of Canada is quickly aging with fewer young people entering the labour force to support them. It provides a real social dilemma and pension reform is long overdue. This is what is necessary and the government can no longer continue to avoid it.

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 motion of Mr. Edwards. 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 46(5)(a), I have been requested by the parliamentary secretary to defer the division until a later time.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*) the division on the motion now before the House stands deferred until 10.45 a.m. tomorrow, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are 82 motions in amendment to Bill C–26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 1 and 3, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate and voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 2 and 4, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to motions Nos. 1 and 3. Accordingly, the Chair will not select them.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 5 and 7, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 5 applying to Motion No. 7.

Motions Nos. 6 and 8, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to Motions Nos. 5 and 7. Consequently the Chair will not select them.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate and voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 10, 12 and 14, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to motions No. 9, 11 and 13 respectively. Accordingly, the Chair will not select them.

• (2120)

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 16, 19, 21 and 23, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, together with Motions Nos. 15 and 18, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 15 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motions Nos. 16 and 18; (b) a negative vote on Motion No. 15 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 16; (c) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 16 obviates the necessity of a vote on Motion No. 18; (d) a negative vote on Motion No. 16 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 18; (e) Motion No. 19 will be voted upon separately; (f) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 21 obviates the need for a vote on Motion No. 23; (g) a negative vote on Motion No. 21 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 23.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 17, 20, 22 and 24 are identical to motions No. 16, 19, 21 and 23 respectively. Accordingly, the Chair will not select them.

Motion No. 25, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 26, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, is identical to motion No. 25. Accordingly, the Chair will not select it.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 27 and 31, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, and Motion No. 29, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, will be grouped for debate but voted on separately.

Motion No. 30, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops was moved, debated and negatived in committee. Consequently the Chair will not select it.

Motions Nos. 28 and 32, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to Motions Nos. 27 and 31 respectively. Consequently the Chair will not select them.

Motion No. 33, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, Motions Nos. 34, 36, 38, 40 and 43, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, together with Motion No. 42, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) Motion No. 33 will be voted on separately; (b) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 34 obviates the need for a vote on Motion No. 36; (c) a negative vote on Motion No. 34 requires the question being put on Motion No. 36; (d) Motions Nos. 38, 40, 42 and 43 will be voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 35, 37, 39, 41 and 44, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to Motions Nos. 34, 36, 38, 40 and 43 respectively. Accordingly, the Chair will not select them.

Motion No. 45, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 46, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, is identical to motion No. 45. Accordingly, the Chair will not select it.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 47, 49 and 75, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 47 applying to Motions Nos. 49 and 75.

Motions Nos. 48, 50 and 76, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to Motions Nos. 47, 49 and 75 respectively. Consequently the Chair will not select them.

Motions Nos. 51 and 53, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West will be grouped for debate but voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 52 and 54, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, are identical to motions Nos. 51 and 53 and respectively. Accordingly, the Chair will not select them.

Motion No. 55, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, and motion No. 56, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) if motion No. 55 is carried, it will not be necessary to put motion No. 56; (b) if motion No. 55 is rejected, motion No. 56 will have to be put.

[*English*]

Motion No. 57, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester is identical to Motion No. 56. Consequently the Chair will not select it.

Motions Nos. 58 and 59, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, together with Motions Nos. 60, 62 and 64, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West will be grouped for debate but voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 61, 63 and 65, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester are identical to Motions Nos. 60, 62 and 64 respectively. Consequently the Chair will not select them.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 66, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 67 and 68 standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, will be grouped for debate and voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 69, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops was moved, debated and negatived in committee. For this reason, the Chair will not select it.

Motion No. 70, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 71, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester is identical to Motion No. 70. Consequently the Chair will not select it.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 72, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops, and motion No. 73, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) if motion No. 72 is carried, it will not be necessary to put motion No. 73; (b) if motion No. 72 is rejected, motion No. 73 will have to be put.

[*English*]

Motion No. 74, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester is identical to Motion No. 73. Consequently the Chair will not select it.

Motion No. 77, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West will be debated and voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 78, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, is identical to motion No. 77. Accordingly, the Chair will not select it.

Motion No. 79, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 80, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, is identical to motion No. 79. Accordingly, the Chair will not select it.

[*English*]

Motion No. 81, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 82, standing in the name of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester is identical to Motion No. 81. Consequently the Chair will not select it.

I shall now propose Motions No. 1 and 3 to the House.

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 2 by striking out line 13 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

"employee from one position to another position at the same level of responsibility for which the employee has already been qualified by the Commission;"

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 2 by striking out lines 14 and 15 at page 1 and substituting the following therefore:

" "promotion" means the movement of an employee from one position to another position at a higher level of responsibility or at a higher maximum rate of pay than the level of responsibility or the maximum rate of pay of the position the employee previously occupied;".

* * *

• (2130)

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-73

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or (2) with respect to second reading of Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3) I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and on Motions Nos. 1 and 3 (p. 12268).

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, these two motions quite properly have been grouped because they are changes to definitions in the act that are very much related one to the other.

One of the major changes in this bill is a move away from the long-standing principle, long-standing to the tune of 70 years since the first Civil Service Act was passed by this Parliament, that the person best qualified for a job gets the job. We will be discussing that particular aspect of this bill in several clauses throughout the bill to demonstrate that is, in fact, the case.

One of the fundamental changes that happens here is that people can now be deployed. Up until now, people have been appointed in the Public Service. That means they are hired into a position for the first time, they are promoted to another position, or they move to another position. In all cases whether they are or are not appointed is based on some method for determining who is the best qualified among those who want that position.

In Bill C-26, we now have a thing called deployment. Members of Parliament may remember over a year ago changes were made, not through legislation but through Orders in Council, that people could be transferred from one position to another without the right of appeal and without any reference to the Public Service Employment Act which for many years has ensured we have a Public Service that is fairly and impartially appointed.

The ability to transfer people without paying any attention to the act that has protected those principles for seven decades was challenged in court. It was thrown out by the courts because the court said very clearly the ability to transfer people was contrary to the merit principle.

With that court decision in hand, the government in this bill is now trying to make legal what the courts have thrown out. The bill says that somebody may be deployed, i.e., transferred from one position to another. Again, the bill very clearly spells out that those deployments have to pay no attention whatsoever to merit or to bilingualism. They are unappealable and an employee who feels unjustly treated has no recourse against the deployment. It is totally within the arbitrary discretion of a manager.

Unfortunately, what the provisions of the act also do is allow deployments to be used for promotions. That is clearly contrary to the merit principle where people move up in the Public Service according to ability, not according to whether the manager likes them or not.

The distinction between a lateral transfer and a promotion becomes blurred in this legislation. What I have attempted to do with these motions is to get rid of that blurring.

Deployments will now be able to be made within very broad categories with very broad salary ranges and with no accountability. The government will group employees, in one case in groups of up to 110,000 employees, obviously with very many salary levels, very many layers of responsibility and a manager is free to move somebody up that scale or down that scale without any reference to the requirements of the act and without any appeal.

These two motions attempt to clearly define what is a deployment i.e., a lateral transfer, and what is a promotion. The bill now says simply that a deployment is the movement of an employee from one position to another. The government has tried to persuade us that these are not promotions or demotions but simply sideways moves. They are not.

What I have done in Motion No. 1 is to clearly specify that a deployment is at the same level of responsibility and that the person has already qualified on merit to be transferred within that level of responsibility. I have used the precise words the commission gave to the legislative committee in describing what a deployment was going to be used for.

I have difficulty understanding why the government would not accept this amendment to clarify that deployments will not be used as a guise for promotions or demotions. In other words, any movement within the Public Service could become a deployment that is unaccountable and unappealable.

For the same reason, promotion is defined. In the legislation a promotion will from henceforth, if the legislation stays unamended, mean whatever the commission says it means. That is quite simply what the legislation says. A promotion is as defined in the regulations of the commission.

Employees will no longer have a clear definition of what is a promotion, where somebody was improperly awarded without going through competition, and therefore they will have no grounds on which to appeal a promotion they think was unjustly made.

Putting in these amendments is only one small part of what is necessary to ensure that there is still some accountability, still some attention to fair hiring and promotion practices in the Public Service but they are a starting point.

They put words on what the government has said it means in this legislation, on what the Public Service Commission says deployment will be used for. Since we have these motions out for debate, I look forward to hearing why the government does not want to accept, if it does not want to accept, wording that reflects what it says are its stated intentions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on the motions she presented. The important point here concerns the definition of what a promotion is, but the issue is the merit principle.

Will public servants really be able to have confidence in a future where their promotions and working life will be regulated fairly and equitably, with clear definitions of what is meant by promotion, transfer and demotion? To whom will they appeal? That is the big question. I can well understand that the minister wants to give managers more power so that decisions can be made much more quickly.

• (2140)

However, I do not think that he put in place the mechanisms needed to protect public servants who might be abused by some managers. Generally speaking, we know that managers and senior officials are conscientious and think of serving the Canadian public in the best possible way and are very honest.

Nevertheless, it would be very difficult to correct any abuses that may occur. A senior official might have racial prejudices or prefer men over women or vice versa. It would be rather difficult if he discriminated discreetly, not to say hypocritically, by forming teams from his old boys' network around him. He could surround himself with his friends and relatives and like-minded people and keep others out of his circle. He would have the power to transfer some employees outside or inside his section or service and these employees would not be subject to competitions to determine the best candidate for promotion.

We know very well that the number of public service occupational categories will be greatly reduced, from 75 now to possibly 24 or 25. This means that in general, for every three categories now there would be only one.

Say that someone works in category 1, the lowest level, and an employer or senior official wants to transfer him. He could easily move from level 1 to level 3. Who could appeal? Who could discuss the good and bad points of this transfer? There will be various gradations between level 1 and level 3, between level 4 and level 6 and between level 7 and level 9. Managers will be able to transfer employees as they like and also, unfortunately, according to their prejudices.

So the important point to keep in mind is that with a quarter of a million employees, there must be transfers, promotions and even demotions and it is very important to have mechanisms so that employees who feel wronged, overlooked, mistreated or discriminated against in the decision can appeal.

It is true that appeals can now take a long time. I would have preferred the minister to deal with the length of appeals instead of reducing the opportunity to appeal.

So, Mr. Speaker, with great regret, having participated in many meetings of the legislative committee that studied the new public service bill, I realized that the merit principle will no longer exist in the Public Service of Canada, one of the best, if not the best, public service in the world.

[*English*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to very briefly concur with the words spoken by my two colleagues from Ottawa West and Carleton—Gloucester.

The essence of these motions is to try to address one of the fundamental concerns that we have about Bill C-26 and the amendments that it brings about to the management of the Public Service system in Canada. These changes undermine the principle that promotion and appointment are based on the principle of merit, first and foremost.

This principle, which has been the bedrock of the Public Service management over the last number of decades in Canada, is fundamental to having the kind of capable, competent, independent and non-partisan Public Service that Canadians have the right to expect and require.

In particular, the merit principle manages to eliminate the political patronage that at one time characterized appointments to the Public Service and also is the method of ensuring that bureaucratic patronage, which in some ways is even more insidious and more difficult to deal with than political patronage, does not become the order of the day in making appointments or promotions.

It is crucial that we in the House of Commons restate again the importance we place on this principle and the concern we have that this legislation is likely to undermine it.

As an example of the criticisms that we have, allow me to quote from Hugh Winsor's commentary that appeared on May 23 in *The Globe and Mail*. He wrote: "Civil service managers would also be given leeway to redeploy people within categories without competitions, something the Treasury Board attempted to do under the existing Public Service Employment Act and was rapped on the knuckles for it by a federal court judge. The Public Service Commission has delegated much of the responsibility for hiring to the deputy ministers in individual departments and admitted in its most recent annual report there has been too much abuse of the system. Too many deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers are appointing their cronies and redeploying people they do not like or putting people in allegedly temporary acting positions without going through the competition process, the commission said".

This is really what we are trying to get at here. We are not saying that the Public Service administration needs to be burdened down with red tape and bureaucracy or that managers should be hamstrung in their ability to manage, none of that is appropriate to these criticisms.

It is crucial that the integrity of the merit principle be preserved, not only for the benefit of the people who labour daily within the Public Service and have hope of promotion and career advancement but also for the benefit of the people of Canada who deserve to be served by a Public Service that continues to understand and implement this principle of meritorious reward for effort.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this debate I find what I see taking place here very disturbing.

The other members who spoke discussed promotion on the merit principle. What we are also seeing happen is a loss of morale within the Public Service. There are people in CEIC centres and other places telling the unemployed: "Don't bother to come here, there are no jobs. We cannot find you any jobs".

Prior to these changes, and the proposed changes in this bill, the people in these centres would go out of their way, they would go that extra mile, to try to help the unemployed. This is lowering the morale of these people. They do not know where they are going to be. They do not know that if they do their job well they are going to be the people who are selected for promotion.

I am scared at what I see happening here, because we are taking this away. This is something where the Public Service says yes, there have been a lot of problems with it over the years. There has been quite a bureaucratic nightmare in a lot of cases. I hesitate to warn the government that we cannot change these things this drastically, to give this power to managers and just to throw out the merit principle. I find this bothers me and I know it bothers the Public Service of this country. It certainly bothers the public of this country because you have people coming to you. You know the old saying: "If you don't know somebody, you are not going to get that promotion". This is an area that certainly the public is very concerned about. I am sure that if we allow this amendment that has been put forward, it will make this bill that much more palatable.

• (2150)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand this approach on the part of members opposite. They say "here it comes". I do not understand why they would think "here it comes". I suppose the President of the Treasury Board is a little antsy. He knows he is moving a bad bill and he is afraid that he is going to get roasted for it. I recall roasting him one time before. It drove him to prayer.

I think what he would want to do is reconsider his view. I ask him to seriously reconsider his view of clause 2 of this bill because my very hon. and distinguished colleague from Ottawa West has moved an amendment that makes great sense and will save us from the difficulties envisaged by the hon. member for Hillsborough.

I listened to the speech of the hon. member for Ottawa South. I did not have the benefit of hearing all of the speech of the hon. member for Carleton—Glouces-ter, so I was not able to say that he dwelt on quite the same terrors that were outlined by the other members in relation to what would happen with this bill if it is passed in its existing form. The President of the Treasury Board, who has a significant responsibility for the Public Service in this country, should know better than to introduce a bill such as this with this kind of change in the House.

I know what is going on and I think the public of Canada knows what is going on. It is a power grab by senior public servants. The minister is being used as their tool for the purpose of getting this power grab. They are taking over the question of promotion and transfer in the Public Service in a way as well as demotion—promotion, demotion and transfer in the Public Service—in a way that is totally unprecedented in our system. Ultimately the responsibility for that is going to fall on the minister's head, so that when an incompetent gets shifted or moved into a higher position without competition in the face of—

An hon. member: The Peter principle.

Mr. Milliken: No, no, no. The hon. member for Hillsborough would not want to call it the Peter principle. If someone of lesser competence gets transferred to a position for which there were better applicants, there is going to be a problem. It is going to create problems for ministers. It is going to create problems for deputy ministers and worse, it is going to create problems for the public of Canada who have reason to expect a reasonable level of service from their Public Service.

What this bill is doing is taking away any sense of responsibility for these appointments from the independent Public Service Commission. Far be it from me to stand here today to defend the Public Service Commission. I have moved amendments to this bill which we will be discussing another day that would restrict its powers. In my view it has not shown itself to be responsive to the wishes of Parliament to which it is responsible. The hon. member for Burlington perhaps disagrees. If so, I invite him to rise and make a speech. I would be glad to hear from him on this subject.

I think generally the Public Service Commission has not been responsive to Parliament to which it is responsible. It is not responsible to the government. It is responsible to this Parliament, this House and the other place. In my submission, based on past evidence that I have seen, it has been very unresponsive to the demands of this House. As a result, I introduced a private member's bill which would have brought it to heel. It would have created for it in the statute things that it should have done by regulation as recommended by a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons and which report it ignored. Many of the amendments that I have proposed to Bill C-26 are based on that refusal or ignorance, if you wish to call it that, on the part of the Public Service Commission to deal with amendments that I put forward.

The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River is on the committee that has studied this again and has made a report similar to the one originally proposed by the predecessor committee in I believe 1987. That report was ignored by the Public Service Commission.

I have no particular desire to stand here today and defend that commission. What I do defend very vigorously is the importance of the independence of the Public Service and the importance of a lack of political interference in the promotion, transfer and demotion process in the Public Service.

If the merit principle is removed, what is replacing it? That is the question that is not answered by this legislation. A blanket power is given to promote, demote or transfer without regard to merit. If merit is taken out, what is the regard for? What is the promotion, demotion or transfer to be based on? The minister's whim? Surely the President of the Treasury Board does not want to have to take personal responsibility for every transfer, promotion or demotion in the Public Service of Canada.

An hon. member: I suspect you are right.

Mr. Milliken: He says he suspects I am right. Then let us fix this bill so that the minister does not have to take that responsibility. Let us make an objective judgment that somebody can look at.

I know the minister perhaps would prefer a subjective judgment but his answer indicated he would not.

Let us have an objective measure by which promotions, demotions and transfers can be judged and let us base it on the merit principle. What could be simpler than that? It has worked for us in the past. It can continue to work for us.

What the hon. member for Ottawa West has proposed is that clause 2 of the bill be amended so that deployment means the transfer of an employee from one position to another position at the same level of responsibility for which the employee has already been qualified by the commission. In other words, it can only be a lateral transfer if it is a deployment. It cannot be a demotion and it cannot be a promotion.

Second, on the term promotion, which is left wide open in the minister's bill—the minister points his finger at me—let me read his definition to him. I find it hard to believe a minister with the intelligence and the ability of the President of the Treasury Board would propose such a ridiculous bill to the House; a distinguished man. The Minister of Justice sitting beside him is a well educated individual as well. One would have thought she might have read this bill and said, "We cannot have this. As a government we could not introduce anything so silly". She sits silent in her seat. I do not think she has spoken yet on this bill. I would have thought she might.

Promotion says the bill "has the meaning assigned by the regulations of the commission". Talk about a *carte blanche* for the commission. The commission can do whatever it wants. It does not listen to Parliament. We have evidence of that already.

What the hon. member for Ottawa West proposed is that promotion means the movement of an employee from one position to another position at a higher level of responsibility or at a higher maximum rate of pay than the level of responsibility or the maximum rate of pay of the position the employee previously occupied. What is wrong with that definition?

I say to the President of the Treasury Board, come back to the House and tell us what is wrong. Never mind running for comfort to the Chair. Come and speak in the House and tell us what is wrong with this bill. This amendment makes sense. This amendment is reasonable. This amendment upholds the principles on which the Public Service has functioned lo these many, many, many years.

The hon. member for Burlington probably cannot even remember when it was different. Certainly I cannot. I am sure the youthful member for Ottawa West cannot.

The hon. member is sounding as though he is a violin. I am sorry he feels that way about this speech. Perhaps he has heard it all before. If so, surely he should change his tune and get up and object to this bill.

If he had objected in caucus, if the hon. member for Burlington had raised this issue in caucus, he might have got somewhere with this bill. As it is, it is left to us in opposition in this House to publicly condemn the government for its action in proposing this kind of amendment in the House.

I see the hon. member for Cambridge getting into the act as well. He must know this is wrong. He has heard my very reasonable arguments. Perhaps the President of the Treasury Board is getting some advice as to whether this amendment should not be accepted and if it could be done without defeating the government.

Certainly we would not regard it as a question of confidence if this amendment were to carry tonight, Mr. Speaker, and I invite you to put the question to the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry but it being 10 o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 9, 1992, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 18, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS BY MINISTER

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I may have inadvertently misinformed the House in reply to a question from the member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

I was asked if the names of CSIS informers are now routinely given to politicians. I replied that the names of CSIS sources are not, in the course of my tenure in the position of Solicitor General, revealed to the Solicitor General.

I have since been advised, and I wish to advise the House, that there have been a very small number of exceptional occasions when the director of the service found it necessary to advise me of the name of a human source.

To the best of my knowledge, based on a review with my officials, no person who is a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident has ever been named to me as a source.

I would also like to assure the House that I have never asked the director of CSIS for the name of a CSIS source.

In the very few cases when the director has found it necessary to provide me with the name of a source, those cases were related to instances of sources who had provided valuable service to Canada and my being informed of their names was necessary for administrative reasons.

I regret the inconvenience to the House but I want to reassure the House that names of CSIS sources are not routinely provided to the Solicitor General or to politicians.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HEALTH AND WELFARE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SENIORS AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

FIFTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women entitled *Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, Preventable Tragedy*.

Your committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 109.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

PRESENTATION OF SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs on Canada and security in Europe.

During both world wars and throughout the cold war, Canadian servicemen were actively involved in protecting freedom and democracy in Europe. Now that the cold war is over, it is only normal that Canadians continue to care about security in Europe.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact totally disrupted the political and military scene in Europe and offers the prospect of sustainable peace. However, the tragic situation in Yugoslavia as well as ethnic tensions in the former Soviet republics show that the Soviet threat having disappeared does not in itself preserve peace.

Governments and people are increasingly aware of the fact that security is not a military matter any more and that attention must be paid to economic development and environmental management.

While recognizing that Canada must maintain its active membership within NATO, we recommend that Canada continue to take an active part in the CSCE process and to help build up its conflict prevention centre. We also recommend that Canada join forces with other members of the international community to help the former Soviet republics and eastern European countries dismantle their nuclear arsenal and rebuild their economies. If there is to be sustainable peace in Europe, Canada and the international community as a whole must support these young democracies not only in word, but with positive actions.

[*English*]

Mr. Brewin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 35(2) reads:

> (2) Upon presentation of a report accompanied by supplementary or dissenting opinions or recommendations pursuant to Standing Order 108(1), a committee member of the Official Opposition representing those who supported the opinion or opinions expressed in the appended material may also rise to give a succinct explanation thereof.

I have spoken to the parliamentary secretary, to the House leader for the government and to the official critic for the Official Opposition. I have a brief dissenting opinion and I understood—

• (1010)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I must ask for unanimous consent.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons.

The committee is presenting an interim report on some of the issues considered during recent hearings on the subject of aboriginal people with disabilities.

This report is also available in audio cassette format from the clerk of the committee.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

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

In accordance with its general mandate under Standing Order 108(2), your committee has considered the question of conditions in the former republics of the Soviet Union and reports its findings and recommendations.

THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, in accordance with its general mandate under Standing Order 108(2).

The Subcommittee on Development and Human Rights of the standing committee has considered the question of South and southern Africa and the Canadian policy post apartheid. It reports its findings and recommendations to the government and asks for a report within 150 days.

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CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

SIXTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

The report deals with conflicts between provincially registered trade names and federally registered trademarks. The committee hopes its recommendations will serve to reduce and eventually eliminate such conflicts so that small and medium sized businesses will be free to use their business and corporate names without fearing the possibility of an action for trademark infringement.

The committee requests that the government table a response in accordance with Standing Order 109.

* * *

BILL C-42

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-42, an act respecting the protection of certain species of wild animals and plants and the regulation of international and interprovincial trade in those species.

The title was changed from an act respecting the protection of certain species of wild animals and plants, with amendments.

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

* * *

COPYRIGHT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-88, an act to amend the Copyright Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, this is a technical bill seeking to amend the Copyright Act. It will modernize the outdated definition of a musical work.

This amendment is necessary in order to clarify the new transmission rights created at the same time as the implementation of the free trade agreement. It is urgent that the clarification be made through the wording of the act that any musical composition, with or without words, is a musical work regardless of its physical attributes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mr. Beatty moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

INVESTMENT CANADA ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-89, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted with recommendations.

Mr. Loiselle moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE RENAMING ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-353, an act to rename unemployment insurance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Robitaille: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to change the term unemployment insurance by replacing it with the more positive term employment insurance in all federal statutes and regulations or other texts made thereunder. Using of this new terminology would be more in line with recent trends in government policy and should be seen as reflecting a more progressive and positive approach.

Mr. Speaker, I may add that this change does not in any way affect the tenor or substance of existing statutes but will stress the use of a term that is more positive than the one in current use.

In concluding, I would like to point out that this bill reflects the views and expectations expressed by many Canadians in the course of prosperity consultations held in my own riding and elsewhere in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mr. Robitaille moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-354, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise and table my private members' bill, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act, which has been seconded by the hon. member for Calgary North and has been co-sponsored by 15 members of the Alberta caucus.

The bill amends the Young Offenders Act to reduce the maximum age for a person to be considered a young offender to 15 and by providing that young offenders who have been twice convicted of indictable offences be tried in adult court.

I truly look forward to the second reading of this bill when many of the concerns of Albertans and all Canadians can be brought forward. Only by working together can solutions be found.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mrs. Sparrow moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (for Minister of Transport) moved that Bill S-11, an act to amend the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act, be read the first time.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

* * *

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

SHOP CANADA DAY

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to seek unanimous consent today for the following motion:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should proclaim Saturday, July 4, 1992, Shop Canada Day to keep consumer dollars in Canada and to support Canadian retailers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is no agreement.

* * *

• (1020)

PETITIONS

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today from many Albertans residing in several communities of southern Alberta petitioning the House of Commons on the question of the Young Offenders Act. They are requesting the Young Offenders Act be updated with a lowered minimum age.

OLD AGE SECURITY PENSIONS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition with hundreds of names from Lévis and Mascouche, Quebec; Trenton, Nova Scotia; Beaton, Ontario; Medicine Hat, Alberta; Moncton, New Brunswick and many other areas.

The petition draws the attention of the House to the following: That thousands of Canadian senior citizens live below the poverty line; that over 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 years of age live in poverty; that the 37 cent increase in old age security pensions in 1992 is inadequate to meet the needs of many Canadian seniors; that it is desirable for all Canadians to provide senior citizens with the necessary support to live their lives as independently as possible.

Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to ensure that Canadian old age security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition certified pursuant to Standing Order 36 and it is signed by many residents of Calgary and other areas of Alberta.

These petitioners, in memory of Ryan Garrioch, draw to the attention of Parliament the following: That the majority of Canadians support equal treatment of criminal offenders but with legislated age shelters from criminal law for very young adolescents and that chapter 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality rights.

Therefore the petitioners request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13.

BREAST CANCER

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to have the opportunity pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of many people from my riding.

They make the statement that every day 12 Canadian women die of breast cancer and this year 5,000 women will die of it. They expect the numbers to increase.

They are asking for new research dollars to find the cause and cure for breast cancer. They are asking the government to develop partnerships with health care industries, university researchers, service providers and government agencies.

They are asking that the government put this as a policy priority and are hoping this will advance soon.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions which are signed by over 500 people from my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby, from the lower mainland area of Vancouver, Ontario, Montreal, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, from virtually every region of the country.

This petition says that since the goods and services tax is applied to feminine sanitary products such as tampons and pads, and since these products are necessities for women between puberty and menopause, and since the government has decided that the goods and services tax should not apply to certain foods because they are necessities, the petitioners call on Parliament to consider removing the goods and services tax from women's sanitary products.

JANA AND LEONARD ZRNIC

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36.

This petition is of particular concern to me for the following reasons. Two Canadian citizens have been held in prison in San José, Costa Rica for the past 40 months without trial.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to make a formal request of the Government of Costa Rica to act within the boundaries of its constitution and as a member of the International Human Rights Commission to proceed with the trial for the Canadian citizens, Jana Zrnic and Leonard Zrnic. Jana Zrnic's sister, Roni Arseneault, is a constituent of mine. I am pleased and ask Parliament to follow up with this petition.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): The second petition I wish to present pursuant to Standing Order 36 is in relation to the prospect of a referendum.

The 36 petitioners call upon Parliament to accept a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments with two stipulations, a majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada, together with a majority vote in the majority of provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of 83 constituents from the city of Calgary who petition this House in memory of Ryan Garrioch, the 13-year old who was stabbed to death in my riding some few weeks ago.

His parents are with us today. They have circulated a petition across the country that already has 150,000 signatures requesting that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today, pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first petition is from residents of the province of Ontario. They are petitioning the Government of Canada to rescind its decision with regard to the Court Challenges Program and call upon the Government of Canada to reinstate this program forthwith, thereby giving Canadians the opportunity to make legal interventions on behalf of minority groups and disability groups across this country.

The second petition pursuant to Standing Order 36, is signed by residents from the great province of Nova Scotia, in particular from Sydney and Church Point, Nova Scotia. They too call upon the Government of Canada to rescind its decision with regard to the Court Challenges Program, thereby reinstating this very worthwhile program which has enabled Canadians, particularly disabled Canadians and minority groups to petition and to make legal interventions.

RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of 175 residents in the town of Sheho in my riding of Yorkton—Melville who are facing the closure of their post office.

The petition reads: "Whereas our national postal service is an essential link between rural residents and our friends, our families and business contacts; and whereas rural post offices are not only the heart of rural communities, but often the only federal presence; and whereas Canada Post and the federal government are closing rural post offices across the country; and whereas this is unfair to rural communities and unnecessary given Canada Post's annual profit statements; wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament"—and this is the key part—"to ensure that the Canada Post Office in Sheho, Saskatchewan, remains intact with a permanent postmaster or postmistress and staff and appropriate personnel".

This is a very important issue to 175 people in a small village in my riding.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is an honour to present a petition with 63 names from constituents of my riding of Okanagan Centre.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government and also to enact legislation providing for the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments to be determined by the majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada, together with a majority vote in the majority of provinces with the territories being given the status of a single province.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in offering signatures in support of a petition that was explained earlier today, that the majority of Canadians support equal treatment of criminal offenders, but with legislated age shelters from criminal law for very young offenders.

• (1030)

I am pleased to have been asked to present these petitions to the House of Commons today. They are totalling up in the hundreds of thousands and are at 150,000 already. I am sure there will be support from all members of Parliament in seeing something done about this.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my first petition deals with petitioners from Nova Scotia who ask that the goods and services tax on books and reading materials be removed. They point out that there has been no such tax on books and reading materials since the founding of the nation. They believe it is contrary to democratic principles and objectives such as enhanced competitiveness and increased productivity.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my second petition represents petitioners from Alberta who point out that the merging of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with the Canada Council is dysfunctional at this particular point in time. They note that Canada's greatest challenges are really in the social sciences area. They identify domestic violence, environmental problems and problems of abuse as those that are best dealt with by the council.

The petitioners ask that this decision be deferred, that there be consultation and then a decision made.

RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my final petition is from petitioners from Manitoba who ask that Parliament monitor very closely the work of the CRTC with respect to the use of foul language on radio and television. They point out it is not necessary for informing or entertaining and that it is often contrary to the basic efforts on the part of the family to raise the children.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition, containing several dozen names, stating the following: "We the undersigned residents of Canada, in memory of Ryan Garrioch, draw to the attention of Parliament the following: That the majority of Canadians support equal treatment of criminal offenders but with legislated age shelters from criminal law for very young adolescents. Therefore, the petitioners request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years."

WATER DIVERSION

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present three petitions. The first petition is signed by some 106 petitioners mostly from my constituency of Kootenay West—Revelstoke, including all of the cities and many of the villages.

The petition draws attention to an application to divert Canadian waters from the North Thompson River near Belmont to sell in San Diego, California. It points out that under the provisions of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement the export of bulk water from Canada to the U.S. would enshrine Canada's obligation to maintain such exports even in the event of domestic water shortages.

The petitioners urge the Government of Canada to state categorically that it will not permit our freshwater rivers to be dammed and diverted into the U.S.A. and to state that our Canadian rivers are not for sale.

I should just add those feelings are exacerbated by the recent draw-downs of the Kootenay and Arrow Lakes to make up for water shortfalls south of the border.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): The second petition is signed by 58 signatories from communities throughout my constituency. The petitioners point out that the goods and services tax is applied to feminine sanitary products.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to consider removing the goods and services tax from women's sanitary products.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my third petition is from 56 petitioners from communities throughout my riding, including Rossland, Edgewood, Nelson and Argenta.

The undersigned residents draw the attention of the House to the following: that there has been a promise from the government to freeze unemployment insurance premium rates for three years; that the recent cumulative increases to UI premiums are unfair and insensitive to small business during hard economic times; that further job losses due to business closures would further impair the chances for a full economic recovery.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to freeze unemployment insurance premium rates for one year.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Jim Edwards (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. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been some consultations. As you are aware, the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte also put in an application. Our preference would be that the hon. member be allowed to put his first.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can assist the House. Yesterday, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte gave me notice of an application for an emergency debate. I have received today an application from another member on the same issue. I will hear the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, if he wishes to be heard.

I understand the courtesy of the hon. member for inviting the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte to speak first, but under the rules of this place I am bound to hear the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I thought I heard the hon. member indicate to the House that he was relinquishing his place to my colleague from Newfoundland. Is that not acceptable to the Chair? I seek the guidance of the Chair on that. Perhaps we need the—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. House leader and I could discuss the matter privately, but I have made the decision and I am afraid we have to stick to it.

FISHERIES

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, as you said, yesterday I gave notice that I wished to seek leave to adjourn the House for the purpose of debating an urgent issue, namely the failure of the northern cod fishery.

The collapse of this economic mainstay of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia represents an economic crisis for dozens of communities and thousands of people. These Canadians urgently require an indication of the kind of short and long-term strategies the government will employ to deal with this crisis. The imminent summer recess will diminish the ability of these Canadians to speak to government through their representatives, therefore I request that we adjourn the House to debate this important issue.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan has raised essentially the same question that was raised yesterday by the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte. I know—and I want to say this to the House—that the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte today supports the position of the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

As I said yesterday, it seems to me obvious to all hon. members that this matter is a very serious one. Yesterday I advised that I had listened very carefully to the exchange in the House in Question Period with respect to this. I am going to do that again today.

I am not prepared at this time to order the proceedings of the House be adjourned for an emergency debate, but I am saying both to the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan and the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, and to other members who come from Newfoundland and Labrador and other members who are very concerned about this, that I am paying very close attention to the exchanges in the House on this very serious matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1040)

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-73

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 78(3), I move:

That in relation to Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill, and that 15 minutes before the expiry of time provided for government business on the allotted day of the second reading stage consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted if required for the purpose of this order and in turn every question necessary in order to dispose of this stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

Some hon. members: Shame.

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. 219*)

YEAS

Members

Andre
Atkinson
Beatty
Belsher
Bertrand
Bird
Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais
Blenkarn
Bosley
Boyer
Brightwell
Browes
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Corbeil
Corbett
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
Danis
DeBlois
de Cotret
Della Noce
Desjardins
Domm
Dorin
Duplessis
Edwards
Epp
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Greene
Guilbault
Gustafson
Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hicks
Hockin
Hogue
Holtmann
Horner
Horning
Hudon
Hughes
Jacques
James
Jelinek
Johnson
Joncas
Jourdenais
Kempling
Koury
Landry
Langlois
Larrivée
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
Lopez
MacKay
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight
McLean
Merrithew
Monteith
Moore
Nicholson
Oberle
O'Kurley
Plourde
Porter
Pronovost
Redway
Reimer
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sobeski
Soetens
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thompson
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt
Van De Walle
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vien
Vincent
Weiner
White
Wilbee
Winegard
Worthy—112

NAYS

Members

Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker
Bélair
Bellemare
Berger
Bevilacqua
Black
Boudria
Brewin
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Dionne
Duhamel
Ferguson
Finestone
Foster
Fulton
Gaffney
Gagliano
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Heap
Hovdebo
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
Marchi
Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McLaughlin
Mifflin
Milliken
Mills
Nowlan
Nystrom
Parker
Proud
Prud'homme
Rideout
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Samson

Simmons
Stupich
Vanclief
Waddell
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—65

Stewart
Tobin
Volpe
Walker

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate that I was unable to be on time for the vote. Had I been here when you put the question, I would have voted with my party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the previous question at third reading stage of Bill C–55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and Pension Benefits Division Act.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, June 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle that Bill C–55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act, be read the third time and passed, and the amendment of Mr. Edwards.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall I dispense with calling in the members?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, we are clearly ready to proceed immediately but I am wondering, as there were noes, we might go a little quicker than normal and not have the full 15 minute bell. Is that agreeable? As soon as those who are required are here we can proceed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The answer is no. Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 220)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Corbeil
Couture
Danis
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Fontaine
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Loiselle
MacKay
Mayer
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vézina
Vincent
White
Winegard

Andre
Beatty
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Porter
Redway
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Worthy—112

NAYS

Members

Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair

Assad
Baker
Bellemare

Berger	Bevilacqua
Black	Boudria
Brewin	Caccia
Catterall	Comuzzi
Dingwall	Dionne
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Fulton
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hovdebo
Hunter	Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
MacAulay	MacLellan
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McLaughlin	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Nowlan	Nunziata
Nystrom	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Peterson
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Rocheleau	Rodriguez
Rompkey	Samson
Simmons	Stewart
Stupich	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—66

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the amendment carried.

Amendment agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on the main motion. 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): All those in favour will please rise. On a point of order, the hon. government Whip.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the House might be disposed to take the vote that we have just taken and apply it to this.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am afraid I heard a no.

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

(Division No. 221)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Beatty
Belsher	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Cardiff	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Corbeil	Corbett
Couture	Crosby (Halifax West)
Danis	DeBlois
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horner
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Joncas
Jourdenais	Kempling
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Lewis
Loiselle	Lopez
MacKay	Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer	McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Oberle	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reimer	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Tardif	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vézina	Vien
Vincent	Weiner
White	Wilbee
Winegard	Worthy—112

NAYS

Members

Angus	Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bellemare	Berger
Bevilacqua	Boudria
Brewin	Caccia
Catterall	Comuzzi
Dingwall	Dionne
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Fulton
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hovdebo
Hunter	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	MacLellan
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McLaughlin	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Nowlan	Nunziata
Nystrom	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Peterson
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Rocheleau	Rodriguez
Rompkey	Simmons
Stewart	Stupich
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Waddell
Walker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—62

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, May 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and on the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When Bill C–73 was last before the House there were seven minutes remaining in the question and comment period following the speech of the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a few words concerning this particular legislation before the House. Of course it is an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act in the name of the Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

The motion made by the official critic for the opposition is that this bill be read six months hence. In other words, that it just simply be thrown into the garbage can for this particular session. The actual wording "six months hence" is the wording that has been adopted under the British parliamentary system going back to Westminster in Erskine May and repeated in Beauchesne and then in the Standing Orders, a custom I believe that goes back to 1622, which says you would not look at the bill again, that it be ripped up and discarded by members of the House of Commons.

I have had an opportunity in the last couple of moments to examine very carefully the wording of this legislation. Nowhere in the legislation before the Chamber dealing with Canada Post does it talk about service to Canadians. Nowhere in the bill does it talk about the time it takes for a letter or a parcel to get from point A to point B in Canada or internationally. Nowhere in the bill does it talk about lost mail. We have an incredible number of cases. We have seen a substantial increase in the number of complaints from people who mail letters in this country that are never received at the other end.

We have had a substantial increase in the number of students who complain that their applications to university, their registration for university and their requests for the syllabus and entrance information are being lost in the mail.

We have a lot of complaints from senior citizens who say that their letters never reach the destination written on the front of the envelope. Of course, we see Canada Post then coming back and saying: "Oh, no, we have got all these statistics that say we have a better service in Canada than we ever had before" and within two days a letter will go to its destination in another part of this country.

• (1200)

Of course Canada Post forgets to point out that is for letters that have a typewritten front, exactly in the middle of the envelope, done by machine, certainly not written by some senior citizen or some person in a very rural area of Canada who does not have a computer in their front living room to address their envelopes.

None of these subjects are addressed in this bill. Here we are in the House of Commons debating Canada Post and nowhere in the bill does it talk about service to Canadians. In fact, it does not talk about letters at all, it does not talk about parcels, does not talk about stamps, does not talk about the closed post offices. Once upon a time in our rural areas in Canada we had the one public building in a community which was the post office, and that is where all the business was transacted. That was the centre of activity for the community. In fact, that is the place in a lot of communities where the cheques were changed. It was the banking centre, it was the community centre, it was the place with the Canadian flag on the pole.

That has changed drastically since this government was elected, because there has been an intentional effort, of course, to close post offices and to replace them with these supermailboxes where you have to dig your way into it in the snow. It did, I must admit, provide de-icing fluid for some of the locks a couple of years ago.

Nowhere in this bill that the House of Commons is debating today, and the government just brought in a motion of closure, nowhere in this bill that has been dealt with by a committee of the House of Commons, nowhere in this bill that will now be dealt with by the Senate, is there one word about those matters which affect Canadians when they think about Canada Post. In fact, there is nothing in this bill that any ordinary Canadian would even talk about if you brought up the words Canada Post or if you brought up anything.

Words in this bill deal with such things as redeemable shares, beneficial ownership, security interest, and so on. This bill deals with shares of corporations. This bill deals with the kind of language that Canadians have come to expect from the Canadian House of Commons since this government was elected. This deals with the kinds of things that cause the Government of Canada in dealing with corporations and corporate shares to change the law in Canada in December, just before Christmas, and now it is a law in Canada today that all of the shares that are held in private trusts that are capital assets will not be taxable for another 30 years. That bill, which meant for the richest of Canadians, the biggest corporations in Canada with tens of billions of dollars held, escaping the capital gains tax, that will be able to be deferred for another 30 years while ordinary Canadians have to pay the GST.

That is the kind of language in this bill. The kind of language in this bill of corporate shares and corporate interests was the same language as was in the bill that defined corporate entertainment under the Income Tax Act, which means that now escort services in Canada are tax deductible. That is the kind of language you would see in this bill, the kind of language that the Government of Canada is interested in, and that is corporate shares, corporate policies.

Do not forget all of these corporate people who receive their $15,000 and $20,000 Christmas bonuses, what they call productivity bonuses, approved by this Government of Canada. That is the type of thing you would see, the types of phrases that are used in this legislation.

What is the government doing bringing in this legislation dealing with the post office? It is a good question. Why tie up the House of Commons, the Senate, printing, and everybody else talking about Canada Post when all you are doing is talking about shares and assets? You are not talking about letters, parcels, post offices, service to Canadians, people or anything like hat.

What is the government doing tying up the House with a bill like this? You would not understand half of this bill if you tried to read it. As a former law clerk of a provincial legislature, I must say I have difficulty following the blooming thing.

As I finish reading it, I still do not understand the purpose of this bill. You can read the speeches of the Government of Canada and they say nothing. What it says is "we are going to give shares of Canada Post"—the post office—"to employees".

It sounds okay on the surface of it. It is the thing to do in corporations in Canada today. Give shares to employees. Sounds like an admirable thing to do, a great thing to do I suppose until you look at what they are doing. The shares are not defined.

I will tell you one thing that is defined that I found rather interesting. I will have to read it out to put it on the record. It says here: that the shares are non-voting shares.

Why on earth would you give shares to people if they are non-voting shares? What are you afraid of? The hon. member says dividends from a corporation that lost $100 million dollars last year. Ha, ha, ha. Funny. Very interesting. Oh boy, what a rationale that is. Dividends.

I will tell you why they are non-voting shares. The Government of Canada is afraid that ordinary people, employees, would actually have a say in the running of the corporation. That is the real reason for this definition of non-voting shares.

I would suggest that when the minister stands up on third reading of this bill, he tells us how many similar situations there are where employees have shares of a company which are non-voting shares. I would bet that it would be about 1 in 10. Then, of course, there is the restriction. They can only own up to 10 per cent of the corporation in question.

I support the motion tabled in this Chamber to have this bill read six months hence. In six years, says the hon. member for Miramichi. Let us make it six decades. How about that? That would even be better because I have never ever read such a lot of language that means absolutely nothing.

Of course I cannot at second reading go into some of this exact language, but I can assure members that it means nothing. The actual decisions under this bill will be made by future ministers and the Minister of Finance on the approval of the President of the Treasury Board on the establishment of bylaws by the board of the corporation; if you can figure that one out.

That is what Canada Post is now spending its time on, an act to amend the the Canada Post Corporation Act. It is not spending its time looking at the numbers of letters that are lost in the mail, not spending its time looking at the needs of rural Canadians, not spending its time paying attention to the closing of the post office in Joe Batt's Arm.

• (1210)

Oh, no, it is spending its time on redeemable shares, security interests, and beneficial ownerships. In all of it Canada Post says that the employees could only own 10 per cent of the total amount of shares available. The shares will be non-votable shares and under this bill there will not be a dollar value placed on the shares. What a bill.

An hon. member: And they are in the hole any way.

Mr. Baker: They are in the hole any way. I hope all members of this Chamber will support the motion put forward by the Official Opposition, meaning the Liberals, soon to be the government of this country after the next federal election. I hope everybody will support this motion, shelve this bill, and say to the Government of Canada: "Look, for goodness' sake, get back and sign a deal with your employees. They haven't had a contract in three years, come next month", instead of dealing with shares, with capital ownership and with corporate dividends.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of my colleague on this shemozzle that is now called the post office. In his area of the country were the rural post offices torn out and thrown away? Were the people who went to meetings given any kind of rational approach to what the post office is doing? Did they send out these PR people with packaged information, or disinformation I should say, and try to come up with a scheme whereby they would have the people completely confused? I know that is what has happened in my own riding. It made no difference what we said, what kind of argument we put. They were programmed and that was the only answer we could get from them.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that I should have dealt with it. I want to thank the hon. member from Miramichi who has sat in the House, I can recall, since 1974. He knows the post office inside out. He knows the basic requirements of the rural areas of Canada. Once upon a time we had a railway in those rural areas. We had Air Canada in those rural areas. We certainly do not have them landing. We have lost the federal presence in the air. We have lost it on the ground. We have lost the post offices in our rural areas.

The truth of the matter is that before Canada Post makes a decision on the closure of post offices it gives a list of those closures to the Government of Canada and the Government of Canada approves the list. The government can say it does not approve of the list but it certainly does not disapprove of the list. What is on that

list is finished. It is gone. We can go through all the procedures we want; it is gone. The post office is closed. The building is gone. The flag is gone. The job is gone, in many cases several jobs. In some cases it is more than one job; it is several jobs that are gone from a rural area. One other thing that is gone is service. The service is gone.

I do not care how many surveys they come up with, the government and Canada Post Corporation, which say that it takes *x* number of days for a letter to get from point *a* to point *b*. I can assure the House that is not the case.

I do not know how those figures are compiled. We had better service in Newfoundland when we had the mail on the Newfie bullet. When the Newfie bullet was operating and stopped at every little settlement, we could put our mail on the Newfie bullet one day in St. John's and have it taken off the same day in Gander, Newfoundland. In fact I believe the service was better even before the Newfie bullet when we had the dog team. I can remember when we had a dog team service in the community that I was living in. There was better service for Newfoundlanders at that time. I imagine we could go back to the pony express.

An hon. member: The government has gone to the dogs.

Mr. Baker: The service has gone to the dogs, I can tell you that.

It does not make any difference how we send a letter. I have had cases recently of students who have run out of time to register at university because the money they sent in the mail, the mail order, was lost or the letter of registration was lost. We have had countless numbers of cases of this.

People have come to the conclusion that it is just not safe to put a letter in the mail any more and count on it getting to the place it is being sent to on time. Instead of two days between provinces in actual fact it is over a week.

In answer to the hon. member's question, our service has deteriorated, and what does Canada Post do? It gets the Government of Canada to come up with this bill that talks about giving shares in the corporation to employees as a good PR gesture and saying: "Boys and girls, look, we are going to allow you to get 10 per cent of this corporation, but we won't make it voting shares because you might have a say in the corporation. We won't give you a contract. You haven't had a contract for three years. We are going to give you 10 per cent of the shares. Actually we are not going to give it to you. We are going to sell it to you and we are going to come up with the amount of money you are going to have to pay later".

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to follow the member from Gander—Grand Falls, one of the more expressive and dramatic members of the House. However I did not know the Liberal Party wanted the postal service to go back to the dogs. He was saying it was much more efficient when the dogs did it back in Newfoundland many years ago. I also did not realize that the member was that old, unless I am mistaken about when dogs were used in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In any event I support the motion before the House to give this a six-month hoist. It is not a good bill. I am sure my rural colleagues in the Conservative Party agree as well. Even my friend from Etobicoke—Lakeshore probably agrees it is not a great bill. Therefore let us give it a hoist. Let us give it a study.

The government wants to sell off up to 10 per cent of the shares in the post office to the employees. I think that would be the first step toward privatization of the post office. I do not really want to set up a modern-day version of the pony express in this country.

The post office is in place to act as a service to all Canadians regardless of where we live. I know you, Mr. Speaker, as a very distinguished Chair of this House would agree, coming from rural Alberta, that we cannot privatize the post office in this country. It must remain a Crown corporation. It has been a Crown corporation ever since it began, supported by a number of Conservative governments over the years.

To open the door, to start to privatize the post office of this country, is a mistake. We have seen it happen with Air Canada. We have seen it happen with other Crown corporations. The government now is trying to do the same thing in Bill C-73, the bill that is before the House today.

I appeal to the backbenchers of the Conservative Party to stand up and speak out on behalf of their constituents. I even know the government Whip from Calgary probably in his heart of hearts is very upset—and he has a big heart—that his government would open the door to privatizing the post office. I do not know why he supports the bill. Maybe it is the Reform Party in Calgary giving him the nudge. It wants to privatize absolutely everything.

• (1220)

I hope he will get up and speak his mind on this bill and help those of us in the opposition fight for the ordinary Canadians to keep the post office as a service to all of Canada.

I rise mainly because I wanted to put on the record the facts regarding the post office as it pertains to my riding of Yorkton—Melville in rural Saskatchewan. We have recently had the closure of rural post office after rural post office. In fact since 1984, when the government across the way took office, we have had 174 post offices close in the province of Saskatchewan. In less than eight years of Conservative government 174 post offices have closed their doors. Another 37 are being reviewed.

In many of those cases the people of the local towns have rebelled; they have petitioned, they have called meetings, they have lobbied to have their post office remain open. However, we have had a government which has not been receptive, which has not listened to what the people in those communities have said.

The post offices closed in my riding since the Conservatives came to power are in the following centres: in the small community of Arran, which serves the northeastern part of my riding; the small community of Danbury, which is now the home of the newly elected MLA, Ron Harper, from the riding of Pelly; the small community of Okla; the community of Togo; the community of Orkney; the village of Runneymede; the village of Waldron; and again to a larger centre, the town of Saltcoats, where several hundred people live in a thriving community, the post office has closed down; the village of Stornoway; the small town of Dubuc.

Some members across the way will remember the campaign by the people in the village of Dubuc. About two years ago a delegation came down to Ottawa. They came before a parliamentary committee and made their case. They got national news stories and a lot of stories in Saskatchewan about their fight for the preservation of the Dubuc post office, in that case a very well-kept building. People wanted unanimously to keep it open. They did not want a retail postal outlet, a RPO, but the government failed to listen, they failed to respond.

The towns of Tantallon, Lintlaw, Spy Hill, Whitespruce and Mikado have all lost their post offices since 1984. Those are the towns in my riding that have lost their post offices.

In addition to closures, we now have a number of post offices being reviewed in terms of whether or not they should remain open: the towns of Gerald, Bredenbury, MacNutt, Springside, and the large town of Kamsack, which has a population of about 3,000 people. The government is now reviewing the post office with the possibility of closing it down.

I mentioned Sheho. Just today in the House I tabled a petition signed by 174 people from the town of Sheho. That is roughly the same number of people who are patrons of the post office and they are asking the federal government to keep the post office open. I hope that the postmaster general will do something quite extraordinary, listen to the people of these small communities and keep the post offices open.

In addition to that, roughly a year ago the city of Yorkton, a city of 18,000 people, lost its post office. It is one of the largest centres in the country to lose a post office: a city the size of Yorkton with around 18,000. In my riding, we have had a reduction of hours in the town of Churchbridge, the town of Langenburg, the town of Theodore; in all cases causing concern to the local people who are served by the post offices in these towns.

Members across the way will say, what about the RPOs, the retail postal outlets? If they were to go around in rural Saskatchewan in my riding, they would find that the residents are pretty well unanimous in wanting to keep the post office, and are speaking out to keep that facility.

I will give members three examples of letters I received recently. A person who is the postmaster in the town of Goodeve, Mrs. Evelyn Lutz, writes: "Our community has many elderly people and to take away the

post office from this village would be devastating". Mrs. Lutz makes a very good point.

As you go around the prairies, and you are from the prairies, Mr. Speaker, you know that in the small towns and in the villages of prairie Canada, we have a lot of senior citizens. The average age of some of these small hamlets, towns and villages would be up in the upper fifties or sixties or perhaps even older. You can sometimes go down a street and you think that the only people living in a small village are people that are on retirement. There is the occasional family with small children. It is these older people that need the postal service.

That postal service is a very important aspect of culture in this country in terms of popular culture. People gather at the post office. They meet their neighbours at the post office. It is the centre of communication and the centre of activity in the community. It knits together and holds together these small communities.

I remember when the people of Dubuc were fighting for their post office. They made the point and it is still true. Often in small towns, the only place you will see the Canadian flag flying is over the post office. That is the only federal presence in a small town or a small village. When they closed down the Dubuc post office a couple of years ago, down came the Canadian flag, the only explicit federal presence that we had.

Now with the crisis facing this country, we need more flags flying. We need more of a federal presence. We need more of Canada in all parts of Canada. Instead, the federal government is tearing it down, piece by piece, flag by flag, post office by post office. The people out there notice and they are worried about it.

In terms of the cost, a lot of these post offices are very efficient: city of Yorkton, 18,000 people; Kamsack under review, 3,000 people. Many towns of 500, 600 people have a good, efficient post office. When I say 500 or 600 people I mean in the town or the village there are 500 or 600 people but the surrounding farms will add maybe another 100 or 200 people. The community is one that is large enough to service a post office economically and efficiently.

The second constituent that has written to me recently is Jean Barteski, from the town of Invermay. I hope the member from Toronto who is concerned about retail postal outlets, the RPOs, who is sitting in the back bench, will listen. Ms. Barteski says: "The switch to retail outlets is helping destroy rural Canada. Let us put a stop to—"

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Hughes): On a point of order, the hon. member for Halton—Peel.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not wish to be identified as the member from Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Hughes): Perhaps the member from Saskatchewan can carry on with his speech.

Mr. Nystrom: The member from Ontario, let us say. What Jean Barteski was saying was that the switch to retail outlets is helping destroy rural Canada. Let us put a stop to post office closures.

Finally, I have a letter from Mr. Glen Smith of Saltcoats. He says in his letter: "Quite a number have been closed in our riding and one supposes the rest are at risk in Saskatchewan. Rural Canada needs these jobs and this federal presence".

• (1230)

Once again, here is a gentleman talking about the federal presence disappearing because of the closure of the post office. The flag is gone, the federal presence is gone, the community gathering point is gone, the service is deteriorating, the consistency of the hours is not necessarily there. The fact that we will lose jobs is also a key point.

All of these rural post offices have a postmaster or a postmistress. They all need a back-up person, part-time help, and it is a real asset to a small village, town or hamlet to have a few extra part-time jobs in terms of the economics of the community.

Often it is one family with children who go to school. It provides extra economic input into a small community. With the closure of the post offices it is gone.

Finally I want to say that if one looks at the statistics we find that in this country since 1984 there have been 1,239 post offices closed. One hundred and seventy-four of those have been in the province of Saskatchewan, roughly 15 per cent for a province that has around 4 per cent of the population of Canada.

If we add the number of post offices closed and those under review, there are now 1,595 closed or under review across this country. Two hundred and thirty-one of those are in my province of Saskatchewan, again a much greater share than we should have in accordance with our proportion of the population in Canada.

I cannot agree to support this bill. It is a bad bill. The post office has failed miserably in providing a decent and reliable service to the people of this country.

The whole objective of the post office is to run at a profit. It is the wrong priority, the wrong objective. First and foremost the post office should be a service to all people in this country, regardless of whether we come from a large city, a small town, a farm or a fishing village in Newfoundland, it must be a service to the people of this country, provided at the same cost for every citizen of Canada. That is the whole philosophy behind the post office and behind a postal stamp.

With those words I want to encourage the House to hoist and defeat this bill. It is not good for Canada. Hopefully the Conservative Party will join us in making sure this bill is done away with. It is a bad bill for the country.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Yorkton—Melville for his remarks here today. Quite frankly, I have not heard him talk so passionately about a federal presence. I am not saying he has not done so before, but this is something I share his views on, from the flag to the Canada word mark, and all the points he made about how the government has dismantled these symbols. I cannot argue with that.

My concern is that this approach to privatization or this approach to earnings per quarter versus public service is absolutely wrong. I am concerned that it is moving beyond things like Air Canada, VIA Rail and the post office into almost every department in this government.

I think specifically of the direction our constitutional debate is taking, where we are starting to take the federal presence out of some of our other areas of responsibility like tourism and housing. We are pushing it away, retreating from national governments. One of the things that has galvanized the will of this country over many, many years is the fact that we have had a national postal service and an airline service, the fact that it was not just Tourism Ontario or Tourism B.C., it was Tourism Canada, soon to be abolished or pushed off again to the provinces.

My question is does the member not see that this dismantling of national services, national departments, is really going to mean that those regions of our country, smaller provinces or smaller regions, rural Canada, et cetera, are going to be the big losers in this government's thrust?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, it really tears the country apart. We have had a dismantling of several national institutions: Canada Post, VIA Rail, the railway across this country, the down-scaling of CBC, other national institutions as well, and the privatization of Air Canada. All of these things have led to the dismantling of this country and to the alienation of Canadians from a central government, from the country of Canada itself. This really concerns me.

I mentioned today a whole series of post offices in my riding of Yorkton—Melville. The same is true of the abandonment of railways, the CNR and the CPR, which served all kinds of small towns. There used to be a connection there of the country east and west and that is disappearing very rapidly. It also ties into the trade deal where the east-west links are no longer as relevant, where again it is north and south. I am afraid the same thing will be happening with the signing of the NAFTA agreement, the free trade agreement with Mexico in terms of giving up a lot of of our sovereignty.

What we are seeing here is less of Canada pulling together. We seem to have more of a feeling in this country that we should have 10 little fiefdoms or kingdoms of provinces doing more and more things by themselves.

The point I make, and maybe people in the bigger cities have not thought of this before, but often the post office—and my friend from Nova Scotia knows because he has small towns in his riding—is the only building in town with the Canadian flag. The older people in particular are really proud of the presence of that flag. Mr. Speaker, on your right you have a Canadian flag. I was here on the day about 15 years ago when we decided to put the flag in the House of Commons. When you go to Dubuc and Springside and all those little towns in my

riding, that flag is gone. What is left? You have a few garages, a cafe, a few stores, a service station, a Saskatchewan government insurance office and a school that flies the Saskatchewan flag, but where is the Canadian flag? It is gone.

The other thing I said that I want to repeat is that for these small towns and communities, particularly on a Saturday morning, the post office is a centre of activity. Farmers and villagers come in and meet their friends, neighbours and family. Often, as a member of Parliament, not just in campaigns but other times as well, when I want to meet people and get a sounding and a feeling for the community, I go on a Saturday morning or any other morning of the week and stand in front of the local post office and meet the people. It is amazing how in a couple of hours you can meet just dozens and dozens if not hundreds of people. It is an activity they look forward to.

My father and mother live in the small town of Wynyard, Saskatchewan with a population of about 2,700. My father is now just a bit over 80 years old and he still enjoys going down every single day to the post office. That is where he meets most of his friends, gets most of the news, exchanges points of view and keeps in touch. It is an activity and a thing to do. It is like a community centre where people can meet. That is gone. It is gone and if this government gets its way it will be gone and gone, not just for 1,200 or 1,400 communities I have mentioned in this country, in fact there are 1,239 that have had their post offices closed since 1984, but it will be gone for the other hundreds of rural communities that are still hanging on in a very fragile way to the post office that is serving them.

• (1240)

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I was chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs during the period of time that we conducted about a six–month study into pretty well all the facets of Canada Post. We wrestled with a great number of the issues which have been raised during this debate. We heard from delegations from places like Dubuc, Saskatchewan, from corporate competitors of Canada Post, from labour people, from virtually anyone who has anything to do with Canada Post. We issued a series of recommendations as a result of that.

Having gone through that whole process, I can see through the rhetoric of a lot of what has been said in this House, particularly by the last two speakers. There is a lot of rhetoric surrounding the culture and the mythology of Canada Post. There are the absolute statements which are made in this House that service has been diminished, that there are fewer points of service for individual Canadians to access the postal service.

I would like to put on the record that in fact there are more points of service because of the move to retail postal outlets from corporate outlets than there were prior to that program starting. There are actually more places today than before where Canadians can access postal service, just as there are more addresses now being serviced by Canada Post in total. The level of service has actually gone up. Statistically we can prove that.

As far as the rural post office fulfilling a role as a community drop–in centre, I am not sure that as a Canadian taxpayer that is necessarily how I want my tax dollars spent, providing a community drop–in centre in *x* number of thousands of communities across this country. I thought we were talking about postal service, delivering letters, the cost and efficiency of dispatching our mail. That is what Canada Post is supposed to do, not provide drop–in centres.

In terms of the federal presence, I will grant members opposite that the diminution of the federal post office presence in small communities does, in fact, remove some of the national elements, the national fabric, the national presence. There is some validity to that argument and I will accept that. However, I am not sure at what price that needs to be maintained. I am not sure that the gross inefficiencies of a lot of rural post offices are really worth making the whole system less efficient simply to have a Canadian flag in that community. Maybe there are better ways we can do it, more effective ways.

My feeling is if we have to force nationalism, if the Government of Canada has to go into Dubuc, Saskatchewan to put up a Canadian flag, and if there will not be a Canadian flag flying in that community unless Ottawa goes and does it, then our country is in a lot worse trouble than maybe a lot of us even think.

I would like to have the member's thoughts on that.

Mr. Nystrom: I suppose our country is in a fair amount of trouble. It is going through a real crisis right now in terms of unity.

The point that I made is it is not just the flag. The post office is the only federal institution, the only federal presence in a small community, and once that is gone it is gone. I think that is a point we should take into consideration.

In terms of efficiency, a lot of these post offices are efficient. Some are in very small hamlets and very, very small villages where they have to be subsidized. Again, should people be penalized because they live in a small village or a small hamlet or on a farm that is serviced by a small village or a small hamlet? I do not think they should be penalized. I think they should be subsidized to get the same kind of service people are getting in the rest of the country.

That being said, a lot of these post offices are efficient, are making money, are in larger communities, have modern facilities and are being run in a very competent way. In my own riding, for example, as I said already, the town of Kamsack with over 3,000 people plus in a large rural community, has many, many, many hundreds of patrons. It is an operation that is efficient or should be efficient because the economy of scale is there. There is no reason to close that. The people of the town want that particular post office. The same is true of many other communities in my riding and right across the country, communities that are large enough to have efficient operations that are a service to the community.

In terms of the member from across the way from Ontario, when he talks about the drop-in centre or the community centre aspect of the post office, if he understood rural Canada he would realize how important that is, a place where people can come together on a Saturday morning or come together every day and meet their neighbours and converse and compare notes and just be part of the community.

It is a bit different in a large urban centre. There is a different psychology altogether. One of the problems of this country is we do not realize what the popular culture is in terms of its differences from one part of the country to the other. The post office is a very near and dear thing to the people of rural Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Comments are now terminated. Under Standing Order 74, the 39 minutes of debate are now concluded, and we are going to commence 10 minute maximum speeches.

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to offer some comments on this particular bill and to respond to some of the comments that have been made earlier as well. Bill C-73 will enable Canada Post Corporation to create an employee share ownership plan for all of its 57,000 employees.

This legislation will allow the Crown corporation to do several things. It will allow it to continue to improve its service to the people of Canada and to do so at reasonable and competitive rates.

Second, it puts its present and future employees on an even footing with the employees of other enterprises in the communications and distribution industry, particularly those of competitors who offer employees a piece of the action as a way of building an *esprit de corps* and thereby providing the incentive for increasing profitability.

Third, hopefully this will help set the stage for improved employee-management relations and thereby reduce the likelihood of disruptions in the postal service. We all find it very frustrating when some major important services like the postal service are disrupted by labour-management disputes.

All members of the House and indeed all Canadians are aware that there have been in the past labour-management conflicts at Canada Post. Despite many years and millions of dollars spent in contract negotiations with its union leadership, Canadians are still from time to time the unfortunate victims of these kinds of strikes.

Those disruptions have not only caused untold hardship to individual Canadians, they have also meant a dramatic loss of business to Canada Post. What is worse is a lot of that business does not come back to Canada Post once the strike is over. A lot of it stays with Canada Post competitors.

That means that even after the corporation weathers a strike, it comes back with a smaller share of the market. A smaller share of the market means that smaller profits or even a loss, as will be recorded by Canada Post for the year just completed, will occur and that occurred largely as a result of the strike last fall.

If Canada Post does not make a profit it cannot employ as many people, it cannot continue to expand into new areas, and sadly, it cannot provide the high level of service which Canadians have the right to expect. It becomes a vicious circle.

We believe this legislation will put an end to that vicious circle from the start. Our ultimate goal is to get away from the outdated notion that Canada Post exists only as a battleground for the classic labour–management struggle for philosophical and operational control. Unfortunately some people are still locked into that mindset and that is not particularly constructive for society.

Most of our major competitors around the world are getting away from that kind of a mindset. Canada Post is in the business to deliver the mail and to do so on a profitable basis. Labour disruptions jeopardize that business both nationally and in world-wide markets. Unlike manufacturers, service industries like Canada Post cannot build up big inventories and continue selling during a labour dispute.

Let me hasten to add that employee share ownership does not mean doing away with unions or that people are going to work for half their wages. Far from it. We are going to continue to have strong unions at Canada Post. Canada Post will continue to offer competitive wages to all of its employees. The corporation successfully negotiated fair and generous settlements with five of its unions in the year preceding the strike and had difficulty with only one, CUPE, which resulted in disruptions in postal service.

• (1250)

I move:

That the House continue to sit through lunch for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C–73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation.

I know there are many members very interested in speaking on this motion.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, in the 10 minutes I have under the rules I am happy to speak on Bill C–73. I must say one could use a lot more than 10 minutes when you start talking about the postal corporation and especially from my perspective. I have been a member of this august Chamber while we still had a postal service in a department of government. It has gone from a department of government in which members did have a little input, to say the least, in postal service to their constituents.

Then the great panacea came and we took it out of a department and made it a postal corporation, a Crown corporation. That was going to be a new day for labour relations, a new day for service to Canadians and a new day for postal service in Canada.

I was here in the Chamber when those bills by the then Liberal government were debated and I was in the opposition. I can even remember who the critic was for the Official Opposition of the day who sometimes sits in the chair in which Your Honour sits. There was a general agreement, because there had been dissatisfaction with postal service as a department of government, that perhaps a postal corporation, a Crown corporation, would remedy many of the complaints people had.

We now have the postal corporation and Bill C–73, following the remarks of a lot of members who have spoken before me, seems to be another extension of a Crown corporation to now giving shares to employees and perhaps beginning and will complete the road to privatization of a post office.

Having not seen the improvement in postal service from a department to a postal corporation, I have very real apprehension if we are going down the slippery slope, as we say in the jargon, of the privatization of a postal service in this country. This country will not be able to provide the service to Canadians from coast to coast if we get in that line.

Before I continue I want to thank my colleague from Nova Scotia, the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, for having the courtesy of letting me take the floor before he took the floor because we all know we have a certain rotation here. I had been here a little earlier and I was getting a little hungry for lunch but he is younger than I am and he can wait for lunch if he has not already eaten. I do appreciate that courtesy to say these few remarks.

I am sorry the member for Halton—Peel has left. He was the chairman of the committee for consumer and corporate affairs. He was a very active chairman. He was a very active columnist before he came to Parliament on many issues Parliament has spoken about. I say philosophically, in a general way at this stage in the debate, the question he put to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville had some merit in that perhaps factually there were more points of service.

The answer of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville to that question illustrates in graphic degree the dichotomy that you have in a bill dealing with postal services between the rural and the urban member. Quite frankly, the postal corporation and the whole background of the postal corporation and its service or problems of service to the Canadian people really illustrate the differences between a bureaucratic approach to service and a departmental approach through which you can help service the people you are supposed to represent.

Ten minutes go very quickly and I want to get into basically this whole business of post office closures. There are perhaps more points covered. In a lot of the new areas of the country, with suburbia, I do believe with all the concern that we have with closure of post offices that some of the retail outlets, because of the difference in hours some cases, even in my own riding, are providing a better service than was provided when the post office was closed.

The real problem in this whole issue is it is one thing to put a retail outlet into a growing area of Canada and a new area of Canada and a suburban area of Canada where there are lots of people and the retail outlet can be put in a shopping centre in which there is no history of a previous post office. This is the total difference between retail outlets, which in many cases provide a very good service to the people they are supposed to serve. That is totally different than the present postal corporation policy of post office closures.

It has a policy that when a postmaster or postmistress retires or there is a vacancy because of death or sickness, the operation of that individual post office is reviewed. What has happened is that the so-called review of the post office really becomes the beginning of a closure of that post office in established areas, towns, villages, in which they have had post offices for years and eons.

I agree completely with other members who have spoken here today, especially with the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville who spoke in very glowing terms about the very real psychological function, let alone the service function.

My hon. friend from Macleod is a very fine member from a rural area. I have been in Macleod. His speech was written by the postal corporation. It was perhaps an interesting contribution to debate. In his heart of hearts I would be very surprised if he has not run into the same problems that I have run into, that the hon. member from Peterborough has run into, in trying to intercede with the postal corporation about the closure of a local post office that has had a history in a community and is the only federal presence in that community.

It is a staged procedure by these PR people who go out doing their job. Admittedly they are doing their job. They have their instructions to have local hearings, talk to the people. Mabou, which is in the riding of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, is one of the only post offices that I have heard about in all the closures in Canada which in effect the people have on their own initiative taken over from the postal people, as I understand it, and are going to run a post office that was set for closure.

That is the situation of having the rhetoric that we have an input into post office closures as members of Parliament. The reality unfortunately reminds us of Mr. Trudeau's admonition about members being nobodies. You can argue whether he meant in the House or 50 yards from the House. That is an interesting debate. In terms of post office closures, as far as I know from my experience and the experience of most other members here, once a post office is set for closure, even if it has been providing service for years, that post office has been closed and members do not have an input.

The point is that there has to be a balance. I am not hidebound to the realities of growing areas and retail outlets. As I said earlier, some of that has provided a very necessary service. I have no hesitation in voting for the amendment to put this bill off to another day or voting against the bill which talks about corporate shares and dividends and is more worried about the corporate world than about the people world.

• (1300)

I sat in this House during the debate on the postal corporation bill. The public has great reservations about what the devil members do and how well we do it, how poorly we do it or how we do ourselves good and bad. The horrible thing is, and there is not a member who can deny this, in terms of one of the basic services a government is supposed to give to its people, a postal service, members are basically nobodies because we created this postal corporation and set it up on a pedestal.

You can write letters to the minister responsible for the postal corporation and you will get your official answer from his assistant and they will look into it. You may get a letter from someone in the postal corporation but onward the wheels turn and pretty soon the doors close and another post office is terminated. All the psychological negatives that have been mentioned here before about keeping a little presence of this country, let alone having a little purpose in being a member, have been eroded and that has been very unhealthy.

I cannot get on to all the things I would like to say, but I will have another chance after we get rid of this motion for second reading. I was here also when a fellow called Mr. Kiearns was the first Minister of Communications in 1966. He started a little policy of rationalization of existing post offices in the then postal department.

Why is the government in a lot of trouble today across the country? Some months ago I looked it up and Mr. Kiearns rationalized a total of 26 post offices in Canada from coast to coast. One was in my riding at the time. There was hue and cry from coast to coast about what he was doing to these social centres.

Now, as my friend from Yorkton—Melville says, and I think the figures are even more, we have already closed over 1,300 to 1,400 post offices. Is it any wonder that this government is in a rather poor state in the polls?. Along with many other things, without repeating them all, I suggest that in terms of service to the constituents, this whole post office closure policy has been about equal to several other misguided policies of this government which justify the low state of the polls. Unless this somnolent caucus of the government wakes up and tries to make an input on post office closures there will not be any dramatic change in the polls, nor should there be.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate and to remind the House that what we are debating is not second reading of Bill C-73 but the amendment put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, that the further debate on this bill be considered six months hence; in other words, that this bill be withdrawn by the government.

There is a very good reason for putting forward that amendment. At this point in its mandate, a six month hoist, as this motion is often called, perhaps if this government had the good sense to call an election there would be a Liberal government in place to put forward legislation to amend the Canada Post Corporation which would make more sense and would be more contemporary than this little bill which the government put forward on April 30 for our consideration.

When all of the problems and all of the concerns are considered that Canadians across this country have expressed to members in this House about the bad service, the bad employee relations, the closure of rural post offices and the litany of complaints which we have heard over the last seven or eight years concerning Canada Post, the government seems to be on some other planet when it puts forward this legislation which it purports will resolve all those ills.

The minister in charge of Canada Post on May 14, when he spoke at second reading of this bill, argued that the legislation would allow the Crown corporation to do several things. Let me cite from his speech.

> One, it will build a stronger partnership between management and employees, thereby resulting in more harmonious labour relations in Canada's postal system.
>
> Two, more harmonious labour relations will better position the corporation as it invests in new technologies and expertise it needs to expand in new areas of business activity at home and abroad.
>
> Three, it will put its present and future employees on an even footing with the employees of other enterprises in the communications and distribution industry—
>
> Four, it will continue to improve its service to the people of Canada and will do so with reasonable competitive rates.

Everybody knows about the desperate state of employee-management relations at Canada Post. I wonder about the paradox of having introduced this legislation, which is strongly opposed by the two major unions that deal with Canada Post; the Union of Postal Employees, which is opposed to this legislation—and some of its representatives have even spoken to me about it in my constituency—and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

If this legislation is supposed to improve labour–management relations and lead to a more harmonious working environment in Canada Post, you would think that this government would have sought, through Canada Post, to negotiate the kind of share savings plan which it has proposed as a centrepiece of this bill.

What it is trying to do in typical Tory fashion is impose this share savings plan on the workers of Canada Post, a share savings plan which is very faulty to begin with, a small concession to the workers. It is a faulty small concession because, as other members who have spoken earlier have said, it provides non–voting shares. A small fraction of the dividends Canada Post can generate through profits that it has accumulated, very often by cutting service across the country and laying off its workers, would be returned to the employees.

To offer that to the employees who are being laid off at Canada Post or to those communities which are losing their rural post offices and which are being provided with very inferior substitutes is a bit like offering a condemned man one last meal. The meal may be tasty but when he considers his future prospects he loses his appetite for the meal.

That is essentially what is happening with this bill. It is a very paltry and insignificant contribution or attempt by this government to deal with the myriad of problems that Canada Post has perpetrated on Canadians through its reckless attempts to become profitable at the expense of service to many parts of Canada, particularly the rural parts of Canada where I live and where many other members of this House also live.

As well, it has generated the climate of labour–management relations which is legendary in the degree to which it is acrimonious and poisonous and which is characterized by endless grievances. I really do not see that this legislation is actually going to change very much. It really needs to improve the kind of treatment it gives to its employees.

I would like to cite an example of that kind of management style which is so counterproductive. For example, in the community of St. Peters in my constituency, very recently a woman who had been working as a part–time employee with the post office was led to believe she was going to lose her job. Canada Post wanted to change her job classification to one that is bilingual even though she was a unilingual employee.

The community is overwhelmingly unilingual. She was told that she would not be able to continue in her job. This caused a great consternation among all of the community members who supported the service she was providing to the community and they wanted to keep her there. Although Canada Post led her to believe for weeks that she was going to lose her job, it finally had to recant and keep her in the job, after she had gone through all of the anxiety of thinking she was losing her job.

• (1310)

The whole community had to rise up and defend this person's job record and argue for keeping her in that position. That kind of case shows that Canada Post has certainly a long way to go in terms of developing its relations with its workers. It is instances like this and others that have poisoned the relationships among workers in Canada Post.

The rumours are right across Canada of the minister's intentions and the application of the minister's intentions to privatize Canada Post.

I realize I only have one minute left. I hope I will be back later on when we consider second reading of Bill C–73 if we fail to do what we should do in this House which is to reject further consideration of this bill.

I would like to speak to this issue of privatization and the effect that it will have on rural communities. I also want to relate the experiences of communities such as Mabou, which my hon. friend from Annapolis Valley—Hants mentioned earlier. Last year, this community valiantly attempted to maintain postal services after a vigorous battle with Canada Post. It wanted to close down and terminate Mabou's rural post offices. Last night the community of Judique was faced with an ultimatum from Canada Post to close its rural post office. The residents of Judique are strongly opposed to this decision but they realize that dealing with this corporation is like dealing with a steamroller in that it does not listen. All Canada Post wants to do is to privatize at all costs.

I hope to get back up again on this important issue.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today and address this particular matter.

As many people will know, this bill seeks to make shares of the Canada Post Corporation available to its employees. One of the actions of government that I find difficult to accept is the closure that has been imposed on this particular debate on a fundamental question; namely, whether this particular corporation in a sense is going to be privatized.

I find that alarming and unfortunate because we are talking about the future of several thousands of Canadians in a climate of recession and a climate in which people are really concerned about their futures and their jobs. I want it noted that this government has done this on several occasions. Some people say it always does it whenever it is dealing with a delicate issue and particularly when it thinks it is going to get into difficulty.

One of my colleagues has described this particular move by government as one which seeks to place another nail in the privatization coffin of Canada Post. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not, in principle, opposed to privatization of certain sectors. I think we have to examine under what conditions this might take place.

For those who are enthralled with this whole notion of privatization, I urge you to go out in front of the House of Commons today and talk to the employees of Air Canada and ask them a number of questions. Ask them what they think of privatization, because they have been privatized. Ask them how many people they have lost since they were privatized. Ask them how many more employees will lose their jobs in the very near future. There are alarming comments that have been made with respect to losses of jobs that are going to affect many, many men and women. They are going to be announced very, very shortly. I hope that is just a rumour and an unfounded one, but I am extremely suspicious.

While you are out there in front of the House of Commons where there are roughly 400 people from Air Canada who are demonstrating, ask them how successful they have been in having a level playing field in the private sector and how difficult it has been to try to get access to the Japanese market.

The reason for my bringing those to the attention of my colleagues is that a lot of people look at privatization as some sort of a panacea, that all of a sudden all of the problems that existed are going to be gone. This is an example of privatization and it is not all rosy. If you were to go to the employees today and ask them what they think about it, you would be extremely surprised and certainly there is real concern out there, a legitimate concern.

I want to point out, as have a number of my colleagues, that this bill is an extremely general one. Why is there no value in shares? Why is there no identification of the number of shares? Why do we not talk about the net worth of the corporation? Why is there no definition of an employee who will be able to buy those shares? Why is the amount of shares individual employees would be able to purchase not announced?

Once again the government has left to regulation by cabinet and Treasury Board the powers to establish the terms of the share offering. Why cabinet? Why Treasury Board?

As I mentioned, the bill does not provide specifics on share offering. The bill does not place value on assets, on the value of shares. The bill even permits shares to be given away. The first reaction that one has is to whom would they be given away? It might be very attractive for some high-placed friends of the government in executive positions in the corporation. I would hope that would never come to be but certainly some people suspect that.

The other element that needs to be noticed is that the shares are non-voting shares. If they are non-voting shares then you cannot take part in the decision making and you cannot be on the board. How useful is that?

The bill does not protect employees. Those employees have not had a contract for three years. It has gone through mediation, it has gone through all kinds of hoops and hurdles and still today—and my colleague raised it the day before yesterday—we do not have an agreement for our postal employees. I find that shocking. I find that most unfortunate.

How would this bill help that kind of situation? I should point out that there has been no effective communication or consultation with the employees with respect to that—none whatsoever.

It does not address the basic essential question, which is service to Canadians. It is important to make profits. It is important to make money if you can. It is also important to respond to the needs of Canadians in a number of sectors, certainly in this sector.

People talk about making the corporation a more efficient one, one which is responsive to the needs of Canadians. Let me give you a few examples of how this is going about right now and how it has impacted upon my riding.

There have been a number of closures of postal outlets. For example, the Marion Pharmacy in August of 1989, a full postal outlet in the Norwood area, closed despite numerous letters and petitions from local residents. Canada Post had offered the proprietors at that time some postal services but never followed through. This is not responsive to the needs of Canadians.

Metro Drugs on Autumnwood Drive closed in the fall of 1990. I am told that the business closed this spring. This is not good for business.

There are other examples. McCullough Drugs (Tache and Marion) closed within the last two years, as did the Drake pharmacy outlet which closed in 1991 despite thousands of petitioners and concerned residents, including a seniors' home on Elizabeth Road, very close to that facility.

We have to realize that the closing of those outlets and the changing of the services in those outlets affect all residents of the area, particularly those who are seniors and those who may have a physical or other disability limiting their ability to get about.

How will the offering of shares to employees help these people who until recently were able to use those facilities I have mentioned? It will not. It simply will not, not one little bit. How will this bill address the concerns of millions of rural Canadians whose post offices have been closed?

That is a serious issue. It is a serious concern for those smaller, more isolated communities. It is one that it will do nothing about. I suspect it will exacerbate it.

I have not even mentioned supermailboxes. We have not talked about those recently. I am sure that my colleagues would like to be reminded that they are still not very popular. I get stories, I get calls from residents still. Very often older people find it difficult because if placed on the wrong side of the street it can be extremely slippery. We have adverse weather conditions in a number of areas in Canada, such as Winnipeg. They are still extremely angry. They do not see this as an improvement. On the contrary, they feel as if they have not been treated fairly and have not been consulted.

• (1320)

I am going to tell you a little incident about a lady who called my office. She sent a watch to Calgary in an envelope that was properly addressed and that had a return address on it. It had the whole works. Unknown to her, though, was that the company was no longer operating. What happened since then is that the post office did not return the envelope. They have been unable to locate it. What is worse is that they are unwilling to compensate her for the lost item. We shall continue to pursue that. We are not going to give up.

[*Translation*]

As I just said, this bill is not at all specific; it is very vague. We do not know exactly what it is talking about. In fact, it overlooks basic issues affecting services to Canadians. It provides no protection at all for employees. Where is the bill going with all that? Canada Post wants to privatize, but why? What will it achieve with all that? How could it improve the services to Canadians? Will people in small and remote communities benefit from such a measure? Will this bill give anything more to those in my riding whose post offices have been closed and services altered drastically? Will those who are older or disabled have to go from one place to another? Will they benefit from such a bill? Absolutely not. I know that privatization can be good in some cases but very harmful in others; it can be most unfortunate. Ask the Air Canada employees who are in front of the House of Commons today how many jobs have been lost since Air Canada was privatized. How many jobs will still be lost? These questions should also be raised here and answered. Also consider all the difficulties they had in getting access to the private sector so that they could have healthy competition with the other sectors that interest them.

I conclude by saying that I absolutely cannot support such a bill, because I do not believe that we are giving priority to the Canadians who receive services from that corporation.

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-73 today, a bill to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

I have heard many speakers today talk about the act itself and make reference and comment on Canada Post. The one thing I have not heard either from the minister or from the government is really the basic tenet of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

The act clearly states that what we should be doing is providing service to Canadians. This service is really paramount in this country. Each time I hear a comment it concerns how we can save money, generate profits and make this an efficient business.

I find that in each move that has been made by the government over the last several years, we see the price of postage stamps rising dramatically and we see the loss on the Canada Post side rising dramatically. As a matter of fact, this year there is rumour of a projected loss of $130 million. There seems to be a loss of efficiency and yet the price of those stamps keeps soaring up by hundreds of millions of dollars to Canadian consumers.

Now today we face a change in the act which would bring in a change in the legislation which would provide or allow Canada Post to sell 10 per cent of its ownership to employees through a sharing proposition.

The minister in charge of Canada Post stated that the plan is a common sense next step to ensure that improvement continues. I fail to see where there has been any improvement at all. There is an increased cost in postage, much dissension about loss of service and an increase in losses in that company. Where are those improvements that the minister suggests are continuing?

Canada Post claims it would improve customer service. In my mind it is making a proposition to employees who are saying they do not want to buy those shares. How does that improve customer service and reliability? How will it improve the financial sufficiency of Canada Post?

I have some real problems with why the government has stated that there will be improvements. As a matter of fact, I wonder why the government put this on the table at all because I cannot see how any group is satisfied. This is outside of the fact that it seems to be the first step toward the privatization of Canada Post. This is certainly taking it in a direction that the act would not allow it to go. I guess this is a major concern that is being stated by all of my colleagues.

The government claims are quite difficult to follow through as we talk about it, but despite the claims noted, a closer review of the legislation reveals there are some major problems. The shares are to be offered to employees yet there is no definition of an employee in this. Is it full-time employees who are being laid off by the thousands? Is it part-time employees who are losing their jobs? Is it casual employees? Can this be used as a bonus to supervisors? I am not certain but I have my concerns.

The government wants employees to feel that they are more a part of the corporation and yet shares for employees are to be non-voting shares. The only shares retained by the government are going to be the voting shares. Any shares that are turned over to the employees will give the employees no say. Therefore you are not involving the employees in the operation of the corporation. You are asking them to take money out of their pockets to buy something for which they have no power to use with any votes in the future.

The bill suggests the selling of 10 per cent of Canada Post Corporation. What exactly is 10 per cent made up of? There is no value or indication of the make-up of the corporation, no description of what the corporate assets are and therefore there is no idea of what that 10 per cent represents.

Canada Post continues to claim there are improved services and financial self-sufficiency. However, I continually receive letters and complaints from Canadians across Canada about Canada Post closures, conversions or rationalization plans. These Canadians do not see the so-called improvements as better, but rather they see it as a dismantling of a national institution.

The government, referring to the share offering, maintains that a price for these shares will be established in the future. However, the bill itself indicates that shares may be offered for consideration or for no consideration. Therefore, shares could be given away. The bill permits the giving away of shares. Could this then be a move to corporate bonuses in Canada Post? We see the huge, huge salaries that are being paid at the present time. Are we then starting to look at giving some of the corporation to those executives within Canada Post?

• (1330)

How are issues such as the value and the number of shares and assets to be determined? Should these important matters be dealt with by the Governor in Council or cabinet? No, they should not be dealt with there. They should be dealt with here in the House of Commons. The Canadian people have the right to know how the government will decide what the value of the shares are, what the corporate value is and if people are being treated in some reasonable way. Do not give it to the minister and Treasury Board to make those decisions.

In addition, Bill C–73 would permit bylaws of Canada Post Corporation to be inconsistent with any provision of the bill. The government would have Canadians believe that it intends to improve situations at Canada Post because of Bill C–73, yet the bill does not adequately address the issues. Authority would be vested with the board and cabinet to be inconsistent with the act itself.

The government realizes that there are very serious and complicated issues in dispute at Canada Post Corporation. CUPW management has been unable to achieve a contract for the last three years. For three years there has been negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and back to work legislation. There is still no settlement.

Now the government wants to do something to make the employees feel more a part of the corporation itself and less a part of working together. The answer they have is Bill C–73. This bill will not solve the problem. It does nothing to improve employee–employer relations. In fact, the bill is opposed by the postal workers.

How can the government state that there will be improved co–operation when there is no co–operation of any kind put forward in this bill? How does Bill C–73 address the concerns of Canadians on Canada Post? Will Bill C–73 reopen the post office that was closed in the village of Erieau in my riding? Will it reopen post offices in many small communities in P.E.I., Nova Scotia, Quebec, in the west and across this country? We have seen some 1,200 post offices axed in the last six years. This bill will do nothing to help that situation.

Will Bill C–73 compel retail postal outlets to provide the same service for the price that Canada Post offices provide? Certainly not. Will Bill C–73 save the postal identities of Winona, Fruitland, Vineland, which they will wipe out according to the bill? No.

I see my time has run out and I hope I will have the opportunity to speak to this later. However, my concern is that this bill creates more animosity, more tension and more problems in Canada. It certainly does nothing to enhance or improve our service to Canadians.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion on the six–month hoist and to oppose Bill C–73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

There is not a single subject that is more akin to waving a red flag in front of a bull than a bill that has to do with Canada Post Corporation coming before members of Parliament who have any memory of Canadian history regarding Canadian postal services. I cannot think of a greater horror story or a worse example than this institution. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, it had a terrible labour relations record, but at least it delivered the mail on time.

It was turned into a Crown corporation in the early 1980s and at that time, under the presidency of Michael Warren and under its new mandate, it managed to bring back mail services from a period in which it took over two weeks to get across this country back down to a position of only two or three days. It improved some services. It reduced the labour relation grievances within the post office from over 100,000 down to virtually nil. It gave postal workers who for years had been out on strike, one after another because of terrible labour relations in the old Canada Post system, some feeling of pride.

In 1984, with the election of this government, the whole clock was turned back again. The only thing worse than having a service which is in disarray is having a service that having been in disarray is drastically improved and then turned back and thrown on the scrap heap again.

It is no wonder that Canadians from coast to coast, especially those in rural communities who have been specifically victimized by this corporation, are up in arms and have absolutely no faith in the credibility of this government, especially when it comes to delivering basic services like the mail.

This government is swallowing some outdated concept from mini-WAC, old Bill Bennett in British Columbia who privatized the B.C. Resources Investment Corporation and saw shares go from $6 almost down to zero in his attempt at privatization. It was the same kind of policy that the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs in that government espoused when he was Prime Minister for a short period of nine months. He wanted to do it to Petro-Canada and the people turfed him out, especially the people in British Columbia who could remember what the Socreds did to their resource corporation and turned an effective corporation into a scrap heap that was worthless.

How they think they can adopt that same kind of policy and that somehow it is going to improve morale among postal workers and do anything to turn around the attitudes of Canadians to have a more positive outlook on their postal services really boggles the mind. It is beyond imagination.

When the Crown corporation was first created in 1981-82, my colleague for Kootenay East was the postal critic for our party. I was postal critic for the next two or three years following that. Michael Warren had a mandate which he pursued very effectively. He met on a regular basis, at least two and sometimes three or four times a year, with postal critics from all caucuses in the House. If you had a problem you had an answer back in writing directly from Mr. Warren, often within 24 or 48 hours. Attention was paid to the problems that were raised, specific local problems as well as national problems. The attitude totally changed in the work force.

If the government really wants to do something about improving labour relations, one of things it ought to do is get a collective agreement, an honest collective agreement, because it is now two or three years that postal workers have not had one, between the employees of Canada Post and the corporation.

One of the other things it could do is restore what we had when the corporation was first set up when there were two representatives of labour, not necessarily directly from postal employees but on the board of that Crown corporation, so they had some direct or indirect input into the corporation. Those directors were kept on when the government changed to the Tories. Slowly but surely they were frozen out. Resignations were virtually forced upon them.

• (1340)

Once again the bridge that connected the employees to the management of that corporation and gave them some feeling of participation in it was dissolved.

Some of us in this place have had some experience working within Crown corporations that have had employee representatives sitting on boards. You do not need ownership for that to be effective. You need a partnership in which the employees of the corporation believe that their opinions on non-labour relations matters—let us not confuse it with a bargaining relationship—are listened to, from the implementation of new technology, funnelling through engineers' reports to see how they actually work on the floor of an industry, to delivering a product. In a myriad of ways you can begin to develop some meaningful relationships between the ideas employees have and the day to day operations of that corporation.

Giving 10 per cent ownership of non-voting shares is not going to accomplish a damn thing. It means nothing. It is seen as cosmetic by the employees. It is certainly seen as cosmetic by any one who has had any past experience with that kind of marginalized employee participation and ownership because it is not participation. They are non-voting shares.

How can the government think for a moment that simply because 10 per cent of its shares belong to some of the employees who have no voice it is going to make a difference in attitude among 99 per cent of the corporation's employees? They have no vested interest even from a straight economic point of view in what is going on in the corporation.

At the same time the corporation goes out and hires scabs, provokes violence on the picket lines. I use the term provokes violence not lets it happen, advisedly, having seen it first hand on a number of occasions over the last couple of years. How it thinks that is going to turn attitudes around I do not know.

A lot needs to be done with the Canada Post Corporation. How the government thinks it can get away with closing down our rural Canada outlets, wiping out rural post office box delivery and replacing it with group boxes and the whole host of measures that it has taken to alienate the Canadian people, the consumers, from the one corporation they ought to be able to count on to deliver a decent service is beyond me and I think beyond any rational Canadian. It is a cosmetic performance.

I support the motion for the hoist. This is bad law. It will accomplish nothing. It will accomplish less than nothing. It will move us even further backwards than we are today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on Bill C-73, which is so important because it concerns the privatization of a Crown corporation that provides a vital service to Canadians: our postal service.

The government claims this bill would enable employees to acquire 10 per cent—one wonders 10 per cent of what— of Canada Post's net assets. How would this be done? What are the details? That information is not available, and that is why I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who moved for a six months' hoist to give the government and the minister responsible for Canada Post a chance to do their homework and come back with a detailed piece of legislation and a business plan. When a company decides to go to the public, to go to the stock market to sell shares, it goes with a business plan and written instructions indicating which shares will be voting, which non-voting, and so forth. There is nothing in this bill, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder, considering the opinion Canadians have of Canada Post and the misadventures that have befallen our postal services over the years, who would be prepared to invest in this kind of business, even as an employee of Canada Post. I think we should be realistic. We are a little—I don't want to use the words, but suspicious says it more or less. Why is the government taking this approach? We are told it wants to give employees a chance to participate in the corporation, but there are no details.

The government claims that when employees realize they can have a 10 per cent interest in the corporation, they will become more responsible and that this will make for peaceful labour-management relations within the corporation. As you know, Canada Post did have a quiet time for several years after it was incorporated, because it had been given a clear and specific mandate, consisting of three components.

The three components included providing a better service for Canadians as the first objective; second, better labour management relations; and third, they had to stop asking the government for money because the government was too busy dealing with the deficit. During the first few years, until 1984-85, objectives were met satisfactorily. In fact, from the time the corporation was created and up to 1986, if I am not mistaken, there were no strikes.

However, the strikes started again as soon as the Conservative government tabled its management plan, which included setting up supermailboxes in urban areas. Gradually, home delivery, something most Canadians were used to, was phased out. New homes would not have home delivery.

That is what happened, and I remember, because I was the critic at the time. I went across the country. I went to British Columbia and to the east, and some untenable situations had been created. On the same street, some residents were getting home delivery, while across the street, they had to get their mail from the green boxes, later called superboxes which, despite the name, were hard to open because keys tended to rust and the boxes froze, and so forth.

The other part of this plan, in 1986, was to privatize rural post offices or close them down altogether. Previous critics as well as the present critic for Canada Post, are still very much aware of this problem throughout Canada.

There was a board of directors on which the employer was represented, the union and consumers. All the ingredients for maintaining harmony were right there in the the Crown corporation's board of directors, which represented a good cross-section of our society. The potential was there to have good labour-management relations and to meet the all-important objective: to serve Canadians and have the best postal service in the world.

However, in its first budget after the 1984 election, the government, through the Minister of Finance, said that from now on the corporation would have to absorb its own deficit. That is the kind of measure the minister took. That is what the privatization issue was all about. We know how disastrous that has been.

• (1350)

Since then I do not think that the postal services have improved, even though the government claims they have. A greater number of Canadians receive their mail in green boxes or superboxes, and many others no longer get postal services in rural areas. Mr. Speaker, this is very serious.

Now the government wants us to believe that Bill C-73, which would give 10 per cent of the net worth of Canada Post to its employees, could promote harmony and peace in the labour relations within that Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that Bill C-73 can solve the problem that exists within Canada Post.

The corporation is an essential service for all Canadians. The moment you start privatizing everything— We saw what happened with the railways and with Air Canada. Mr. Speaker, everything that was created to help us identify as Canadians is being destroyed.

It is certainly easy to privatize postal services in Montreal and Toronto, given the volume in those large cities. But what happens to Canadians living in sparsely populated regions such as the north or the east? Do you think the private sector will keep providing equal services for everybody? Should we not, as Canadians, at least have access to the same postal services? I have nothing against the private businesses; they are there to make profits and pay dividends to their shareholders. This is how it works in the business world. The government would privatize Canada Post Corporation tomorrow if it had the support of Canadians. Just think of the symbolism of the post office in a small community. In some areas, it is the only federal symbol; yet, the government wants to close it down.

It even removed the words "Canada Post" on the boxes, at this crucial time for our country. My colleagues and I will support the motion of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell asking that this bill be read a second time in six months, in the hope that the minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation will change his mind, come to his senses, withdraw this bill, and give Canada Post the necessary leeway to improve its relations with its employees and the consumers, in order to try to provide a better service to Canadians.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, to add to what my colleague just said, if this amendment is adopted by the House, we could have an election almost immediately, since it would indicate a lack of confidence in Her Majesty's government. We could therefore have an election that would give Canadians the opportunity to choose a new government that would do a much better job than this one.

[*English*]

What I wanted to talk about today are the problems this bill has posed for Canadians and they are serious problems because the bill is trying to create false expectations out of the post office.

I do not know who could have thought up this scheme.

An hon. member: Harvie Andre.

Mr. Milliken: No doubt it was the government House leader who is, after all, responsible for Canada Post in this House. This is probably one of his privatization brainwaves that he picked up along with the Minister of State for Finance and Privatization who is running this privatization department.

The person they should privatize and get out of public life is the minister responsible for Canada Post, the government House leader. If he could be privatized that would be very good. We could have an election and he could be privatized by the votes of the people of his constituency in Calgary and we would not have to go through a share offering.

What the government is proposing in this case, the minister has put this forward in a serious way apparently, is to privatize part of Canada Post.

The way it is proposing it is quite bizarre because it is going to allow the sale of up to 10 per cent of the shares, none of which will have votes, and the government will retain 90 per cent of the shares, the only voting shares. Therefore, the government in effect will control this corporation, at the same time allowing some ownership by others in the corporation.

I want to make perfectly clear what is being foisted on the Canadian public here. The government speaks about Canada Post as though it were something different from the government. It is 100 per cent government owned. It is just like another government department except it has a board of directors and operates something close to arm's length from the government, although one does not know how close that is unless one is in government.

Assuming it is at arm's length, here is a corporation wholly owned by the government carrying on business in Canada with one very important power that other corporations do not have; namely, a monopoly on the right to distribute mail in Canada. With that right goes a right to apply to the government and the government has the power to increase postal rates and to charge for the service it provides.

In other words, there is no commission like the CRTC to oversee its rates. There is no other body that can control those rates except the Government of Canada. Even the House of Commons has lost its control over the rate increases imposed by Canada Post.

My recollection was that in the old days when Canada Post wanted to raise rates it had to come to Parliament and it was an act of Parliament that dealt with the issue. Now that it is no longer a government department that process is gone. Therefore, as parliamentarians we have no control over the rates of Canada Post except for possibly the government caucus which, if it would flex its muscles once in a while and tell the cabinet what to do, could tell the cabinet not to approve another rate increase and Canada Post would not get a rate increase.

Rate increases at Canada Post are nothing more than a tax on Canadians. You would think to hear the minister speak that a rate increase is just a cost of doing business. It is nothing more than a tax because if the rate increase makes profit for the government it reduces the general tax burden on the rest of us, and if it does not then we increase the general tax burden.

Postal rates are in effect a tax.

An hon. member: It charges the GST as well.

Mr. Milliken: It charges the GST as well. It is a tax on a tax. If the post office were still a government department it would have a little more trouble justifying charging the GST on postage rates. I am glad my colleague from Montreal reminded me of this fact. It is an important one. Canadians are paying a tax on a tax when they buy postage stamps or pay for postage. They are being bled white by this government and its Draconian policies. Now to make it look as though it is softening the blow, the government is proposing to privatize Canada Post and put it up for sale, at least in a limited way, to some undefined members of the public.

This bill should not be proceeded with. The fact is Canadians are sick and tired of the way Canada Post is being run by this government and privatization of it is not going to make it any better. The fear is that it will make it worse.

Supermailboxes have been a cause of real concern. People living in new subdivisions cannot get door to door mail delivery. They get their mail from a supermailbox. I get constant complaints in my constituency office from the electors of Kingston and the Islands who are served by supermailboxes. The supermailboxes freeze up in winter. These people are unable to get the keys into the locks because they are jammed up with ice. They are unable to get access to the boxes when it is too cold because they will not open properly. In terrible weather senior citizens in my riding who live in these subdivisions served by supermailboxes are forced to walk in treacherous conditions to the supermailbox to get their mail. They are not paid to do that. Post office employees who deliver the mail are.

If the mail were delivered to homes the way it is in other parts of the riding that are not so new, we would not have this double standard, this second-class service, that some people are forced to endure because of the changes in policy of Canada Post brought about as a direct result of this government's policies.

The minister responsible for Canada Post in this House, the government House leader, and all his colleagues have flown. Here we are discussing a government bill and not one of them is here to listen to the criticisms of the bill and they have put closure on the debate. It shows a complete unwillingness to listen to the views of Canadians who are appalled by the government's actions.

Then we have labour relations in the post office. I can recall about two years ago having a public meeting in my riding for post office employees who were disgruntled with the way they were being treated in the post office at Kingston. Just recently one of the substations in Kingston closed down and all the post office boxes that had operated in that facility had to be moved to some drugstore or other private facility located in the riding.

Why close a good postal facility, Mr. Speaker? Because Canada Post claims it loses money. Well, I can tell you how it makes that claim stick. It raised the rates on the post office boxes, doubling and tripling the rates a couple of years before in some instances, and then wondered why customers were lost. Then the argument is "we have no customers using the service so we had better close it down".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being two o'clock, we now proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

TURBOCRISTAL

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I pay tribute to a deserving company in my riding.

Turbocristal, a maker of artificial snow, has successfully broken into the international market. This young company holds more than 40 per cent of the world market, thanks to two major assets: the superior design and quality of its artificial snow-making equipment.

Turbocristal's equipment is state of the art. For example, the guns are computer controlled and adjusted to produce the most snow, regardless of fluctuations in temperature or humidity.

Turbocristal, which is only seven years old, is an example for tomorrow's entrepreneurs who want to provide consumers and business people with a quality product.

[*English*]

THE TORONTO STAR STRIKE

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, in these tough economic times, every Canadian knows the value of working together for prosperity and success. Every Canadian knows that if we are to beat this made-in-Canada recession, a recession our Prime Minister induced, labour and management must work together and not at cross purposes.

The labour dispute at *The Toronto Star* is a good case in point. Since June 8 members of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild have been on strike. Since that date, management has continued to put out a drastically reduced version of the *Star*. The *Star* is one of the best English language newspapers in the world. Its writers and editors have won countless awards for their excellence, and it saddens everyone to see this institution of 100 years locked in such a dispute.

I call on representatives of management and labour to work together to come up with a mutually acceptable resolution, and I call on this government to take whatever steps it can, within the jurisdiction that it has, to ensure that this dispute is resolved to the equity and for the betterment of all.

* * *

CANADA'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday in Fredericton the citizens of my riding celebrated Canada's 125th anniversary with a warm and enthusiastic expression of the unified spirit of pride and patriotism which our country so badly needs at this time in our history.

More than 10,000 people turned out to share friendship and to demonstrate citizenship on the banks of the Saint John River, and the results were inspiring to behold. Truly it was a display of the broad and rich fabric of diversity which characterizes Canada. English and French languages were being spoken; a host of multicultural costumes and cooking was on display; native cultural participation was evident; and volunteer contributions from one and all. It was an all-Canadian event to remember.

My appreciation and congratulations go to all who made it happen, and in particular to those organizers called the Fredericton Civic Pride who took the initiative.

The toast was to Canada, this magnificent country we all adore.

* * *

LUBICON CREE NATION

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, in 1984 the Canadian Council of Churches sent an observer delegation to Little Buffalo Lake in north–central Alberta. Their mission was to investigate and report on the living conditions and treatment by Canadian governments of the people of the Lubicon Cree Nation.

It was this delegation that first applied the term genocidal to the situation they found. It was this delegation that first drew the attention of the world to the destruction of the Lubicon people's traditional way of life and the ongoing refusal of Canadian governments to deal fairly with them.

Last Thursday, eight years later, a second Canadian Council of Churches delegation travelled to Little Buffalo Lake. Their conclusions? If anything, things have become worse and government intransigence more calamitous. Death and disease run rampant. The very spirit of the people is being ground to dust.

This ugly stain on Canada's record must be removed. The Canadian government must begin real negotiations with the Lubicon Nation, in good faith and starting with a detailed point–by–point response to the Lubicon's 1989 draft settlement offer.

* * *

NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, this week, June 14 to 20, is the first ever National Public Service Week in Canada. I want to take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to the outstanding team of men and women who were Canada's negotiating team for the earth summit on environment and development in Rio.

The tireless dedication of these Public Service employees over two years has earned Canada the respect and admiration of the entire world in the struggle to stop the devastation of our environment. But behind our team stood an army supporting them every step of the way on the road to Rio. Just as important, every day hundreds of thousands of Public Service employees work without recognition to provide us with clean air, clean water, safe food, good health care, help for the needy and all the qualities of life that we call Canadian.

I pay tribute to them all, recognized or not, in public and thank them all for their contribution to Canada.

* * *

FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the subcommittee on health issues tabled its report today on the very serious issue of foetal alcohol syndrome and its effects. The report contained numerous recommendations for better education and better preventive measures in order that the people of Canada might become increasingly aware of the danger involved in consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

I stood in this House on several occasions and discussed the gruesome details of the possible results for Canadian children who are born with this disability. The key is in prevention. This disease is fully preventable yet completely incurable.

That is why I congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare for his quick reaction to the report's recommendations. Two hours after the report was released, the minister announced a four–part plan to implement some of the committee's recommendations immediately. One step that the minister is prepared to take now is a pilot program to label alcohol beverage containers in several Canadian provinces.

While I am extremely pleased with the minister's quick response, I would also encourage him to study the committee's report in depth and take further steps to see

that Canadian children can be spared the tragic effects of foetal alcohol disabilities.

* * *

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, Nibin Amik is a First Nation community of 310 residents and is located in my riding of Cochrane—Superior approximately 450 miles northeast of Thunder Bay. The community is accessible by air only.

On May 7 of this year, Summer Beaver suffered a serious setback when their log school burned to the ground. The fire occurred during the school day and fortunately most of the 85 children were outside at recess. No one was injured, but all teaching supplies were burned.

Summer Beaver is in desperate need of a wide range of supplies that could be used in their temporary school. The school is an elementary school up to grade six. The community will also require adequate facilities for the students in September when school begins again.

I urge the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to address this crisis situation at Summer Beaver and assure the residents that there will be a school facility for their children in September.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, families of Yugoslavian origin in my riding, like John Plesac's family in Val d'Or, have been worried about the situation in Yugoslavia for months.

A battalion of Canadian peacekeeping forces in Croatia should be at Sarajevo airport to help send humanitarian aid through.

Our people are proud of what our Canadian soldiers are doing with the United Nations in trying to establish and maintain peace in Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavian families in Abitibi and I want to thank our Canadian soldiers today and assure them of our gratitude.

S. O. 31

CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the constitutional negotiations have failed. The federal government has not been able to obtain a consensus from the English speaking provinces on offers acceptable to Quebec. Let us be up front about it: it is a failure, plain and simple.

There is just one thing left to do: Quebec must hold a referendum on Quebec sovereignty, nothing else. That is why I ask the federal government to stop negotiating under the table with Mr. Bourassa, because he does not represent what Quebecers want.

If the federal government wants to know Quebec's position, it should let the people of Quebec hold a referendum on sovereignty. I know what Quebecers want: they want to be masters in their own house, so that they can develop properly.

* * *

[*English*]

POLICE

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks there have been many negative comments about police men and women.

• (1410)

I call upon all members of Parliament and society at large to thank and praise our police men and women from municipal, to provincial, to our RCMP officers. Under increasingly complex and sometimes terrifying conditions they deserve our understanding and full support.

When they pursue a known drug dealer, order him to stop, fire a warning shot, and then are attacked with a knife, I want them to know that I fully support them if they deem it necessary to use their revolver to protect themselves and thereby society at large.

I urge the government not to concentrate its attention exclusively on individual rights and freedoms and the defence of those accused of, or suspected of, criminal activity, but rather to focus on protecting law-abiding citizens and particularly police officers, as they serve us, seek to protect us, and uphold law and order.

Tributes

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in February of this year the municipal council of Belcarra, a beautiful village in my riding, passed a resolution on national unity. It is intended simply to convey support to those in Quebec favouring a renewed federalism. The resolution was passed on to other municipalities and over 70 municipalities in British Columbia have endorsed it.

Last week acting mayor Jamie Ross of Belcarra, presented it to Claude Ryan on the steps of the Quebec National Assembly. I am pleased to read it in the presence of a group of young Voyageurs here from my riding and from the Montreal riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce who are in the gallery now.

The resolution says this:

> That the Municipality of Belcarra, in the Province of British Columbia:
>
> (1) Encourages all citizens to remember all that we have already accomplished and what we can accomplish in the future;

[*Translation*]

> (2) Expresses the sincere desire that the Province of Quebec choose to remain a valued partner in this great nation that we share.

[*English*]

> (3) Conveys its best wishes and best regards to its counterparts in Quebec.

That is a powerful message on national unity. Come on Canadian politicians, listen and get on with the job.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to commend the minister of immigration for the immigration reform initiative presented this week.

First of all, this bill is good news for all Canadians, since it will enable the government to better manage immigration and achieve our economic objectives.

Furthermore, while preserving our country's humanitarian tradition, this reform will give us a more efficient, less costly system that will process applications more quickly and above all discourage fraud.

Ours is a welcoming country and will continue to be so. With this reform, we will be able to unclog the system and eliminate abuses, as the Canadian people want.

Even more important, this reform will give us the ability to control our immigration so that it works in the interest of all Canadians, as well as all those who benefit from it.

* * *

ASSOCIATION FRANCO-YUKONNAISE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the *Association franco-yukonnaise* plays a vital role in preserving and promoting the French language and culture in the Yukon.

Last week, the federal government reduced its financial assistance to this organization by $80,000. This cut forced the association to stop publishing the Yukon's only French language newspaper, *L'aurore boréale*, eliminating two jobs and ending its cultural promotion programs.

At a time when promoting Canadian unity is so important, francophone communities throughout the country see the funds allocated to them reduced.

Therefore I urge the Secretary of State to restore the funding to the *Association franco-yukonnaise* so that it can continue its work in the Yukon's French speaking community.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, many people in my riding over the years have expressed their concerns regarding the immigration process.

They are concerned about the expense incurred by Canadians when people are allowed to enter Canada illegally and remain here through a lengthy deportation process.

I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the Minister of Employment and Immigration for taking the views and concerns of the people of Canada into consideration with his latest initiative and proposals for change.

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, today hundreds of Air Canada employees marched on Parliament Hill to show their disapproval with the government's handling of the airline industry.

Their presence here today is a vivid illustration of the complete failure of this government to provide policy leadership in one of Canada's most strategically important industries.

As a result of the government's inaction the airlines, their employees, and Canada's ability to compete globally have been put at risk. No other national government would be content to sit on its hands if its airline industry was going through the turmoil now happening in Canada.

Rather than waiting, the government should provide some much needed policy direction about the future of our airline industry. If the government does not know what to do, at least let the transport committee of this House proceed with an investigation into the state of our airline industry.

The chairman of this committee refuses to call a meeting to deal with this issue while Canada's airline industry is at peril.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Manley: Like a group of Neros, this government and its members play their fiddles while vital Canadian interests are at risk.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada must be taken to task for its weak response in Rio de Janeiro to climate change.

Yes, a commitment was made two years ago to stabilize carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. But today, Canada has yet to produce a plan spelling out how we will reach that goal.

Canada also lost the opportunity to play a constructive role by not supporting the initiative of numerous nations including Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Australia and commit to a carbon dioxide reduction program beyond the year 2000.

Tributes

Canada holds the dubious distinction of emitting per capita more carbon dioxide than virtually any other nation. The Government of Canada has a responsibility to the global community and must prove it can match its rhetoric with meaningful action.

* * *

HON. HERB GRAY

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF ELECTION TO HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Speaker: This is an unusual event but one that I think will meet with your acceptance and appreciation.

Since my election as your Speaker in 1986, I have thankfully not been obliged to have recourse to what is probably the most severe procedural measure available to a presiding officer, that of naming an hon. member. Yet there was bound, some day, to be an occasion when such a step would become inevitable. Today is such a day. It is my duty, therefore, to name an hon. member.

[*Translation*]

By this, I do not mean that I intend to use the disciplinary powers provided to the Chair by Standing Order 11 of the House of Commons. Quite the contrary. I want, on behalf of all the members of this House, to honour one of our colleagues on the day that marks the 30th anniversary of his loyal services to our institution.

[*English*]

I name you Herbert Gray.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Herb, Herb, Herb.

Mr. Speaker: You have served your country, *notre pays, avec distinction,* as a member of this House for 30 years.

You have successfully fought 10 consecutive general elections, in itself a remarkable tribute from the people you represent. Having been the member of Parliament for Essex West since 1962, you were sworn in as a minister in 1969, thus becoming the first Canadian federal cabinet minister of the Jewish faith. Your service in several senior cabinet posts and, more recently, in senior critics' roles in opposition, including the high office of Leader of the Opposition, is testimony to your devotion to this institution and to the country.

• (1420)

Your achievements do you great honour. We, your fellow Commoners, can only hope that we will continue to benefit from your wisdom and dedication for many years to come.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one does not have to think long and hard to find the words to pay tribute to the hon. member for Windsor West. We met when I arrived in the House the year after he was elected, and althought I took a sabbatical for a couple of years, I sat on the Liberal benches with the hon. member for Windsor–West for nearly a quarter of a century.

[*English*]

As you said, Mr. Speaker, he served this House very well in many capacities. He has always been a very hard working member of Parliament, a very dedicated minister, and an excellent interim Leader of the Opposition, but there is one thing that has to be an example to all members of this House. He has always been a fantastic member of Parliament for the people he has represented.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: It is an example for all of us that every time the member for Windsor West got up, whatever his duty, we always knew that he was from Windsor, Ontario and that the interests of his constituents were always reflected in his policy stance. He has always been a very good supporter of the party. He was an example in terms of discipline, but he served his people first and foremost. For that he has to be an example to all members of this House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I want to say that he is re–establishing something that seems to have disappeared from Canadian politics. After we have served for many years in very important positions, the press, the media and public opinion seem to say that perhaps we should go elsewhere. In Europe people serve after they have been Prime Minister and minister for years, keeping their seat in the House, offering advice, example, and participating in the debate for a long, long time in their lives because experience and judgment are very important.

That is why we on the Liberal side do not want to make too much about 30 years. It is not enough. We want him for many more years.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I am sure that despite the differences between the parties, all members of this House wish that Herb, Herb, Herb will be around for a long, long, long time.

Some hon. members: Herb, Herb, Herb.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party, I wish to pay tribute to the hon. member for Windsor West.

[*English*]

Thirty years in politics is indeed a very long time. It is a testament to the stamina of our colleague that he has successfully steered his way through 10 elections and the vagaries of political life. Fewer than 27 members in the history of Canada have served in this House for 30 years.

There is a former member sitting here today, Mr. Stanley Knowles. I would like to say to the hon. member for Windsor West that he has about 20 more years to catch up on Mr. Knowles who will have been here for 50 years and today is celebrating his 84th birthday.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a grand acknowledgement to the member for Windsor West that he has served this House well. He has served his country well. He has been a leading spokesperson for his party and a very able cabinet minister.

[*Translation*]

He always conducted himself with great dignity and showed great respect for others. The entire House has benefited from his wisdom.

[*English*]

There is much made, I might add, of the member's penchant for rock music, something that may be little known to the public. One can tell just by looking at the member for Windsor West that he certainly is a fan of the Kentucky Headhunters. However, as someone who has spent 30 years in the House of Commons, we know that the member for Windsor West is no Rolling Stone.

He is respected. We do appreciate the work he has done for his party and for this country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. William Scott (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Government of Canada to recognize the 30th anniversary of the election of the hon. member for Windsor West to the House of Commons. He is the longest continuous serving member of Parliament.

When I came here as a rookie in 1965, he was already a fixture as the hon. member for Essex West. Only the hon. member for Saint-Denis can claim to have sat in Parliament with the hon. member for Windsor West before then, having been elected in a by-election in 1964.

Over the years we have seen many changes in the House of Commons. Good friends have come and gone and been replaced by new good friends. What has never changed is the dedication of the hon. member for Windsor West to the process that is exemplified by the House of Commons.

Today we find ourselves in the middle of yet another discussion on the future of our country. The hon. member for Windsor West can no doubt recall many instances over the past 30 years when the future of our country was at stake. Each time he rose above the partisanship that existed here to make a valiant defence of the virtues of our country.

The hon. member for Windsor West has worn many hats in the last 30 years. He has been Minister of National Revenue, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion, President of the Treasury Board, Opposition House Leader and Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in 1990. He was a royal pain in the side of our government at that time.

Thirty years of service to the people of Canada as a federal member of Parliament is something to be very proud of. I join with his family and friends and hon. members from all sides of this House in wishing the hon. member for Windsor West a very happy 30th anniversary.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I take this special opportunity to stand in celebration of Herb Gray's 30th anniversary in this place as one who can claim to have contributed to his first victory by being a part of the sacrifice then made by the New Democratic Party in the first federal election in which it ran. I have to say that in spite of the chagrin at the time, I knew then that Herb Gray would be a charismatic luminary for almost ever in the Liberal Party as he is today. I share with him the struggle that we from Windsor have undergone in order to ensure that our city is considered to be part of the map of Canada and not its periphery.

I take great pleasure in congratulating my friend and colleague on this his 30th anniversary. I do not know whether I can agree with my leader that he should have another 20 years. I cannot give up the struggle, but I do respect this man.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, at the risk of being named again, I hope you will permit me to take a few minutes to respond to the words of tribute just paid me.

I do want to express my deep and sincere appreciation for these kind words. Listening to them makes me believe that perhaps I have not got off to such a bad start after all.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1430)

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): As I have been reminded here and on the Hill recently, this is the 30th anniversary of my first election to the House of Commons. It is not something I think about a lot because I am not the type of person much given to reminiscence. I prefer to deal with things as they are and as I would like them to be.

Mr. Speaker, you will be relieved to know that I do not intend to depart from that habit today. However, perhaps you will allow me to share with you and the members of the House one anecdote relating to my first election to this House of Commons.

Some months after that election, I came to Ottawa on what was to be the first day, the opening of the new session. That morning before the House opened, I decided it would be a good idea if I took a look inside the House of Commons Chamber, where I had never been before. I walked up to the door of the opposition lobby and before I could go in a guard came up to me and very gently but firmly took hold of my arm and said: "Young man, just where do you think you are going?" He was most apologetic when he learned that the guy with the brushcut and the horn rimmed glasses was, in fact, a member of Parliament and was entitled to go into the Chamber to see where his seat was to be, before the House opened that afternoon.

The question the guard asked me at that time is still relevant: Just where did I think I was going? On that fall day, for some so long ago but for me only yesterday, I must say I did not enter the Chamber with a complete game plan for the next 30 years. I did not anticipate the possibility that this occasion would arise. I must say that I did go in expecting to speak and work for my city and my country, to work to implement the program of the party for which I campaigned and also, since I entered through the opposition lobby, to work so that after the next election I would not only come back, but I would be seated on the other side of the House. Well, I guess things have not changed that much after all.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, today is above all a day for me to state my thanks but not just for the warm words that have been expressed. I want to state my thanks for the marvellous opportunities I have had to work with the great leaders of my party. I especially thank my current leader for his words of tribute. I want to express my thanks for having been able to work with the wonderful people of our Liberal caucus.

It is also a time to thank my family, my parents of blessed memory, my wife and children who mean so much to me, for their encouragement and understanding. I also want to thank the Almighty and my constituents for having helped me reach this day.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): I express my appreciation to the people of my community who have supported me and demonstrated their faith in me. Because of this they are sharing with me in whatever words of tribute are being expressed today. Their support has enabled me to spend these years working for them and for our country.

My city of Windsor with its rainbow of peoples, its ability to fight back against difficulty and adversity, its openness and its tolerance, represent for me what is the best and what must continue to be the best about our country, a country of understanding and openness, a country which celebrates its unity through its diversity.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, as you know I am proud to be the son of immigrants, Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe. The principles of social justice in my heritage are very important to me.

Looking at the story of my parents and their hopes and aspirations, and looking at my part in that story, makes me want to say to the members of this House that it is only a small part of the larger story of the Canadian dream which is being told and retold every day in this country by the strivings of tens of thousands of people who are working to create better lives for themselves and their families and thereby to build a better country for all of us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): This is the 125th anniversary of the creation of our country. I want to commit myself again as should we all to continuing to work to preserve and strengthen its unity and strengthen its well-being as the foundation for a better life for all its people.

[*Translation*]

We must all stand together to fight for the unity of our country and for all Canadians.

[*English*]

I have been privileged to serve as a member of Parliament, not just in this Chamber, but in its committees, in our party caucus, in the cabinet, in my community and across this country.

Our system today is subject to a lot of criticism. That is healthy. Let us, however, paraphrase the words of Churchill who said that our system of government has its problems but when we look at all the other systems then we will decide ours is not so bad after all.

What comes next? I should tell you that I have already begun to plan with my riding executive for my next election campaign, but—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): I know that this depends on the Almighty and of course my constituents, but I want to tell you about the spirit in which I make these plans. That spirit is reflected in the words of Wilfrid Laurier in his classic speech to the young Liberals of Quebec in 1877 when he said:

> I am a Liberal. I am one of those who thinks that always and everywhere in human things there are abuses to be reformed, new horizons to be opened up and new forces to be developed.

Many of you are familiar with those words but very few are familiar with the words that came after in that classic speech. Laurier said:

> Our means are limited but our nature is perfectible and we have the infinite as our arena. Thus there is always room for the improvement of our conditions, for the perfecting of our nature and for the attainment by a larger number of an easier life.

These words are as relevant today as when they were spoken over 115 years ago.

When I walked in the door of the House of Commons that fall day in 1962, after that altercation with the guard, the next thing that happened was I found myself standing here speaking to you, responding to words of tribute I appreciate very much. Standing here speaking in this marvellous place, in spite of its problems, is still the focal point to which Canadians look when it comes to the protection and enhancement of their liberties and well-being. May it always be such.

Looking out from this Chamber and all across this great country, surely I can conclude by saying as did—

[*Translation*]

—George Étienne Cartier, when he wrote the following as a student 158 years ago: *"Comme le dit un vieil adage, rien n'est si beau que son pays. À son aspect, le Canadien s'écrie: Ô Canada, mon pays! mes amours!"*

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I have been able to serve and work for my country and its people for what George Etienne Cartier called "Canada, my own beloved land" and hope to be able to continue to do so for some time yet. I say to all those who have helped me to do this, merci, thank you very much. I am eternally grateful.

[*Editor's Note: All hon. members rose and applauded.*]

ORAL QUESTION

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister, if I can find one. My question is directed to whoever is the spokesperson for the government at this time.

We read in the media that confusion reigns in the current constitutional debate. Formal talks ended a week ago, and the country is still in the dark. I would like to know from the government whether someone will soon report to the House on his matter. We would like to know whether the Prime Minister will convene a First Ministers' Conference soon, so that Canada will know exactly where we are on this question. People are fed up, and they want these issues to be settled as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, discussions are ongoing between the federal government and the provinces. If it would be useful to have a First Ministers' Conference the Prime Minister is prepared to do so, but he is awaiting a report from the Minister Responsible for Federal-Provincial Relations.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we read in the papers and we hear on radio and television that the government is planning to have a referendum only in the provinces where the premiers do not want to agree with the government.

I want to ask the minister if it is true. I would like to say to this minister that we proposed a referendum, not as a club to try to put some discipline on some premiers, but to give a voice to the Canadian people and give the Constitution to all the citizens of Canada. We want every Canadian to be consulted. We do not want the government to use it as a political tool, but as an instrument of unity in this country.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, we could not agree more. The referendum should not be used as a political tool or for showboating or for dividing Canadians. The only basis on which a referendum should be held is if it will unite Canadians.

Our goal is to see an agreement between the federal government and the provinces for constitutional renewal. All of us on all sides of the House should be working for that.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what we are asking for. I am happy that the minister said the Conservatives do not want to use the referendum as a tool against the premiers of Alberta, Newfoundland or Manitoba, but to give a voice to the Canadian people.

I would like to know from the minister if this government will take that stance and make sure that the Constitution really belongs to the people of Canada and not to the backroom boys who are back in the back rooms against the will of the people at this time?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I may have missed something here but I fully remember the last time that constitutional change was made. The hon. member at that time was back in the kitchen doing deals. There will be none of that under this government.

Mr. Chrétien: And you voted for it.

Mr. Beatty: The hon. member is terribly proud to say that after he cooked up the deal in the kitchen we voted for it. What we want is an arrangement where all the premiers work together with the federal government, where there is an agreement between the provinces and the federal government which will unite Canadians.

We do not need showboating, we do not need divisive comments and we do not need partisanship.

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BALTIC STATES

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister or the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs or somebody.

Last weekend, 90 per cent of the people of Lithuania voted for the unconditional withdrawal of the over 200,000 Russian troops that are presently occupying the Baltic states. As the external affairs committee reported this morning, there are enormous difficulties in sending these troops back in terms of shortages of housing, training and employment.

I want to ask whichever minister is responsible these days: Will this matter be raised with President Boris Yeltsin in the visit tomorrow? Will we gain a commitment for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic states? Will the government be offering, as recommended by the external affairs committee, direct assistance for housing and for employment so that the Russian troops can return to their homeland?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, regrettably the Secretary of State for External Affairs has become ill and is unable to be here at the moment. I would certainly take the hon. member's representation as that and communicate it.

I am sure, as he well understands, there will be a long agenda of items under discussion. This will undoubtedly be a part of it, but I will ensure that his representation is made on the broader question of aid to Russia and the kind of commercial relations we might have.

Obviously we are interested in the issues the hon. member raised. I am sure they will be part of the discussions the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs have.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister who will be speaking on behalf of the government if, in that meeting with the President of Russia, the question of a demilitarized zone in the Arctic will be raised, if we will gain agreement from the President to go ahead immediately with the establishment of an Arctic council, and if we will establish joint programs to clean up Arctic waters, especially those that have been polluted by nuclear waste.

Will the government agree to the recommendation of the committee that there be an ambassador for circumpolar affairs so that we can give real priority to the common border that we hold with Russia in the hope that it will become a fully peaceful, denuclearized, demilitarized border in the basis of the relations of our two countries?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, in exactly the same way I answered the first question, I think that is a valid point the hon. member raises and is something that ought to be discussed.

In respect to the first question, I have subsequently been informed that Canada's view is that Russia should establish a timetable for the swift removal of its forces from that area. We will be making that representation and asking Mr. Yeltsin what the timetable is and encouraging it to be as short as possible.

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MEME BREAST IMPLANTS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Today it was reported that in January 1989, a senior official of the Department of National Health and Welfare wanted to take the Meme implant off the market for further testing. Mr. Speaker, this was in 1989, it was a senior official, and he felt it was urgent at the time. Women's health was at stake but the government did nothing. Why did the government decide to ignore these warnings at the time?

[*English*]

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the report to which the hon. member is referring from the health protection branch is not the whole story.

The Meme implant was reviewed both intensively and very much had the total research and investigation done. The whole department was included. Indeed I can tell the member that there was a conclusive report with regard to the Meme implant.

I would also like to say that the CMA back in 1991 did a specific review that was arm's length from the government. It did not come forward with any scientific evidence to prove it was not safe.

The health of women—the health of all Canadians—in this specific issue comes first and foremost. We will always stand behind that.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, with a government that says it really, truly believes that the health of women should come first and foremost, I would like to ask why it took three years to act on the advice of a senior bureaucrat that the Meme implant should be removed until further study.

Furthermore, I would like to ask the spokesperson for the department why a senior member of that department would dismiss today, as quoted in the newspapers, women's health issues and the Meme transplant controversy by saying: "It sells papers. It is a women's issue". It is a women's issue. It is a women's health issue.

I want to ask this government why it did not take it seriously in the past? Why in fact did the chair of its own panel in 1992 say today that she had not received all of that information? How can this country and Canadian women have any faith that this government is going to put women's health issues first?

• (1450)

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Baines has received and has full access to all the documentation within the department. Women's health and women's safety do come first.

With regard to the remarks that the hon. leader of the NDP quoted from the paper, "it sells, it is a women's issue", I absolutely apologize. If what that department person said is true, I apologize on behalf of the minister, myself and everybody on this side of the House. It is unacceptable.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, there are many issues concerning women's health that I am sure are of concern to the parliamentary secretary responding and to all of us.

Recently this week there was a report released entitled *Breast Cancer, Unanswered Questions*, a report that made 49 recommendations about the kind of leadership role the federal government could take basically in research, in education, and indeed in consultation with the provinces and territories.

I would like to ask the spokesperson for the minister whether the minister, at the meetings this week with the provincial and territorial ministers of health, is raising this urgent issue of health concerns for women. It is clear that when we have something like breast cancer from which one woman every two hours dies in Canada, this is urgent.

Has the minister of health raised it with provincial and territorial ministers, and what plan of action is contemplated?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. leader brought forward the health cancer research document that was tabled in the House the other day. It does stipulate 49 recommendations in this area, specifically education, research and working together, the federal department along with the provincial departments of health and welfare, and I would say with the public and with the medical fraternity.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare is at the Canada health meetings today. He was there yesterday and last night. He will be reviewing the total act. I can assure my colleague that the issue of breast cancer will be brought forward. I hope that he will be able to report directly to her in the next few days.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House would like to say that we appreciate the unequivocal apology of the parliamentary secretary for the statements made. We would also like to tell her that an apology is not going to set the record straight. The parliamentary secretary herself cited Dr. Cornelia Baines as one of the key players in the panel which finally determined that in fact the Meme implant was not a risk factor for women.

In the same article that same doctor who participated on the panel said that the conclusions of the panel might have been different had they known about the internal minutes. We are talking about internal minutes that have been hidden by someone from the eyes of the panel and the public about this very serious issue.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary to go one step beyond an apology and to order a review of all the material, throw out the panel findings because they were based on inaccurate information, and bring forward legitimate information including the information from her own department that the Meme implant was putting women at risk.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, there have been no hidden minutes from the panel or indeed anyone. Dr. Baines did go on to be appointed to an independent review of the breast implants.

As my colleague does know, the Meme implant was withdrawn well over a year ago by the manufacturers, and the silicone gel breast implants have been put into a moratorium for some months now. There will be no breast implants taking place within Canada until further review.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): With all due respect for the parliamentary secretary, she was not telling the truth, Mr. Speaker, since it was revealed today that the department of health has been withholding information on this for three years. I think that Canadian women are entitled to know why a memo from a professor in her department who spoke of possible risks was hidden both from the public and from physicians interested in this matter. What are they doing in her department?

[*English*]

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Yes, Mr. Speaker, Canadian women do have the right to all the information. Their health is foremost for each and every one of us. There is no hidden information.

The department did an intensive scientific review, the research and the development with regard to implants, both Meme and silicone gel breast implants. I can say right here in the House there is no specific scientific evidence proving that they are unsafe for women.

GRAIN INDUSTRY

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the individual answering for the Minister of Finance. It pertains to wheat shipments to Russia.

The wheat is moving at only half capacity. In the seaway only 20 ships out of 47 are moving. Only 1.7 million tonnes of wheat have been ordered. That is less than 50 per cent of normal. Despite the government's assurances that the Wheat Board can handle the situation, the tie-up continues.

As I understand it there is a problem in the finance department. It is not giving the right signals to the Canadian Wheat Board.

I want to know what the hold-up is in the Department of Finance.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of my colleague, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, I will tell the hon. member that the figures we have here indicate that initial payments were made in light of the information available and based on the figures we had. I do not believe that there is a problem. The news report is untrue, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister knows what he is talking about, because we get a very different story from the industry.

There are 27 ships idle in the seaway. The shipping industry has laid off over 3,000 employees and only 1,000 cars have been allotted to the railways. Normally that figure is 4,000 cars. Farmers soon will not be able to move any grain at all. In other words it is a mess out there.

There is a problem in the finance department. I want to know from this individual if he can say explicitly whether the Minister of Finance has given the go-ahead to the Wheat Board to apply credits to cover shipping charges. Yes or no.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why, but there are still people on that side of the House who get up and complain about the way this government deals with western Canadian farmers. Never has a government defended farmers in the west and throughout Canada so much.

The money made available to western farmers has increased more than 500 per cent over the years, Mr. Speaker. The initial payments were made and are still being made in accordance with the rules. I think that the hon. member should instead thank us for the way we have acted in recent years, rather than complain and simply report complaints from the newspapers.

* * *

[*English*]

BENZOYL PEROXIDE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to whomever is speaking on behalf of the minister of health.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has now imposed a requirement for safety labels on acne medicines which contain benzoyl peroxide. Benzoyl peroxide is both a cancer initiator and promoter. Some years ago an external committee recommended that all sales of medicines containing benzoyl peroxide, which is used largely by teenagers for the treatment of acne, be banned for over the counter sales.

Is it now time, now that the Americans have acted, for the Canadian government and health and welfare to act in Canada to protect those teenagers and young people who are using a potential carcinogen on their skin twice daily?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, with regard to benzoyl peroxide, yes, this has come forward in the news in the last couple of days.

I must say with regard to the concentration in the ointments and salves sold in Canada versus that in the United States, that ours is about a 50 per cent concentration of what theirs is.

Also the ingredients are listed very explicitly and very carefully on all these salves and ointments sold within the retail business or indeed the wholesale business throughout Canada. There is not the cause for alarm in Canada, as indeed there might be south of the border.

• (1500)

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely outrageous. We are talking about medicines used by teenagers for treating acne. They are supposed to understand that benzoyl peroxide means something.

In fact, the concentrations the hon. member is talking about are the concentrations used for eliciting cancer in animals, the same concentration as used in mice.

I repeat my question to the minister, is this government prepared to re-examine recommendations made by its scientists and an external advisory committee that this stuff be banned from over the counter sales to kids?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it is very serious and I take the member's question very seriously. I assure him that the health and welfare department will be monitoring this situation very closely.

I have to say the concentration strength of that product in any of the ointments and salves sold within Canada is less than 50 per cent of that of the United States. We will watch this very closely. With regard to labelling, it will become as specific as possible. If there are any further changes I will notify him.

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GIANT YELLOWKNIFE MINES LIMITED

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour.

Giant Yellowknife Mines Limited in Yellowknife has been involved in a very serious labour dispute for the past several weeks. This is a very ugly strike.

It has all the ingredients that ugliness makes. Replacement workers are being flown in by the company. I really question the wisdom of replacement workers in the safety sensitive position of working underground. Guards are being flown in by the company. Vicious dogs are being flown in to protect the guards.

Violence is happening on the streets of the town every day. Feelings are seething throughout this community reminiscent and analogous to what we have seen recently in large urban centres in this country.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour if he would intervene directly before any more violence happens in this community, to take active participation and bring those parties together?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am active in this dispute. I have contacted the parties. I am in daily contact with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

For the information of my hon. friend, I have received a request from the Minister of Justice and the Government of the Northwest Territories to impose back to work legislation in this legal strike. I should tell the hon. member this has never been done to my knowledge in the history of this country by any Parliament on a dispute which is private and local in nature.

Nonetheless, because the request comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories, I will consider it very seriously and I will get back to the Minister of Justice of the territories very shortly.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, for the same minister, I appreciate the answer and I realize that he too takes this situation very seriously.

I respect what he has just said concerning trying to bring in legislation, but that certainly takes a great deal of time. The situation, I do not think, will allow for that time.

I ask the minister if he will convene a meeting here in Ottawa, bring in representatives of labour and management into a neutrally acceptable area of Ottawa and try

and resolve this tragedy so that no further violence takes place?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, of course we deplore the acts of violence that have taken place in Yellowknife.

As I said in my earlier answer we are in contact with the parties and my hon. friend knows that in these types of disputes the best settlements that can be achieved are settlements that the parties achieve by themselves. However, I have been in touch with the parties and I am hopeful they will be back at the table.

I think it would also be helpful if people would try to stay out of this dispute. I am not referring to my hon. friend but I am referring to a number of politicians around the country who try to get involved. I have been told by the parties that it is hurting the situation instead of providing for a settlement.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could assist the House. Because of the interventions earlier, I think which we all enjoyed taking a part in, I hope this will be acceptable to the House to extend Question Period to 3.15 p.m.

I must say though I have already had representations that some ministers may have to leave for other obligations and I am sure we understand that. I hope the House will accept that.

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HENRIETTE HADDAD

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. There are widespread reports that Henriette Haddad, who was taken hostage in Lebanon in 1985, is still alive, was recently hospitalized in Iran and has now returned to Lebanon. There are also strong indications that her captors are now willing to negotiate her release on humanitarian grounds.

When Mrs. Haddad's son and I met with the Prime Minister in April, he promised to actively pursue this case. I want to ask if the minister will now make a commitment to pursue these new developments and seek the release of Mrs. Haddad as soon as possible?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, there are approaches being made at the ambassadorial level, both in Ottawa and Tehran, in order to obtain confirmation of this newest information on Mrs. Haddad's fate.

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the Iranian Embassy in Paris today asserted that it had no information on Mrs. Haddad's whereabouts. The Iranian Embassy in Paris also denied that any of its staff had been in touch with the Haddad family representatives or intermediaries. That same message was communicated to the Canadian Embassy in Paris.

While embassy officials in Paris say they have no information and they have not contacted the family and they communicated that to the Canadian Embassy, we are, nevertheless, following up whatever leads are available. We are in contact both in Tehran and here with Iranian officials. We will certainly search out every lead in an effort to determine Mrs. Haddad's fate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the government itself must take an active part in the negotiations, which until now have been carried on by the committee to free Mrs. Haddad. The government must also insist on calling Mrs. Haddad a hostage and not just a missing person. This is absolutely necessary to obtain her release. Is the government prepared to make that commitment, which is very important for Mrs. Haddad?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, of course, that is precisely what I just indicated we are doing, contacting the Iranian officials in Tehran through our embassy and the Iranian Embassy here.

I have to repeat, the news story which came out saying that the Iranian Embassy in Paris confirms she is alive is being denied publicly by the Iranian Embassy in Paris and it has communicated this denial to our embassy in Paris. Nevertheless, we are still following up with Iran in an effort to establish whether we can discover the fate of Mrs. Haddad.

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FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of health.

There are reports today that the minister of health says he will act on the unanimous recommendation made by the Sub–Committee on Health Issues in its report on foetal alcohol syndrome by entering into pilot projects on warning labels with interested provinces.

While this is a partial victory for those who have worked for several years on foetal alcohol syndrome, it is not a partial problem but is the leading cause of mental retardation in Canada.

Will the government meet its federal responsibility and begin a national label warning program that deals with this serious national health problem?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the foetal alcohol syndrome report was tabled in the House. Indeed, it was very well done and I want to congratulate the committee and its members.

Various recommendations were put forward, one of which was alcohol warning labels. We do get into research and also education. Although the minister has quickly reviewed this report, he will do an intensive study of it and will respond within the 150 days. Warning labels is one area in which he would be most interested. We will certainly be talking to all provincial governments in relation to this.

• (1510)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental is for the same minister. On April 1, in answer to my question concerning warning labels, the minister of health replied: "If there is a unanimous position by the ministers of health to do something about it, we will certainly consider their recommendation."

Is the minister taking this unanimous report to the provincial ministers of health at their meeting in Ottawa today? Is he actively seeking their approval to get effective warning labels and effective signage in all drinking establishments adopted in all provinces and all territories in Canada?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in all fairness, the report was tabled I believe between 10 and 10.30 this morning. I am not quite sure if the minister has had a chance to review every recommendation specifically. I know he is most interested in the warning labels, not only on the bottles or the cans of the substance itself, but also with regard to drinking establishments.

I have to say that only by working together with our provincial counterparts and the public will we be able to resolve this very serious issue.

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FIREARMS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister answering for the Minister of Justice.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General has for the past several weeks been hearing representations with respect to the regulations pertaining to the firearms legislation, Bill C–17.

Virtually all of those representations have called for a less violent society and yet there are some very significant ironies revealed. For example, the new legislation contains special arrangements for the use of fully automatic firearms in theatre and movie productions which will indirectly incite far more violence than will ownership of those weapons by legitimate gun collectors.

Will the government await the report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General before implementing the new regulations? Will it heed the recommendations of the standing committee based on the representations which it has had from across Canada?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his question.

There have been extensive consultations with user groups before, during and after the legislative process. The minister set up an advisory group in which the user groups had representations as to the firearms regulations. The firearms regulations were published with plenty of time for input from the public and the user groups. That input is now before the justice committee, as are the regulations.

I can assure my hon. friend the government has every intention of treating the report of the justice committee seriously in order that we can get the best regime possible to have safety for the public and at the same time to allow the user groups that use firearms legitimately to go about their business.

FISHERIES

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador are running out of restraint because they have run out of funds as of May 15 when their unemployment insurance ran out. There is desperation growing in our province and it is growing to crisis proportions.

I want to ask the government why it is that instead of talking about long-term plans for stock regeneration, it refuses to talk about immediate compensation for fishermen and their families who need the basic necessities of life? Why not announce a compensation program and take its responsibilities not tomorrow but today?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the great concern of my colleague opposite and other members from Newfoundland and Labrador, indeed all of us here in the House.

However, I think the member was present yesterday and heard the Prime Minister indicate in very specific terms how concerned this government has been about the situation. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has also given similar undertakings, as has the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

I can assure my hon. friend that this government is very seriously considering any interim measures that may be necessary. I think he would agree that today would not be an appropriate time to make an announcement without further information.

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FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health. The health and welfare subcommittee has tabled its report today on foetal alcohol syndrome, the greatest cause of mental retardation in Canada. It is a preventable tragedy and the minister is the person who can do much to prevent it.

Why has this minister failed to introduce warning labels on alcohol as recommended by the same committee five years ago?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the hon. member. The spokesman for the department of health has just left Question Period. I am very sorry for that. She will answer the question tomorrow.

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THE TORONTO STAR STRIKE

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services, who just ducked out. The question for the government—

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. We had interventions in which we all took part for a very significant event. We are running late. I am trying to do the best I can. I do not think we need any comments. I made it quite clear that ministers would probably have to leave.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I did not mean he did it on purpose.

My question is for the Minister of Supply and Services. The employees of the *The Toronto Star* have struck that company. The Government of Ontario, the city of Toronto, have all cancelled their government advertising. I would ask this government if they would be prepared to do the same thing.

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very much for the proposal and I will take a look at it.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question for the government House leader is in regard to the business of the House for today.

Should debate on Bill C-73 collapse later this day, could he indicate to the House what he intends to call for the remaining part of this sitting day?

We have a special session of Parliament tomorrow. Could he also indicate what the business of the House will be commencing after Question Period at 3 p.m. tomorrow, and of course the business for Monday and Tuesday of next week?

While the minister is on his feet, perhaps he could indicate to the House, that if rumour become reality in the sense that the House is called back in mid-summer session, whether or not he would be prepared to give reasonable notice to Opposition House leaders on the business which will be taking place? We may assume what it might be, but I ask concerning reasonable notice.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, in terms of today, unfortunately we had to time allocate second reading of Bill C-73. If that debate collapses, if time permits and if there is agreement among the parties, I hope we might consider Bill S-11, the Airport Transfer Act, which is fairly routine, to get that passed and allow the airport authorities the confidence of knowing what the rules will be as they assume responsibility for the airports in Vancouver, Montreal, Edmonton and Calgary.

There is also Bill C-46, on which I also understand there is general agreement. This is a bill that would permit federal law enforcement officers to issue fines in appropriate circumstances, as opposed to having to issue a summons, which is now the case.

This bill is particularly important to members in recreational vacation areas, since police enforcing boating laws and so on will be able to do so by virtue of fines rather than having to summons the offenders, should that be the case.

Tomorrow and Monday, it would be my intention to call Bill C-86, the Immigration Act, and on Tuesday the government will call Bill C-26, the Public Service Reform Act, for report stage.

In terms of the potential of the House of Commons coming back, I would like the opportunity to pass the usual motion that the House can be called into session for the purpose of Royal Assent, because the Senate will be carrying on with some business, I understand, after we leave.

If for any other reason the House is called back, certainly I give the House leaders of the Opposition and the New Democratic Party, and indeed all members, assurances that adequate notice will be given. I am sure they share with me the hope that in fact such notice is unnecessary and that we are not called back. Nevertheless, if the country is at stake, I am sure we would willingly come back and help to keep it together.

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• (1520)

POINT OF ORDER

84TH BIRTHDAY OF HON. STANLEY KNOWLES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I would like to note officially that today is the 84th birthday of Stanley Knowles.

On behalf of all members I would like to pay tribute to a gentleman who first came to this place in the fall of 1942. It will be 50 years this November since Mr. Knowles was first elected to the House in a by-election in Winnipeg North Centre where he took over from the late Mr. Woodsworth who was the founding leader of the CCF party.

I think we owe Mr. Knowles an awful lot of gratitude for the contribution he has made to this country and to this House.

I was first elected in 1968. When I came down here at that time Mr. Knowles was recognized as the father of Parliament, Mr. Rules of this place, a very kind and very courteous gentleman who treated all members of the House of Commons with great respect.

I remember a regular routine around this place. About 3.30 in the afternoon a messenger would come in with a cup of tea and some Arrowroot biscuits. Mr. Knowles would go behind the curtain; he was the only member of the House who never went up to the coffee shop or up to his office, or even out to the lobby, for his tea and biscuit break. He used to sit right there in the back and make sure he kept his ears alert to every word that was spoken in the House of Commons.

We owe him a great tribute and a tremendous amount of respect.

I remember the first year I was here, Madam Speaker, I was 22 years old at the time. The only time he became annoyed with me was one day when I leaned over to him and asked him, because he was the House leader, what Sir John A. Macdonald was really like. Mr. Knowles had been here for a long time but he quickly informed me he had not been here in those days.

Anyway, I pay tribute to Mr. Knowles and we hope he is here for many, many more years to come.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In the name of the House I am delighted to join with the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville in offering our best wishes to the hon. gentleman on his birthday.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands had three minutes left.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I was addressing my remarks concerning Bill C–73 and I hope I will get an opportunity to make another 10–minute speech after the vote on the amendment is concluded so I can go into greater detail of my criticisms of this bill.

What this bill is seeking to do, as I indicated earlier, is privatize the post office to a very limited extent. I submit this is really the thin edge of the wedge.

There is no protection whatever for the employees who purchase these shares in Canada Post Corporation. The corporation is supposed to be, according to its current mandate, a self–sustaining operation. It is supposed to conduct its operations on a self–sustaining financial basis. In other words, it is not supposed to turn a profit. It is supposed to be self–sustaining. It is to pay its own way at best.

What this government is trying to do is turn it into come kind of profit machine that I presume will be eligible to make donations to the Progressive Conservative fund of Canada or whatever, the PC Fund, their big money machine, for election campaigns.

That is not the purpose of Canada Post. Canada Post Corporation is to provide a service for the public of Canada, to deliver the mail across our country. It is to operate according to its mandate on a self–sustaining basis. So how is the purchase of shares by anybody going to be of interest? Why does anybody want to buy shares in a corporation that is supposed to break even. The purpose of buying shares is to generate some profits and share in the profitability of the corporation.

This corporation is not supposed to be a profitable operation, Madam Speaker. It is supposed to be a public service for Canadians.

What we are doing is inviting these employees to buy shares in a corporation that should not make money. Therefore, the shares should not go up in value. Why are these being offered? The shares are being offered to induce people to buy and then later the government will say: "To help these people out, having sold them this bill of goods in the first place, we now have to do something that will allow their shares to go up in value or will give them some return on their investment".

I do not know what the government is planning to do. It has not come clean with this House. It has not come clean with Canadians. In fact, this bill is some kind of deceitful exercise, designed again to hoodwink the employees of Canada Post into believing that the government is serious about doing something, but without saying what it is serious about doing.

It is an excuse for inaction. It should be rejected out of hand. The government should withdraw the bill. It should be voted down in the House.

If any of the members who support the government would read this bill and see how stupid it is, they would stand up and vote against it at the end of the day as well and get rid of it. It is not a worth–while project to proceed with. It is not a reasonable way to deal with a Crown corporation that has over the years served Canadians reasonably well. It is only in the last few years that we have had these constant cutbacks in service that I alluded to earlier.

This bill does not address those issues. Those are the ones that concern Canadians, not who owns shares in Canada Post. For that reason, I urge all members of the House to look at this bill carefully, study its provisions and say: "Really, is this in the best interests of Canada? Is this something we should be even discussing in this House?" The government has brought it forward as a

serious legislative proposal. I suggest it is not worthy of serious consideration and ought to be rejected.

I see my time has expired, Madam Speaker. I will save my further remarks until later on.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, I want to enter this debate for historical reasons which I will explain, but first I want to meet the challenge of the member who just spoke and answer the question: "Is this bill in the best interests of Canada?" As I will explain, the bill is suited to the ongoing benefits of Canada Post, the workers of Canada Post and the citizens of Canada.

Let me go back in time to 1980 when the Canada Post Corporation Act was dealt with in the Parliament of Canada. It was of great concern to me at the time. The postal service was in turmoil, deficits had mounted to $600 million a year, people were complaining across the country about the level of postal service and Parliament was asked to act. The Liberal government of the day brought in a bill to make Canada Post a separate Crown corporation.

I had for many years served as a legal officer in the province of Nova Scotia. I was well aware of the distinction between various emanations of government called Crown corporations, commissions and departments. I knew that basically there was no real difference. The differences were cosmetic in many cases. Those kinds of differentiations did allow for different perspectives and allowed for change and reform. That is what I thought was involved in the bill that was brought forward to make the Canadian postal service a Crown corporation under the name Canada Post.

What I said at the time in the Parliament of Canada on November 20, 1980 was that the bill gave the opportunity for change and more important, the opportunity for a new beginning. I described it then and I will describe it again today, almost 12 years later, as a leap of faith. The Parliament of Canada gave the Canadian postal service a new start, not knowing what the result would be.

What we did know was that the postal service was inadequate. There were complaints broadly, as I said, across the nation. There was an enormous deficit. Labour-management relations had been reduced to the lowest level possible and to put it in simplistic terms, the postal service was a shambles.

Whether the move to a Crown corporation called Canada Post was the solution or not, history will judge. It was an action that needed to be taken at the time. Even though I and my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party were in opposition, we supported the new arrangement.

• (1530)

We could call on the opposition—I suppose we have a right—to support new arrangements that have as their motive and their goal the improvement of the postal service across Canada.

That brings me to the challenge put forward by the opposition. It is to answer the question of whether this change is in the best interest of Canada.

Anybody who has looked at the postal service over the last decade and more and looked particularly at Canada Post since its statutory inception, will realize that at the heart of the difficulty is labour-management relations. That is the relationship of the management of Canada Post and the approximately 60,000 people who work for Canada Post. They have over the years distinguished themselves, both on the management side and on the labour side, as being unable to resolve their internal problems.

As a result, everybody in Canada suffers. If there is any technique or any action that can be taken to reverse this process which has been ongoing for several decades, then I believe that we should take that leap of faith and support that process.

I have no hesitancy in supporting Bill C-73 which brings a new breath of life into Canada Post by involving, in a very important and vital way, the labour force of Canada Post. It gives each person who works for Canada Post the opportunity to benefit by improvements.

What kind of benefits could arise from the new arrangement? We do not have to look inside Canada Post. We can look anywhere in Canada at the enormous growth in other areas of postal services. The companies that were instituted and established in Canada in the past decade were really substitutes for Canada Post. All of the services that are a day-to-day occurrence in business offices, commercial offices and professional offices across Canada really avoid the use of Canada Post. There are courier services and parcel post deliveries. The magnitude of these developments is tremendous.

There are billions of dollars being spent by Canadians. There are billions of dollars in revenue being lost to Canada Post for the simple reason that the Canadian public does not trust the services of Canada Post. They do not trust the services of Canada Post because of the internal friction, in part.

Any initiative that can be seen as a potential for resolving some of those difficulties that occur internally in Canada Post is going to benefit the employees of Canada Post in the long run. That will lead to the improvement of the internal relations of Canada Post so that it can become more productive and more competitive. This will bring in some of that revenue that is being lost to other persons who are providing the services that Canada Post can provide.

Job security has been, for a number of years, the number one concern among the unions representing the workers of Canada Post. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the former Letter Carriers Union always talked about job security.

It is very strange to me that in an industry that is expanding across this country every day that the courier services are providing increased services and hiring people. Given that situation, why would an organization already in the field of providing delivery services be concerned about job security? The reason is that it is not attracting the business. If it attracted the business, it would have the job security.

The Parliament of Canada has to help Canada Post and its employees overcome these difficulties. That, hopefully, is the purpose of this bill.

I am willing to ask my colleagues to take another leap of faith to benefit Canada Post for all of Canada, but especially for the employees of Canada Post. I could, in the time remaining to me, chart all my complaints about Canada Post. I could talk about the closure of the post office at the Head of St. Margarets Bay that became a national event recorded by the CBC. It was complete with cameras and reporters. It was the funeral that was instituted to mark the closure of the Head of St. Margarets Bay post office in the federal constituency of Halifax West. I am concerned more recently at the closure of the post office in the town of Bedford. It is one of the most enterprising and progressive towns in Nova Scotia and it lost its postal service. However it was replaced by a more efficient service, I hope. Again we take that leap of faith.

I accept these things and I hope people accept these things as part of the leap of faith that in the end we will have an effective postal service in Canada that will provide each and every Canadian with the services that they demand and are entitled to at reasonable cost. I believe that Canada Post has the capacity and the potential ability to provide effective services to all Canadians at a reasonable cost to the taxpayers. As far as I am concerned this means no deficit.

What is our role in all this process? It is to make sure that Canada Post has the statutory instruments to allow reaching that goal. It is not for the benefit of the management of Canada Post or for the edification of the president of Canada Post and the staff he gathers around him, but for the benefit primarily of the people who are involved in the operation of Canada Post whose careers depend upon the success of Canada Post. They literally feed and take care of the welfare of their families because of the employment income they receive. In broader terms this is for the benefit of all Canadians.

Anything that we can do to enhance the efforts of Canada Post in making it an organization that functions effectively and efficiently will be well received by all Canadians who will get the benefit in the end.

We have to put aside those difficulties that have been caused in the past, whether it is in Halifax West, the Head of St. Margarets Bay, the town of Bedford, Kingston or wherever. We must hope that we can come up with some initiative or policy that will enhance Canada Post for the benefit of all Canadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. member rising but he has already spoken on the bill. We are now in the period where there are only 10-minute speeches and no questions or comments.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, if the 10 minutes have not been used up then surely a question can be put to the hon. member in the course of his speech. I did not hear you say that the member had finished his time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member had concluded his 10 minutes and there is no period of question or comment after that. I am sorry. The hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants has already spoken on the bill.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak to the amendment to Bill C-73 of the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I cannot help but look at the intent of his amendment and realize that what he is trying to do here is to ensure that if Canada Post is privatized, and the employees are allowed to own shares, that they will have the ability to sit on that board of directors.

Canadians, particularly across rural Canada, have a lot of apprehension about the dictatorial policies being exercised by Canada Post and by the government itself on this issue.

We have seen post office after post office across this country closed down. In some cases there is a call for community consultation, but the consultations are meaningless. In fact, I only know of one place in my constituency where Canada Post Corporation had to back down. I am speaking here about the village of Newbury. It was only by the tenacity of the reeve, Diane Brewer, and her council that they were made to back down. Some of the information that Canada Post was giving out was not true. She was told that Canada Post would not allow a municipality to operate the post office, but today that is happening and they are operating it extremely well.

• (1540)

I have to give credit to Diane Brewer and the council of Newbury for having stuck to their guns in forcing Canada Post to back down. We have seen a whole host of closings since that.

I attended one of those meetings and I had other representatives attend other meetings. Canada Post is not there to negotiate with the people of the town. It is there to tell them what is going to happen whether they like it or not.

There is one particular case that I want to speak about. It is the case of the heavy-handed tactics of Canada Post and its insensitivity to history and to those who served their country in time of war. This concerns the village of Watford and the local cenotaph that was erected in the village by the Royal Canadian Legion. I am an honorary member of Branch 172 of the Legion. It maintained this site for 59 years. Then, when the post office was closed down, Canada Post was going to tender the property for sale. Whether or not Canada Post intended the cenotaph to go with it, I cannot say at this point.

I want to just read into the record part of a letter from the Royal Canadian Legion to Mr. Craig of Canada Post Corporation. It quotes him as saying that Canada Post indicates that the property on which the cenotaph stands is maintained by Public Works Canada. The statement is absolutely incorrect. The letter goes on to say: "We, the Royal Canadian Legion, have maintained the property and the monument in every way since the erection of the monument in 1933". That was for 59 years, and yet Canada Post, that did not have the property in its name, claimed that it had maintained it and owned the property and the cenotaph.

I quote again from the letter: "We believe the cenotaph, as well as the fenced property on which it stands, is owned by the Watford branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. If you have documents to substantiate other ownership or maintenance, please send me a copy within 21 days or by March 28, 1991".

The village would like to buy the property and they still have not got it. The village would buy the property and the building and here we have Canada Post playing games with the monument that recognizes and honours those who fought and died for this nation in the two world wars and in Korea. It is playing games for what reason, I do not know, but it is a shame that this sort of thing is allowed to happen.

The village submitted a request to purchase the building and cenotaph, as I mentioned earlier, but then Canada Post responded that it would lease it to the town. It did not want to sell the building. What is it waiting for, a better offer or until the spirit is broken as we have seen in so many cases? The town then responded that it would agree and it would submit a request to lease with the option to purchase after so many years. That would be negotiated. Do you know that Canada Post has not responded as of this date to this submission or this request? This request was made last fall.

What kind of trust do we have in an operation like that? What kind of an example does this set for other parts of society to completely ignore a cenotaph in a village centre that has been maintained by the Watford branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 172, for 59 years? Surely there has to be some responsibility here to respond not only to the request of the Royal Canadian Legion but also to the town itself.

This amendment will make sure that employees buying into Canada Post will be on the board of directors to ensure that these heavy-handed tactics are changed to and there is recognition of those who serve this country. Then we will have no more of those instances ever being allowed to happen again.

I had a phone call just a few minutes ago. The village asked Canada Post again this spring and there has still been no answer.

I hope someone on the government side will recognize the folly of what is happening here and will recognize the Canadian people deserve to be treated better than to have all these institutions closed down and privatized.

I am very well aware of the fact that over the years, many of the people who fought for this country overseas were given priority to serve as postmasters in these communities on their return. Of course, in order to achieve that position they had to be bonded and they were. Now there is no need to be bonded. One can be a tremendous credit risk and still get the job if one is willing to work for next to nothing.

Canada Post completely ignored the fact that these post offices were usually the centre of activity in towns and villages. That is where the old people would come every day to converse with each other, to pick up their cheques and so on. They would ensure that somebody check on someone who was sick and needed help. If someone's mail had not been picked up for a couple of days, the postmaster himself as a concerned citizen would look into it.

As Canadians, we have a sense of obligation to small communities across rural Canada to maintain these post offices and to maintain the institutions in our villages. Above all, we must ensure that cenotaphs, such as the one in the village of Watford standing on property maintained by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 172 for 59 years, have a claim on that property. They deserve better than to be treated the way they are at the present time.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Madam Speaker, this is an important debate we are having here today. It is a debate that really should not have to take place but because of the penchant of this government for trying to destroy rural communities, I am going to speak in this debate today.

Canada Post, aided and abetted by the government of the day, has set out to destroy rural Canada. In virtually all of the small communities in Canada the post offices have been removed.

In some cases the post offices are now in community stores. Some are efficient because the people are efficient but there is nothing efficient about Canada Post. We have heard a lot about the necessity for Canada Post to pay its way and to be a profit centre.

• (1550)

For a couple of years it was a profit centre for the government. Now, after bragging about how efficient it was and having destroyed the postal networks at least in rural Canada, we find that Canada Post now has a deficit.

This is certainly not the first time there has been a strike. I would point out when there is a strike, it is not just the employees who are at fault. I am sure in this case there is probably enough blame to go around but if the employees of Canada Post are treated the way that members of Parliament are and in the manner that small communities are treated by Canada Post, I have absolutely no sympathy for Canada Post at all.

I have never been able to get a straight answer out of Canada Post. Of course, the president of Canada Post is obviously too busy to talk to a member of Parliament. Instead, public relations people are sent to our offices or call us on the telephone when we have a problem. All you get from them is a bunch of gobbledegook. These people have no power to make a decision. They have no power to correct a wrong. They are simply there to make the boss look good.

We have lost our rural post offices in areas where they had been for a hundred years. We have also seen extreme increases in prices for services. I can give you one example in the community of Doaktown, a small community by Ottawa standards. The lock boxes in the post office used to have a fee of $5 a year. When Canada Post took over from the post office that fee went from $5 to $50. That is one of the reasons Canada Post was able to make believe it was making a profit.

I attended numerous meetings in my riding with representatives of Canada Post when they were there to tell their good news to the people. The news was that they were going to lose their post office and they would be much better off. I tried at several of these meetings to get through to these PR people that the sovereignty of this nation resides in the people of the nation. It does not reside in Canada Post.

One might as well have been talking to the wall because these automatons were programmed. They were not allowed to say anything they had not been told in their little booklet to say. Naturally, the people were seized with a great deal of anger.

In one situation, in the little village of Loggieville, the community wanted to take over the post office and run it. They were not even allowed to do that. It would have cost Canada Post nothing. But somebody in Ottawa had decided that rural Canada was not worth what the postal service was giving. It has been destroyed in my opinion and it will take a long time for the people in these rural areas to forgive this government for what it has done.

I repeat that the sovereignty of the nation resides in the people of this country. It does not reside in cabinet. It does not reside in this Chamber. It resides in the people. It is time for this government to stop trying to be the dictator of Canada, start listening to what the people have to say and give the people as much as possible the benefits and services they need.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to participate in this debate on behalf of the constituents of Cardigan, Prince Edward Island.

Bill C-73 is an act to amend the Canada Post Act. It should be called the selling out the post office act. The bill is just another example of the government trying to do things through the back door. The government should come clean with the people of Canada and call a spade a spade. This bill is going to privatize the post office.

The government says it only wants to improve productivity and service to the public. Let us take a look at the record of service this government has had when handling Canada Post.

Since the Tories came to power hundreds of post offices have closed down. Many small towns across the country have lost the only government presence they had. People do not mind paying taxes if they see some benefit for paying them. What is the benefit in going to a drugstore miles down the road to get your mail? For most rural Canadians, the post office was the only place where they regularly saw the Canadian flag. By closing down the post office, the government has removed that.

Two years ago on Prince Edward Island, Saturday rural mail delivery was eliminated. The government said the move was to rationalize the service. In 1982, when the post office was made a Crown corporation, it was felt that Prince Edward Island had special needs requiring mail to be delivered on Saturday.

From 1982 to 1990 there have not been all that many changes on Prince Edward Island but the government no longer felt we needed Saturday rural mail service. That move has inconvenienced many people, particularly senior citizens. For older people living a number of miles out in the country, it means that most likely they will not get a daily paper. As a result of the cuts, the post office lost a huge contract for delivering the newspapers. Instead of improving the service, it has gone down in Prince Edward Island. Canada Post actually lost dollars at the time by removing Saturday mail delivery, just for efficiency.

• (1600)

The last slap in the face to islanders came last December. That is when the post office decided it would no longer sort in Charlottetown the mail from communities in Prince Edward Island to places off the island. Off-mail now gets processed in Halifax. This has caused delays in the mail system, especially UI cheques which must be mailed on specific days to be processed properly.

I wonder if the members and the government realize what it really is to be on a low fixed income and to be waiting for your unemployment insurance cheque. The people need these cheques. They do not have another account to go to if the cheque does not come on Thursday and instead it comes on Monday. That hurts. It hurts the people in Prince Edward Island. That is about all that this service has done.

Mail from Prince Edward Island to places elsewhere in Canada or the U.S. now receives a Halifax postmark. Imagine receiving a piece of literature from the tourism department of Prince Edward Island with a big Halifax, Nova Scotia postmark. It is an insult to islanders. It is as if we do not exist. This should not be tolerated.

I would also like to mention a very special case in my riding of Cardigan where it has been impossible to get any action from Canada Post. In a part of Webster's Corner, the people wanted the route extended down the road because a number of people had moved into this area. Canada Post said no but gave the people a roadside lockbox which they said was good enough for them. The box constantly fell over in the mud.

I asked Canada Post, since it would not do any more, to put a concrete slab under the box. Canada Post said no. The people on the road to Webster's Corner have to deal with a box that falls over in the mud in the spring and freezes in the winter. It is very difficult as a member of Parliament to go to Webster's Corner and describe the efficiencies of Canada Post. This is a problem.

The legislation proposes to sell up to 10 per cent of the value of Canada Post to postal employees. The government says the measure is meant to improve employee performance by giving them a stake in the company. In any dealings I have had with business, you have to satisfy your customers too. This is one fact that seems to be eliminated. The theory goes that if you own something you will take better care of it.

The government believes that improving morale will help services to Canadians. I believe the government has this backwards. If the government wants to improve the labour relations at Canada Post, it should really start by improving the services to the customers, to the Canadians they are actually working for.

The only thing this government is concerned about is turning the post office into a profit-making machine and making it more attractive to sell. That is the Conservatives true objective, to sell the post office. The government has done its level best to destroy almost every important national institution. It sold Air Canada, which is now run by a couple of Americans; Petro-Canada; it almost destroyed VIA Rail by eliminating routes especially in Atlantic Canada. It certainly does not exist very much where I live. It cut the budget of the CBC, forcing the corporation to shut down television stations and to cancel very popular programs like *Land and Sea*; and now the government has taken aim at the post office.

Over the last little while we have seen government-sponsored ads on how great it is to be a Canadian and how we should concentrate on the things that keep us together. The very purpose of the post office is letting Canadians communicate. In rural Canada the post office is the only place where people see the Canadian flag. We need to see the Canadian flag more and I think that rural Canadians wish to feel a sense of being Canadian. Rural Canadians are Canadians as well as urban Canadians and central Canadians.

I just hope, and I call upon the government, to not sell the post office. It is an important institution. It is important to Canadians and it is important to this country.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bills without amendment: Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act; Bill C-67, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act;

[*Translation*]

Bill C-71, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and other acts in consequence thereof; and Bill C-84, an act to amend the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and the Pension Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof.

* * *

[*English*]

ROYAL ASSENT

Madam Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member, I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received which is as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

June 18, 1992

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Hon. Peter deC. Cory, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 18th day of June, 1992, at 4.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

Yours Sincerely,

Judith A. LaRocque
Secretary to the Governor General

Government Orders

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and on the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to speak on this bill, but I am not pleased with the content of what I have to say. It is very negative. It is not as optimistic as my general notes are when I got up to speak in this House.

Mr. Tobin: And your nature.

Mr. Mifflin: And my nature.

Mr. Milliken: Optimistic.

Mr. Mifflin: Or indeed the nature of my riding. I represent a group of people who like to be optimistic, who like to toe the line. They work hard. They like to belong to a system in which they work hard and the government is responsive in turn to the way they look at a democratic system. But I have to tell you that right now they are beginning to wonder what sort of a system they live in.

There have been three issue since I have been elected that have haunted the people of my riding. There is no other word for it. One was the goods and services tax, which they could not afford. Another one was Bill C-21, which mucked up their unemployment insurance. They are still trying to come to grips with that.

We have a situation right now where the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte had attended a demonstration in his riding two days ago, a thousand people from St. Anthony, people who normally do not demonstrate. I have been to St. Anthony many times, fine people, excellent people.

As I stand in front of the House today, I have a demonstration being organized in Clarenville by the plant workers of the Bonavista peninsula. They are not just livid with the government. They are not mad with just the fact that something is not being done. They are worried, they are anxious. They have to show that they are concerned and nobody is listening to them, not a soul. We are listening to them. I am listening to them. This side of the House, I know, is listening to them because we met this morning to discuss the subject of fishing. However, this bill relates to the post office. That is the third thing that has got not only the people in my riding upset, but throughout Newfoundland and rural Canada, as much as these other two major issues that have put off Canadians with this government.

• (1610)

Why are they put off with it? I have to slow down, Madam Speaker, because it is a very, very upsetting subject. They are put off with it because it is part of the business of closing down Atlantic Canada. My constituents wonder where it is all going to end. They are not going to be very pleased today when they see Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation, which permits the sale of 10 per cent of the corporation to employees. They will ask "Where does it go from here?"

To my mind this is nothing more nor less than the first step to privatize the Canada Post Corporation. Why bother going through this step? Why not be straightforward with the bill? Why not be up front with Canadians and tell them that we want to privatize Canada Post, instead of going through these diversionary methods?

I am delighted that the member on the other side of the House, the government side, nods his head. I do admire his courage because he is obviously in the same situation that I am in my riding, and others on this side.

I want to give the facts here. I want to state what the numbers are. In the last two weeks alone I have been involved with the shutdown of the Shearstown post office, the whole community, and Bay Roberts and Bareneed and Port de Grave. They are all upset. That is just in the last two weeks.

I have another one from Hare Bay, which is in my riding. Let me read what a gentleman from Hare Bay said. He wrote me on June 7, a Mr. Saunders. He said: "Mr. Mifflin, I am very disturbed about the way Canada Post is treating rural Canadians with regard to the closing of small post offices. I would appreciate you taking a firm stand against this action on my behalf".

That is one letter. I have received over a hundred of these, from a hundred communities. I have 260 communities in my riding and they are all rural communities.

With respect to Canada Post and rural communities, let me say what has happened.

In 1986 Canada Post had a 10-year corporate plan and the development of that would close, amalgamate or privatize 5,221 rural post offices employing 10,000 people across this country. This is a time when we are looking for jobs. In my riding a steady job is a status symbol, not many people have one. The last time I checked the figures, over 900 post offices were closed, with a corresponding loss of over 3,000 jobs.

We talk about equity here; 83 per cent of the rural post office positions belong to women, and the job losses have hurt them the most. In addition, closing a post office in a rural area removes in many cases, as the hon. member for Cardigan just said, the only federal presence in the community, and it terminates an essential ingredient in their social fabric, not the least of which is the consideration for our senior citizens who now have to go out in the rain and in the wind and in the snow. Again, the example that my hon. colleague from Cardigan used. I have many examples of them, Madam Speaker.

The name of the game is service to the public. Canada Post is trying to make profits. In the fiscal year of 1988-89 it made a profit of $96 million. The next year, $149 million. It is like charging for national defence. Do we have to make money because we need to have a defence department? No. The name of the game is to defend our country. You do not expect to get money back from it. The name of the game for Canada Post should be service to the Canadian public.

Judging from the information that I am getting, this service is anything but good. Why? The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources had to resort to a private company outside the country so that he could get reliable service. He said so last Friday. That is an awful state of affairs.

There are other initiatives that this government has announced that this policy of what it is doing now is totally against the Affirmative Action for Women and Youth. I just stated that 83 per cent of the rural post office jobs are held by women.

Conditions for seniors for autonomous living. This does not help seniors who live alone, or to live without help. What does this do to regional economic development? Not very much.

To really put this in perspective, these are the words of Prime Minister Mulroney who made this promise in 1984: "Restoring the quality of service will become top priority with Canada Post".

An hon. member: Another sacred trust.

Mr. Mifflin: That is a sacred trust. It has gone the way of other sacred trusts. Therefore, I believe that this post office bill is inconsistent with government policies in other areas and the government admits it.

Second, this bill results in the loss of badly needed jobs, especially for women. Third, and we have ample evidence here today and even from the government side of the House, it degrades the quality of service for the public. Fourth, it trades off profit for poorer service and it represents the breaking of another sacred trust by the Prime Minister.

Is there any wonder that constituents are concerned about what their future holds? Is there any wonder that anywhere from 500 to 1,000 people will demonstrate in Random Square Mall in Clarenville tomorrow? I do not think there has ever been a demonstration there since the mall was built. Is it any wonder why they are going there to cry out to get some attention from the media and from anybody who will listen when they say: "Our voices are not being heard". The voices of the people from St. Anthony are not being heard so they turn to their members of Parliament to say: "Help us. Pay attention to us. Come down and watch this".

I would be down tomorrow but I feel that I can do better here with my colleagues trying to talk some sense into this government to at least hear what the fishermen and plant workers have to say. They have the prospect of their industry being closed down for five years—

An hon. member: Waiting for the emergency debate.

Mr. Mifflin: —waiting for the emergency debate to take place.

An hon. member: Fifty members have asked for it.

Mr. Mifflin: There have been 50 members today who have asked for this. In my case, since February 21, some people have not had any compensation because they were not qualified in time when the plant in Port Union closed down. That plant holds 1,200 workers. There are 500 workers in the town of Charleston, which is a small town not far from my home town. They were told that their plant will not open and as of May they have no money or compensation and no hope of getting any.

Is it any wonder that the people are marching off to protest? Is it any wonder that they have no faith in the government? Is it any wonder that they want me to get up and talk about post offices and all the other actions that have been taken by this government that shut down Atlantic Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador in particular.

I am fed up to the teeth with this and I hope the government takes some notice of the speeches that it is going to hear in this House on this despicable bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to members opposite make their contribution to the debate on the bill before the House today which provides for the sale of part of the shares of the Canada Post Corporation to its own employees. I must say I am very surprised that opposition members decided to criticize this legislation on every possible ground but failed to focus on the purpose of the bill.

I heard some extremely critical remarks about Canada Post earlier today, but perhaps we should go back a few years to the time when members opposite formed the government and Canada Post was a government agency. For many years, political interference by the party in power in Canada Post was so strong that the agency was unable to run its operations effectively. It was a hot bed of Liberal patronage and politicians regularly interfered with this government agency at the time. We saw the results. Costs went up year after year, and when we came to power in 1984, the Canadian postal service was one of the most costly and least efficient in the world.

• (1620)

Canadians across this country complained about postal services, because the post office was managed from this House, from the government benches at the time. Our government did some housecleaning by making the agency a Crown corporation, operated at arm's length and administered by a group of competent managers with a specific mandate.

Our government gave Canada Post a specific mandate: to provide Canadians with adequate postal services at reasonable cost, and to implement a cost recovery plan. The result was two consecutive years of profits for Canada Post. This had been unheard of before, simply because politicians on this side of the House—our government—decided not to interfere with the managing of Canada Post. That is a well-known fact. That is why Canada Post booked the results we see today.

The hon. member for Miramichi spoke earlier of a deficit this year for Canada Post, which should come as no surprise. The corporation experienced some very serious labour relations problems which led to a strike, and any company that experiences a strike inevitably suffers a loss of income that will turn up as a loss on its books. This is only temporary, and I am convinced that current management at the corporation will put Canada Post back into the black in a matter of months.

I heard opposition members question the government's motives for allowing Canada Post to sell 10 per cent of its shares to its employees. What's wrong with that? I ask members opposite: What's wrong with that?

[*English*]

What is wrong with allowing the corporation to sell 10 per cent of its stock to the employees? There is nothing wrong with that.

[*Translation*]

This measure will simply give Canada Post employees a say in their jobs and how the corporation is run. If, as members opposite are claiming, the government did have the privatization of Canada Post in mind, what is wrong with letting Canadians become shareholders in the corporation and thus real owners of the corporation? This kind of system will give Canada Post shareholders the right to say what they think of management, as shareholders.

In any company, shareholders have the right to insist that management and the board of directors manage the company so as to provide services on a profitable basis and, as I see it, far more effectively than the corporation does at the present time, although there have been many improvements and it now operates at arm's length.

The Liberals are critical of the government because of this arm's length policy. It is a policy that we have been applying systematically. Politicians no longer interfere with Canada Post, and that is as it should be. That is how we managed to set up an efficient and viable system that is making a profit.

Today, I challenge members opposite to tell us why they are so afraid to see Canada Post develop a more modern approach. Is it because they realize that, in the event they get back into power, they will no longer be able to interfere with Canada Post? I think that is the question we should be asking, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker—

Madam Deputy Speaker: There are no questions at this point in the debate. Resuming debate.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, the 10 minutes have not expired.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No questions at this point in the debate. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is well aware of the Standing Orders. The Chair cannot entertain any questions without the unanimous consent of the House.

[*English*]

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have some no's.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, there was a practice in this House for years—

An hon. member: Generations.

Mr. Milliken: —or generations. It goes back to the beginning of time that when a member was making a speech another member could get up and ask the member a question if the member making the speech permitted it.

I realize that we have these time rules. The practice has developed in the last few years that because of the question and comment period that is allowed after 20 minute speeches, it is rare for a member to be interrupted.

Members who have been in this House for some years know the practice. Back in the days when the time limit was 40 minutes it was very common for members to stand up and say to a member who was speaking: "Might I ask the hon. member a question? Will the hon. member permit a question?" That was the way it was put. If the member permitted a question, then a question was asked and answered during the 40 minutes.

All I was asking is that since the hon. member had not used his 10 minutes, would he permit a question during his 10-minute speech? He is about to finish. His time is still running. Will he permit a question?

If he will not, that is fine. However, it seems to me that it is not a question of unanimous consent, but whether the hon. member will permit a question in his speech.

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, I was going to make the observation to you, as indeed you are well aware, that the rules have changed since the time of the practice to which the hon. member has referred. Consequently, what he is asking of the individual now is not appropriate.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I think the member for Kingston and the Islands is something of a scholar of the standing orders—

An hon. member: He is a new member.

Mr. Edwards: —in spite of being a new member. He has been accused of being the reincarnation of Mackenzie King who was something of a master of House rules. I think he will find, if he examines Standing Order 74, that it is very clear that Your Honour was absolutely right. A question and comment period is not available during 10-minute speeches.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I would absolutely concur with the words of the member who has just spoken that indeed there is, as the Speaker quite rightly points out, no formal question and answer period or informal question and answer period after a 10-minute speech. That is not at all being suggested by my colleague and friend.

I have been here for a few years, but not as long as the member for Windsor West, obviously. It is a dozen years. My colleague across the way for Mississauga South has been here for a similar period of time and perhaps a little longer. Asking a member whether that member would permit a question has fallen out of practice, but it has been quite normal. I recall a number of occasions when my friend did exactly as the member for Kingston and the Islands has suggested.

Sometimes the member will say yes and cede his place for a moment for a question. Sometimes the member has said—and this has been the practice—"I will permit questions at the end. I would like to finish my thoughts first". It is quite normal, particularly when a member has not used his full time, as a courtesy, for a member to put exactly that request. That is all the member for Kingston and Islands has said. I submit that it is a worth while practice in this place.

I recall my friend for Mississauga South questioning, for example, some of the statistics I was quoting out of the last budget document. We had quite an interesting—for some people I might say amusing—exchange of statistics in the budget document. We both quoted them in rather interesting ways. However, that is the purpose. It is to hold members accountable so that when they speak in this place they understand and realize that they may be held accountable.

I submit that it makes for a much better debate when there is the possibility that what you say may be challenged or questioned. It would be a great shame if the Speaker's ruling is misinterpreted. I hope it is not improper or wrong or not allowed for a member to ask another member on his or her feet whether or not that member would permit a question. I hope the Speaker's ruling would not be misinterpreted that way. Parliament would be poorer.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like to start by apologizing to the hon. member for naming the former name of his riding. Somehow the name has stuck in my mind and occasionally I will be looking for the word "Humber" and "St. Barbe—Port au Port—Baie Verte" will come back to my mind. I guess I have been sitting here for quite a while too.

• (1630)

I agree with the hon. member that if there is consent of the House we can always go outside our rules. But there must be unanimous consent. The House is its own master and I am here as a servant of the House.

If we look at the Standing Order under which we are now proceeding, after the part of debate where there are only 10-minute speeches, they are not followed by a period of questions and answers.

The only thing that I can do is ask if there is unanimous consent that the hon. member—

Mr. Milliken: He hadn't used his 10 minutes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Once the hon. member sits down he has completed his speech, whether he has used the 10 minutes or not. That is my understanding of the rules. I am quite prepared to be corrected, that his time expired the moment he sat down.

For questions to be asked we would need consent of the House, which was not given.

I think we should now go on with debate and I am ready to recognize anyone who will rise on debate.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, I am quite pleased to have this opportunity to speak right after the member for Manicouagan because during the course of comments by my colleague previously the member for Manicouagan responded to a statement that this was one step on the way to privatization by saying "that's right".

I am looking back at the records of the Commons debate, *Hansard* of April 30, 1992, page 9920. I am looking at a very direct question that was put to the minister responsible for Canada Post by my colleague from Essex—Kent who said to the minister very specifically:

> Earlier today the minister introduced measures to allow employees of Canada Post to buy shares in the Crown corporation.
>
> Will the minister take this opportunity to admit to Canadians that he was embarking on the first steps of privatization of Canada Post?

That is exactly the point made previously, Madam Speaker.

I would like to read the reply from the Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the minister responsible for Canada Post. He said:

> Mr. Speaker, I do not know why I would admit that. It would not be the truth if I were to do that.

He made it quite clear that this bill was not intended as a step toward privatization and yet we have a member of the government sitting on the other side of the House not 10 minutes ago, in response to a comment from this side of the House that this is the first step toward privatization saying "that's right".

Is it any wonder that Canadians have a lot of trouble trusting this government? When the minister in April said "that is wrong, that would not be the truth, if I were to admit we were taking the first steps toward privatization" and now in the heat of June another member of that same government sits there and says that that is exactly what the government is doing.

If Canadians right here in this Chamber can hear completely opposite stories from two members of the same government, is there any wonder that the popularity level of the Prime Minister and his government is at the stage it is? Is it any wonder that Canadians can hardly wait to get rid of this government? Really, is it any wonder that they hold the government and this institution in such disrespect when from that side of the House we hear contradictory statements constantly. We hear denials one day and the accusations become reality weeks or months later.

The member opposite seems to want to debate the free trade agreement. I would love to debate the free trade agreement, the past one and the future one, and point out all the failings of that agreement if he would have the courtesy to put that item on the agenda of the House rather than trying to interrupt a member who has some important issues and points to say on behalf of her constituents on the bill that is before the House on Canada Post.

As well, I note today that the Liberal Party is alone in fighting against this abomination of a bill, the first step in getting rid of a service that has served this country well since Confederation. The socialists are not here. The NDP, which speaks out against privatization, which would like the state to own and operate everything, is not here to say one word in defence of Canada Post. It is not here to say one word in defence of maintaining in the public domain an essential public service to a country like Canada that is so far and so widespread, with such a scattered population, that the ability to communicate with one another is fundamental to national unity. It is fundamental to our sense of being Canadian.

The Liberals stand alone here today defending the continuation of that service in the public domain and in the public interest, not in the interest of profits.

I want to make a few points about the treatment of employees in Canada Post. The minister has made the point that this is to try and get employees more involved in Canada Post, to let them feel a little more a part of the corporation and to make them a little more productive.

There are many ways in which Canada Post has shown that it does not care one whit for its employees. Its treatment of women is abominable. In the interests of profits it is contracting out work, putting on more part-time people, taking people who worked for it for a decade or more and suddenly putting them back on night shift.

It is entirely refusing to pay women equal pay for work of equal value. It has taken provisions out its contract that requires its contractors to pay women decent wages. It talks about shared decision making. Its day to day operations are a total denial of any respect for its employees or any attempt to let them feel proud of their work and to feel that they have a employer that they can work in partnership with.

Labour relations at the post office are no secret to anybody in this country. They are in an abysmal state. One can only question them since this bill before us is a shell. It gives us absolutely no details. It tells us not one thing about what is really going to happen here, what the shares are going to be worth, what they are going to mean to employees or which employees are going to be able to buy them. One can only speculate that if there is any value to the shares at all, they will go to senior managers and if there is no value to the shares at all, then the employees at the lower level might have some access to them.

I want to go back and let people recall the privatization of Air Canada. There is a pattern to privatization. Senior managers and corporations always love to push for privatization because they always seem to manage to set up privatization deals that give them a good hunk of shares, a good stake in the company which means the loss of jobs and less income for those who actually do the work that produces the profits.

I want to go back to Air Canada because I remember with great chagrin the night I heard Claude Taylor, just before the privatization of Air Canada, on *Cross Country Check-Up* saying that if only he were free of all these fetters of government ownership, of government direction, he could run Air Canada much better, much more profitably. I suspect that the privatization of Air Canada benefited Claude Taylor and a lot of other senior executives in Air Canada.

It has meant the loss of thousands of jobs. It has meant the loss of service to northern and remote communities in this country. It has meant increased costs. It has meant reduced service and it is a classic demonstration of why privatization in an industry like transportation or communication, that is so essential to keeping this country together, is not in the public interest.

The public interest is something that does not seem to matter a lot to this government or to Canada Post.

• (1640)

I can only mention small postal outlets in my riding, 10 to 20 feet from a senior citizens' building, being closed down and moved a mile away. These older people who are trying to live on their own, 190 of them in one apartment building, who want to be able to communicate with family and friends who have now moved all over Canada, cannot even get out in the winter to mail a letter, to pick up some stamps, to mail a parcel at Christmas time.

This is happening all over my riding. I have in my riding the second highest proportion of seniors in the country and so I worry about these things. I wish Canada Post worried about people who have to rely on the mail simply to remain in touch with their loved ones. It does not. It does not even make sensible decisions.

I have a branch of the post office that has been out on Richmond Road in Ottawa West for many years, since I moved out to that part of the city. Lo and behold, 100 feet down the road it opened up a private outlet. What does that mean? Better service to me? No. Now I have to go to two places.

Our time is short today but the bottom line is we want a postal service that delivers service to Canadians, one whose purpose is not profits, not exploitation of its workers but service to Canadians. We want the honest truth for once from this government on its intentions. Do not give us a shell of a bill that does not tell us what its real plans are.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I too want to participate in the debate on Bill C-73. As I do, let me say the speech by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa West, was an absolutely outstanding speech because it embraced what is important about Canada Post for the whole country.

The member pointed out that Canada Post is not only an essential ingredient to nation building, holding the country together in so far as rural Canada is concerned, but is important for those citizens who have made their contribution to this country, those senior citizens, particularly in urban Canada, who now find for economic reasons that they must live in senior citizens' complexes. Canada Post is a way of staying in touch with their loved ones no matter where they have gone.

I thought the member demonstrated why Canada Post is an ingredient of national unity at a time when the country is being tested, when the stresses and strains on the fabric of this nation are more pronounced than perhaps at any other time in our history.

As my colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception said a few moments ago, thousands of people gathered in various communities of Newfoundland and perhaps elsewhere in this country, demanding that their voices be heard, demanding that there be an opportunity for their voices to echo across this Chamber, demanding that their fears, their anger, their frustrations and their hopes be reflected in the voices of their members of this place by way of an emergency debate in the case of Newfoundland on the fishery.

Even as this place cannot find the time to allow that voice to be heard, in the dying days of the session, as this place gets ready to close, perhaps until September, even as we deny that voice a chance to be heard in this place, what does the government do with those precious few remaining hours that are left for the elected representatives of the people to meet and to discuss and to debate and to exchange ideas? What does it do with those remaining minutes? It puts forward this bill, Bill C-73, a blank cheque, a loaded gun pointed right at the head of Canada Post, at the postal service, and I put the emphasis on service.

It is a bill, it is a piece of enabling legislation. It transfers to a minister unchecked, undefined and unbridled powers to do with the post office as he sees fit.

What are we being asked to do with this bill? We are being asked to transfer in a blind arrangement the future of the post office and the role the post office plays in Canadian society into the hands of a minister who will not share with Parliament what he intends to do with that power being transferred to him.

If you look at the bill it does not tell us what the value of the shares are going to be in privatization. It does not tell us what the number of shares are going to be in privatization. It does not tell us the net worth of the corporation. It does not tell us that if employees can buy shares how they shall be defined. It does not tell us the amount of shares every individual employee will be allowed to purchase. It tells us nothing save that the government intends to privatize the post office and it would like Parliament, with blinders on, completely blind and disoriented and confused, to transfer authority to the minister and that the minister functioning in the back room with his advisors will make all the decisions.

We are being interrupted by a greater power.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL ASSENT

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

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Chamber of the honourable Senate.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker with the House went up to the Senate Chamber.

And being returned:

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber, the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following bills:

Bill C-21, an act relating to the accounting of certain payments for the servicing and reduction of the debt of Canada—Chapter 18.

Bill C-56, an act respecting the control of government expenditures—Chapter 19.

Bill C-36, an act respecting corrections and the conditional release and detention of offenders and to establish the office of Correctional Investigator—Chapter 20.

Bill C-78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities—Chapter 21.

Bill C-71, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and other acts in consequence thereof—Chapter 22.

Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act—Chapter 23.

Bill C-84, an act to amend the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and the Pension Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof—Chapter 24.

Bill C-67, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act—Chapter 25.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p.10744).

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, as I was saying before we were interrupted by the requirements of the Governor General, this bill that is being proposed by the government in the dying minutes and hours and days of this session of Parliament before we adjourn for the summer break is a blank cheque. The government is asking for a blank cheque. The minister in charge of the post office is asking for a loaded gun.

He is asking for the authority to dramatically alter the size, shape and purpose of Canada's post office. He is asking for the authority and enabling legislation that will allow him to do it behind closed doors in consultation with senior managers of the post office and in consultation with senior bureaucrats. However, there will be no consultation with the people of Canada and no consultation with the elected members of the House of Commons. That is why I object to the bill.

If the government has a plan to reshape the post office, to change the post office and to alter the post office, then tell us what it is. Do not ask for authority to tinker or to alter or to make unrecognizable Canada's post office without telling us how you intend to do it, tell us up front. However, the government will not do that.

One of my colleagues, the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception suggested that this is nothing but a Trojan horse. This is a plan to privatize the post office, to break it down, to turn it over to the private sector and to run it on the same principle as McDonald's sells hamburgers.

• (1700)

The member opposite said: "Yes, correct". Even as I say it now—and the cameras do not show it—the member looks at me and with grim determination nods his head yes. All of the witnesses of Canada in this Chamber who can see the hon. member, see him nod his head yes with a grin on his face. He looks like the latest franchise owner of McDonald's hamburgers. He looks like he just had a big mac attack.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately I must interrupt the hon. member and ask him to show me indulgence at this time. I promise I will recognize him later.

It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

GREEN SHIELD CANADA ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South) moved that Bill S–10, an act to incorporate Green Shield Canada, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Madam Speaker, after the consultations we have had on both sides of the House I would suggest that you would find unanimous consent for the motion that this bill proceed today through consideration at second reading, in Committee of the Whole and at third reading.

I would like to speak very briefly to this bill. It is a very simple matter. It is to straighten the corporate affairs of Green Shield Prepaid Services and to incorporate a new corporation called Green Shield Canada Prepaid Services Association.

The current Green Shield company originated in Windsor, Ontario as a prepaid drug plan service. It has since expanded dramatically throughout Ontario, serving a number of organizations with prepaid drug payment plans and with prepaid legal plans, that class of service. It is a non–profit company.

The company is incorporated provincially in Ontario and it seeks to become a national company. Unfortunately there is no provision either in Ontario law or federal law for it to transfer from one corporation to another corporation, being that it is a non–profit corporation, a not for profit corporation.

The consequence of this bill has been vetted by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and of course the Minister of Finance. The bill has had a hearing before the Senate.

It is a very regular type of bill. All it really does is take the company that presently operates in this health care field, selling prepaid services to Ontarians, and moves it to a federal corporation so that it will be able to operate

and offer its services on a non-profit basis right across Canada.

Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to treat this as a completed bill with three readings, to treat it on that basis.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to consent to the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Mississauga South. I do not know whether he wants to deal with that by motion now, or whether he is prepared that we make our speeches and then at the conclusion of the second reading speeches we could go into Committee of the Whole and deal with the bill at that point.

I am pleased to consent to that, but I would like to address some remarks on second reading of the bill. If that is satisfactory, I will proceed to that now.

The hon. member for Windsor West, who today is celebrating the 30th anniversary of his election, has asked me to substitute for him in dealing with this bill since he is unable to be here this afternoon. He was here earlier, as Your Honour knows. Unfortunately a meeting in his constituency this evening has taken him away from Ottawa for the time being. He asked me to speak on his behalf in respect of this important bill.

Green Shield has carried on business for some time as incorporated under the Business Corporations Act of the province of Ontario. It has been a company with which many members are familiar, at least Ontario members, because the acquisition of health insurance coverage has been common place, particularly as I recall—and I am going from recollection—on items not covered under OHIP or for persons who are travelling.

I understand the business has been a successful one. It is desired to extend the business of the corporation across Canada so that other Canadians in other provinces are able to take advantage of these services. I presume this will lead some additional service being provided or at least competitive services being provided elsewhere.

I am glad to see the Solicitor General has joined us. I expect he will also be speaking in support of this bill too.

As a result the company has determined that the most effective means of achieving the objective is to apply for incorporation by act of Parliament rather than under the Canadian Business Corporations Act. I note that this bill is intended to incorporate the company on that basis, as incorporated directly by act of Parliament. It is a fairly unusual step to be taken today for new companies. Usually private members' bills that come before us amend incorporating acts of corporations that were incorporated many years ago. However in this case apparently Green Shield has decided to proceed in this way, and that is quite satisfactory.

In addition, as I understand it there was some discussion in the other place when this bill was debated as to what happened to the profits of this corporation. My understanding is that there is a foundation of a similar name which has received these profits over the course of the years Green Shield has been in operation and uses the profits for various charitable purposes.

Also my understanding is that the foundation was incorporated under the laws of the province of Ontario. Therefore, in the event of dissolution of the foundation its moneys would be payable to charitable objects only in Ontario. To resolve that problem, I understand that Green Shield has now incorporated a new foundation under the laws of Canada so that, again in the event of dissolution of the foundation, the profits could be distributed to other charitable objects throughout Canada. I understand that has solved a possible problem with this bill that might have met with some objection as it proceeded through the other place.

I note that my colleague, Senator Frith, made an excellent speech in the other place on this bill in the course of the debate there.

Having dealt with these minor problems of incorporation in various jurisdictions, having dealt with the matter of the disposition of the profits through the charitable foundation, I think the about to become a company, Green Shield Canada, has met the possible objections that could have been raised to the procedure it has chosen to adopt. It has come before Parliament.

We recently passed a resolution waiving the normal notice provisions in respect of the petition, its lateness in any event. That has happened with respect to the three bills we may end up dealing with during private members' hour today.

We are now in a position where the bill can proceed through this House, following which it will receive royal assent. If that happens the company will then be incorporated and everything will move along smoothly.

This procedure is unusual. I think it is the first time an incorporation has been done in this House since I was elected. I am interested that this procedure is still available to corporations or groups of individuals that seek to incorporate in this way. It is an ancient procedure, one that dates back many, many hundreds of years. Certainly many of the early English corporations were established by act of the British Parliament.

• (1710)

The power to carry out this incorporation went on here for some time. There were two principal means. One was the granting of a charter by the Crown such as the Hudson's Bay Company got in our early corporate history. Then as Parliaments got busy passing these private acts incorporating companies, it was decided to proceed with easier techniques by passing things like the Business Corporations Act which allows incorporation without recourse to the legislature. That is the usual way of incorporation in Canada today. This is quite an unusual procedure but nevertheless entirely proper and quite interesting.

For legal students who study corporation law this particular precedent will be an interesting one because of the fact that this corporation clearly carried on business previously in the province of Ontario as a business corporation and through its foundation incorporated in the same province, I am not sure under which act but I expect under the corporations act of Ontario. I suspect there were two different provincial acts involved in the operation of the company.

Having said that, I am pleased to support this bill. I commend the hon. member for Mississauga South for sponsoring it in this House and for his efforts in ensuring all-party support for the bill and the co-operation of members on all sides of the House on its speedy passage. I hope that will be forthcoming a little later this afternoon.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, I rise to support Bill S-10 which, as has been cited, is an act to incorporate Green Shield Canada at the federal level. As has been pointed out too, it is a rather unusual process that we deal with in looking at this Senate bill.

Of course, as I said, I support it. I should tell the House something about Green Shield. Green Shield is a not for profit company that provides among other things prepaid dental, medical and hospital insurance and has a considerable tradition in this country.

I point out with some pride that it originates in Windsor. It in fact administers some 750 plans with 500 participants and processes nearly five million claims.

Groups served by Green Shield range from as small as six to 35,000 including GM, Ford and Chrysler. Its annual revenue exceeded $200 million in 1991. Its 1992 fiscal plan calls for revenue to exceed $230 million. It is, like the city of its location, a socially useful and dynamic company.

This bill permits the transfer of jurisdiction from Ontario to Canada on terms that provide for appropriate regulatory authority by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

An incorporation by a special act of Parliament is the only viable option that Green Shield has so that it may realize the goals of federal incorporation and achieve a national scope within a single regulatory framework. Otherwise the process would be exceedingly and excessively complicated.

There has been a thorough review of the bill at both the policy and the regulatory levels. Green Shield representatives have worked closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and the Department of Finance to ensure that this legislation would be appropriate.

I would only summarize by saying that it is a bill made necessary by a series of complicated circumstances.

The outcome will not only benefit the company, but I can assure you that having Green Shield converted to Green Shield Canada can only accrue to the benefits of Canada and to those who need the kind of services that Green Shield has so effectively provided in the past.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this proposal and second reading of Bill S-10.

As has been explained in the Senate and earlier today in the House, the purpose of this legislation is to allow Green Shield Prepaid Services Association to transfer its jurisdiction from Ontario to Canada. Its new name will be Green Shield Canada Prepaid Services Association.

Since Green Shield is a not for profit association, one with no share capital, it is not a simple matter for it to incorporate federally. Under the Canada Business Corporations Act, entities that wish to incorporate must have share capital. Green Shield Prepaid Services Association has no share capital. It has no shares or shareholders.

Similarly, the Ontario Business Corporations Act requires share capital in order to incorporate. In Ontario, Green Shield was incorporated under Part III of the Ontario Corporations Act, and is registered or licensed under the Prepaid Hospital and Medical Services Act.

Because of a defect in the Canada Corporations Act, Green Shield cannot be continued federally. Furthermore, if it did try to incorporate under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act, the statute which deals with the incorporation of not for profit associations without share capital, it could not register or license federally to carry on prepayment plans because there is no federal statute equivalent to the Prepaid Hospital and Medical Services Act.

The remedy, therefore, is incorporation through an act of Parliament and licensing under the provisions of the Insurance Companies Act. This is what is provided for in Bill S-10. I have been assured that this approach has been taken only after extensive consultations with the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Superintendent of Insurance.

In the Senate it was mentioned that Green Shield introduced the first North American prepayment prescription drug program in the 1950s. Since then, it has extended its coverage from pharmaceuticals to dental, legal and other services, and covers workers in most Canadian provinces.

Though it contracts with employers headquartered in Ontario, the employees who may reside and work outside of Ontario are nevertheless covered by their employer's plan with Green Shield. By incorporating federally, Green Shield will be able to contract with companies that are headquartered outside of Ontario and with individuals who reside outside of Ontario. This is the underlying purpose of Bill S-10.

Turning to the bill itself, I refer members to clause 4, subclause (1) which reads:

> The objects of the Association are to provide, operate and administer prepayment plans throughout Canada.

Prepayment plan as defined earlier in the bill refers to the prepayment of the costs of specified services. The term specified services is itself defined as follows:

> such social, health, dental, legal, pharmaceutical or other services as are specified in a prepayment plan

These are the endeavours that Green Shield is interested in pursuing nationally.

Subclause 4(2) of the bill reads:

> The Association shall carry out its objects as a non-profit organization and for socially beneficial purposes, without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the Association shall, subject to section 10, be used in promoting its objects.

We have a non-profit organization which will operate prepayment plans for "socially beneficial purposes". If there are any profits, they will be funneled back into the promotion of its objects, namely, the operation and administration of prepayment plans throughout Canada. If they wish to get into other business activities or operate prepayment plans other than those concerning health, dental, legal or pharmaceutical services, subclauses 7(2) and 7(3)d require the consent of the Minister of Finance.

Clause 8 provides that if the directors wish to wind down the company by transferring its prepayment plans to another entity or by selling all or substantially all of its assets, approval must be obtained from its members and the Minister of Finance. If the association is dissolved or wound up, an obvious question is what happens to the assets. After all, there are no shareholders.

• (1720)

Subclause 10(2) provides that following the payment of all obligations the balance is distributed not to the members of the association, but to "such charitable or non-profit corporations as are designated for that purpose in the by-laws". Where there is no designated recipient, subclause 10(3) provides that the Green Shield Foundation will receive the remaining assets.

This non-profit foundation incorporated under Part III of the corporations act of Ontario in the 1970s is not now active. It was established in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the Windsor Medical Services Inc. incident, where, with the introduction of the Ontario Health Insurance Plan in 1969, Windsor Medical Services was wound up and following lengthy litigation, its surplus distributed to the doctors who were members of the corporation.

If Green Shield Canada Prepaid Services Association were to wind up, the surplus would go to a non-profit entity and not to individuals. I also note that clauses 16 and 17 of the bill specify that the Winding-Up Act and the Insurance Companies Act apply to the association. In the case of an involuntary dissolution, both statutes apply. Where there is a voluntary dissolution, only the Insurance Companies Act applies. In either case, the Superintendent of Financial Institutions will play a leading role.

The Superintendent of Financial Institutions also has a role to play if the association wishes from time to time to distribute any surplus it has accumulated. Subclause 10(1) of the Bill S-10 reads:

> When the Association has, in the opinion of its directors, unappropriated surplus in excess of the requirements of the Association, it may, with the approval of the Superintendent distribute all or part of the excess to such charitable or non-profit corporations as are designated therefor in the by-laws.

I assume that the charitable or non-profit corporation that would be the logical candidate for the surplus is the Green Shield Foundation. As for the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, his role would be limited to ensuring that the distribution of a surplus would not endanger the continued viability of Green Shield Canada Prepaid Services Association. The Superintendent would not be concerned with where that surplus went, as long as its distribution was not imprudent.

There are of course certain advantages in activating the Green Shield Foundation. As I mentioned earlier, the association is limited as to the types of activities it may pursue. If it wishes to step outside its authorized activities, permission of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions must be obtained.

The Green Shield Foundation, however, apparently has a greater range of permitted activities. Green Shield could launch initiatives through its foundation that it could not pursue through its association.

There is one aspect of this relationship that intrigues me. If Bill S-10 passes, we will have a federally incorporated association that eventually could be operating throughout the country in every province and territory. It receives payments from individuals and corporations in every region of the country, accumulates a surplus which it then transfers to its foundation under subclause 10(1) of this bill. The foundation then uses this surplus to fund a new scheme. The foundation, however, is incorporated in Ontario, and like the present day association, is limited in its dealings outside the province. The end result is that the foundation launches a new scheme of benefit primarily to individuals and companies resident in Ontario, funded at least in part from the nation-wide operations of the association.

If the foundation as well as the association were incorporated federally, I would not be raising this scenario. In any event, it is difficult to speculate about this without knowing more about the foundation. Perhaps we can pursue that another time.

I suggest that we give this bill second reading and refer it to committee where this issue can be discussed along with other issues. I look forward to hearing from members who are supportive of this and wish it speedy passage.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I understand there is unanimous consent for this motion to be brought to a vote at second reading at this time.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the chair.

The Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill S-10, an act to incorporate Green Shield Canada.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

On clause 4—*Objects of Association*

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Chairman, I wonder if the hon. member for Mississauga South could tell us whether the terms of clause 4 are normal for this kind of corporation in Canada. Has he had any opportunity to review any other acts of incorporation?

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Chairman, this is a very standard clause that provides the objects to operate the corporation. I would not think there should be any particular difficulty. The objects speak for themselves.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5, 6 and 7 agreed to.

On Clause 8—*Transfer of Plans, etc.*

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member for Mississauga South has inquired whether there would be any tax consequences on the transfer of assets under this bill.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, it is a not to profit corporation so the corporation files are not for profit return as a charity. The consequence is that there are no tax complications that arise as a result of the transfer of the assets of the Ontario corporation and the conversion of the Ontario corporation, as it presently is, to the Green Shield Canada not for profit corporation.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Chairman, could the member tell us whether there is any GST on the transaction?

Mr. Blenkarn: Madam Speaker, I do not believe there is any GST because it is not selling anything. All it is really doing is transferring a corporation from one jurisdiction to another so that the entity remains the same. It changes its names and its jurisdiction but it remains the same and consequently being no sale, there is no goods and services tax.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

On clause 17—*Application of the Insurance Companies Act*

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Chairman, has the hon. member for Mississauga South checked all these sections of the Insurance Companies Act that may apply to this particular company to make sure that they are all the correct ones?

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Yes, Madam Chairman. The provisions I think the member is speaking about are the Winding Up Act, the Bankruptcy Act and the provisions are particularly eliminated with respect to the transfer and the new association created.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Chairman, the hon. member misunderstood my question. It was in regard to clause 17 of the bill. The provisions of the Insurance Companies Act, there are quite a large number of them, are said to apply to this association. I wonder if the hon. member has had a chance to review all those sections of the Insurance Companies Act and could give us his assurance that these are all the ones that ought reasonably to apply.

• (1730)

Mr. Blenkarn: I have and these indeed are the sections of the insurance act that apply. They are incorporated into this bill because that is the easiest way to put them into this act.

Clause 17 agreed to.

On Clause 18—*Amendment to OSFI Act*

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): This clause has to do with the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. I wonder if the member from Mississauga could inform the House of discussions with the office of the superintendent and if he believes this is a good piece of legislation.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): To acquaint the House, Green Shield had a series of meetings with the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions on the organization of this bill. The way the bill is presented was the result of those discussions. This legislation is really the creation of the solicitors for Green Shield, together with the office of the superintendent, working through the Minister of Finance, on the incorporation of this bill to transfer from Ontario jurisdiction to federal jurisdiction in the manner of this bill.

Clause 18 agreed to.

Clauses 19 and 20 agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Blenkarn moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Blenkarn moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I want to say how pleased I have been to be able to participate in this legislative process this afternoon and I thank the hon. member from Mississauga South for his thorough research in preparation for today's dealings in Committee of the Whole and for his explanation, very succinct and concise, of the purposes of the bill.

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.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am told that the hon. member might ask for unanimous consent of the House so the House would deal with another bill at this time.

Mr. Porter: Madam Chairman, I rise on a point of order. There have been some consultations across the floor of the House and there may be unanimous consent to deal expeditiously with all three readings of this private member's bill, which has proceeded through the Senate. Bill S–9 is an act to amend the incorporation of the Northwest Canada Conference Evangelical Church. I would seek permission to speak briefly to the bill if I may.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to present the bill at this time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I am prepared to give unanimous consent to proceed with the bill through all stages, but I want to tell the hon. member that I would like an explanation of the purposes of the bill in the course of his remarks. He does not need to keep it short. I would like to hear a good explanation.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is unanimous consent.

* * *

NORTHWEST CANADA CONFERENCE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat) moved that Bill S–9, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Northwest Canada Conference Evangelical Church, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to a Committee of the Whole.

He said: Madam Speaker, Bill S–9 is a very short bill. It contains only two clauses.

The purpose of clause 1 is to remove the present limitation on the value of property that may be held by the church.

Subsection 7(2) of chapter 79 of the Statutes of Canada 1928 at present reads as follows: "The aggregate value of the real estate held by or in trust for the corporation in Canada shall not exceed at any one time the sum of $1 million".

This clause would remove the limitation of the church to hold more than $1 million worth of assets. It does not put any new limitations, it simply removes that particular limitation.

Clause 2 would provide the church with a French name. The French name of the corporation incorporated by the said act is *Conseil de l'Église évangélique pour le Nord–Ouest du Canada*. I am sure that will come out a lot better in the translation.

The member opposite suggested a detailed explanation. It is basically to reflect the changes in today's society, the real estate values that may have implicated this as it has many other churches in expanding and developing assets across the country.

The second section of the bill recognizes the cultural diversity of Canada and places it within communities in which the second language may be required for those people who are involved. It would assist the church in meeting today's challenges in continuing to serve the spiritual needs of thousands of Canadians.

That is basically what is being asked for, the changes that are requested, and I would respectfully submit that bill today.

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.

[*Translation*]

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went in committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the Chair.

The Chairman: House in Committee of the Whole on Bill S-9, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Northwest Canada Conference Evangelical Church.

• (1740)

[*English*]

Shall clause 1 carry?

On Clause 1—

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Chairman, could the hon. member tell us where this church is incorporated and where its principal assets are?

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Madam Chairman, I believe the church is incorporated in western Canada, in Medicine Hat. The assets would be involved within some of the church organizations that it may have. It has churches in various communities throughout Canada.

I would assume that over the years as they have grown the value and the assets of those properties have probably reached the point where the $1 million limit that was in place in 1928 is irrelevant today. I think that is reason it is being requested.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I was given to understand that there might be a third bill to be dealt with today, Bill S-7. It is on the Order Paper. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader could tell us anything about discussions that may have taken place in respect of that bill?

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, it had been our hope that the three bills, including the one my hon. friend has just mentioned, might be dealt with during private members' hour this day.

The difficulty, as I understand it, is that one of the parties has not had a full opportunity to consult on the bill. The proposal is that Bill S-7, if unanimous consent exists later, not this day but at some other day, might be brought forward.

I believe the examination is nothing more than due diligence and there had not been an opportunity to do so earlier.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary, in the course of his discussions with the other parties, might also look at Bill C-306, standing in the name of on. member for Restigouche—Chaleur. That bill has been reported from a standing committee. It is back from the committee at the report stage. It is an act to amend to the Department of Forestry Act. I believe it changes the name of the department and does nothing else.

It received full support from all sides of the House when the bill was debated at second reading. I see that it has been reported from the committee with amendments. It strikes me that it might be one that could be adopted before the end of the sitting on June 23 if there was again consent to proceed with the bill.

Given the apparent unanimous agreement in respect of it, I wonder if that could be explored with a view to possibly clearing the item off the Order Paper. Certainly if it were brought forward later, possibly we would have debate in the fall and it would take up one full hour of private members' hour. If called without any opposition, it could be cleared up without taking up the full hour and it would help in the disposition of other business before the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may help both the member for Kingston and the Islands and the hon. parliamentary secretary, the bill to which the hon. member refers, in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, is on the Order Paper for Monday.

If there are no amendments, the third reading could be given on the same day. I am just saying it as a question of information.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I raised the issue because given my interest in Private Members' Business as a member of the subcommittee of the House management committee on Private Members' Business, I hate to see the hour taken up on Monday if the bill is going to pass without debate.

It is the same as getting two through today. We could have stuck with the rules and only dealt with Bill S-10. We managed to clear off another one, Bill S-9 I believe. We may do Bill S-7 another day.

All I am suggesting is that perhaps we could dispose of the bill at this time without taking up the entire hour. We could then move on to another item of Private Members' Business such as Motion No. 3 on the Order Paper, the motion in the name of Mr. Caccia and have a debate on that instead.

I realize that there are procedural impediments but clearly we have solved a problem for another week by dealing with Bill S-9 today. That is why I was hoping the parliamentary secretary might be able to assist.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the alternate doses of carborundum and grease that we are getting from opposite today.

It is a very constructive suggestion. My friend is not only an expert in parliamentary matters, in procedural matters, he is also a helpful individual. I suspect that he may have been a logger in a previous incarnation because I expect he will be an expert in forest matters when we get to Bill C-306 on Monday.

I think that we are falling into a bit of difficulty here. What my friend has said is helpful but I do not think that it is appropriate to further negotiate the business of the House on the floor of the House. Those discussions, I assure my friend, can take place. I am willing to participate in them behind the curtain.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will now suspend the House until six o'clock. On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, perhaps you will find that there is consent to proceed with Orders of the Day.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that we call it six o'clock and proceed with Government Orders?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

Madam Deputy Speaker: There were three and one half minutes left in the speech of the hon. member Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte. I will now recognize the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon.

• (1750)

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member who still has three and a half minutes left is in the back, I would be willing to relinquish the floor and begin my speech later.

I appreciate the opportunity to add to the debate we have had for most of this day with respect to the proposed changes in the Canada Post Corporation and what the changes in section 27 of the Canada Post Corporation Act are trying to accomplish.

I should say at the outset that since I have been in the House of Commons, I have followed the issues concerning Canada Post as a critic. I have been very impressed with the majority of things they have been doing in the last three or four years. Their management and their people have tried to bring the delivery of mail and parcels into the 20th century.

I am particularly impressed with Canada Post when I visit their facilities across the country. Members on my side of the House are glaring at me because I am complimenting Canada Post. I will get their comments after I am finished with mine.

Canada Post has the ability to adapt to the manufacturing processes of the 20th century. They take a parcel or a letter or whatever it may be, which they call a unit of production, and figure out the best way to facilitate it. When you take a look at what Canada Post has been doing with respect to management and employee responsibility in such a tiered process, there is a tremendous responsibility at every level of the operation. Many businesses in this country can learn some very important lessons from the way Canada Post handles its operation today.

I also see that in the merchandising and the services it provides. If I recall correctly, at one time it had relinquished the field of delivering parcels and especially letters on time. We find now its merchandising policies and its dedication to providing a service on time is truly a credit not only to those who serve in the management of this Crown corporation, but every person who is responsible for every step of the process for getting a letter or parcel posted in one part of the country and delivered in another in fairly good time. The employees and the management should truly be complimented.

That is why I have some difficulty today trying to understand what Canada Post is attempting to do with the legislation that is before this house. There are many more pieces of legislation that we have to discuss. There is the Immigration Act tomorrow that requires at least 10 days or two weeks of debate and yet we are going to try and cram it into two days and here we are talking about a piece of legislation with respect to changing Canada Post which really makes no absolutely no sense at all.

I will comment in a few moments on why I do not think this legislation should really be here and be discussed and debated in the House today.

Let me say that although Canada Post is truly impressive in a great many areas today, in my judgment it forgot some of the fundamentals of what the Canada Post Corporation truly is.

I come from a mid-sized community, Thunder Bay. I also represent many areas of a rural nature. Nipigon has its own little post office, Red Rock has its own post office, Armstrong has its own post office, Gull Bay is serviced by Armstrong, Dorion just recently closed down its local office and has its facilities handled by good friends of mine, the Atkinson family.

What we find is that in many small rural communities, not only in the area I represent but throughout this country, perhaps the only federal presence we have in that community that is representative or symbolic of Canada is the local post office.

It is the only facility that carries the Canadian flag, that has the Canadian colours, that has the Canadian symbols. This is where Canada Post truly has gone astray. When Canada Post started closing down these rural post offices under the guise of offering better services—it may be offering better services but I am not prepared to make that admission right now—what it is doing is closing down institutions which have been part of rural Canada for the last 100, 115 or 120 years. What is catastrophic is that with the closure of those rural post offices in those small communities it has removed all vestiges of a federal presence.

I do think that given the history of Canada Post and given its background and the services that it provided to this country, not only to large urban centres but throughout the country into small communities, more than anything else is the knowledge of all Canadians that there is a national presence in those small communities. Canada Post provided more than just the delivery of mail, the reception of mail and the forwarding of mail.

That small rural post office has been almost a social net, where people as they get elderly and have lived in a community for years and have had the opportunity to go down and pick up their mail in the morning, meet and discuss items of mutual interest, the post office has become a meeting point. I agree that that is not the responsibility of Canada Post but it is the responsibility of the Canadian government and a responsibility that we have inherited and we should not do away with.

Canada Post in its rural settings not only provides a national presence but it has the ability to assist those people. We all know today that if you do not have some legal training I doubt whether anyone in this country, even with legal training—I have some legal training—can fill out and complete all the forms that most citizens have to do in order to carry on with their day-to-day living.

The forms they have to fill out for their citizenship, to begin with, the forms that they have to fill out for getting their driver's licence, the forms they have to fill out to get their old age security, their old age pension, and the myriad of problems that arise when we have such a social net within our country, Canada Post in its rural setting and through the very fine people who work in those rural post offices, provided that service, provided that advice, provided that assistance to those small communities.

I wonder, when these small rural post offices close down, how those people who before had been able to get that type of assistance through their small rural post office, are going to go to get that assistance now.

Having said what I said at the outset about Canada Post, I think their management has gone just a step too far, and has developed perhaps too intense a business concept. It has forgotten the genesis of Canada Post, its beginnings, what it truly provided for a community. I think Canada Post has lost its way.

The other area that I would like to mention, Madam Speaker, in addition to the closure of so many small rural post offices is this new concept where mailboxes are put at the ends of streets in new developments. That may work in a climate where the sun shines and it only rains once in a while, but it does not work here.

I look at my friend from one of our rural ridings in British Columbia. I know my time is getting short, Madam Speaker, but let me just make the point that his constituents are the same as mine. We all grow older and with the seasonal differences in climate and so on, it is just not as good as it once was.

• (1800)

If we were to do anything in this country that would be beneficial to providing better services for all Canadians, it would be to completely remove those ugly post office boxes at the end of every street and to start delivering mail to every home in this country, as it should be.

I oppose this legislation. I do not know why it is here in this House. I do not think anyone knows why it is here in this House. It makes absolutely no sense that 10 per cent of a corporation would be sold to its employees who do not want to buy it. It provides no security for them. It provides no profit. It provides no gain. I do not know what the purpose of the legislation is.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Madam Speaker, it had not been my intention to speak this afternoon on this particular bill or on the amendment. However, the hon. member for Ottawa West motivated me to do so.

When that member was speaking, she said that the socialists were absent from the debate, socialists who believe in socializing everything, and where were they, why were they not taking part in this debate on this particular bill and on the amendment. She effectively said that we were not taking part in the debate and we were in favour of socializing everything.

She is wrong on both counts. I believe she knows that. I cannot accuse her of telling a falsehood, but I can certainly say that she was exaggerating to say the least.

The socialists of Canada as represented by the CCF and the NDP have never been in favour of socializing everything. However, a service like the post office is a natural candidate for remaining as a government-owned organization. Apart from being a service, it is a monopoly and that is another good reason for it remaining totally under public ownership.

This move by the government to sell off some shares in it is an obvious move to totally privatize it. The socialists who have spoken in this debate—I am not sure how many but two of them today and others on previous occasions—have all opposed the legislation and have supported the amendment to hoist it for six months which of course is killing the bill. We want to do that.

We can all relate our own stories about the post office. I was listening to the member who preceded me and I have some of my own.

I was raised in a relatively small community in British Columbia, South Wellington on Vancouver Island. At that time it had a population of around 500. The post office was a service organization there.

The member talked about various government forms and the assistance that would be given by the postmaster or postmistress in filling them out. Passport applications and old age pension applications, the many forms that one needs in dealing with government which are now picked up by going to a special office in a city could then be picked up at the local post office. Help was available if needed so it was not just forms.

In South Wellington in those days there was one telephone in the community. It was in the post office. Beside the post office was a family-owned grocery store. It was in the same building as the post office but separated by a door that could be locked on occasion. If the telephone rang in the post office and there was a genuine emergency, then it was not beyond members of that family to go and get the person who was required to answer the phone. On other occasions, the phone could be used by people coming into the post office for that purpose.

The post office itself, as well as providing forms, was also the nearest thing to a bank that was available to many people. It provided services which are currently available only in banks, a savings organization that was available to the post office. Postal money orders could be purchased in the post office. It really was something that tied Canada together.

If the mail was piling up for one individual, then the postmistress would advise a neighbour. She would perhaps say to the neighbour: "Would you like to deliver this mail to that person?" That is, if it was not registered mail. Or alternatively ask: "Have you seen that person lately? Is he or she well? Is there some problem? Would you like to look in on that person?" With messages like that people looked after each other in those days. The post office was the place that brought them together, the common place where people called, where they met each other and talked. It was a social centre.

It was more than a social centre. It served the people of that community of South Wellington as it did many other communities all across Canada. Today it is not a service organization, it is profit driven. We have lost something in that.

The post office boasts of its success when it makes a profit. In this particular year, I understand it is not making a profit. It is experiencing a loss of some tens of millions of dollars. It mismanaged employer-employee relations to the extent there was a very serious work stoppage, a result of an argument between employers and employees, which cost a lot of money to give something less than proper service to the people.

Whenever there is that kind of stoppage it cannot be blamed on one group or the other. One can certainly say that Canada Post has to take more than its share of the blame for that work stoppage.

It resulted in the loss of service and resulted also in the tens of millions of dollars of losses the corporation will be reporting this year. But that is not so important. It is the service that was lost. Losing money is important, particularly at this period in the history of Canada, but more important is the loss of service.

Loss of service not just because of that work stoppage but loss of service because Canada Post is retreating from its previous policy of taking its service to the people. Instead it is saying: "You come to us. We are not here to serve you. We are here to offer something if you wish, but you have to come to us. Look for us, find us somewhere, and you can then make use of our services."

It is cutting back on the variety of services, the things that used to be available in post offices, making it more difficult for people generally to get whatever service they want from that post office, by having to go further, by having to drive.

In the days I was talking about there was one car in the area of the community in which I lived, one automobile. Now, of course, everyone drives. They go much shorter distances than we had to go to pick up our mail. But in those days we walked to get the mail.

In those days the post office was a service. I do not think it was losing money in those days either, but it offered services far beyond those offered today. It helped to keep Canada together as a nation. It helped maintain contact between people who now find it difficult to maintain contact.

We should be trying to improve that as a service. We should maintain it as a publicly owned organization, an organization that because it is a monopoly and because it is a service, should be a service oriented organization, should be publicly owned and not privatized as this legislation provides.

We have no hesitation. All of the New Democrats when this bill comes up for a vote will be voting in favour of the motion to hoist, recognizing that what we are doing is killing the bill.

We are hoping that we can achieve that and kill it at least until after the election. Hopefully then the new government will turn the clock back and start improving Canada Post, start improving it from the point of view of providing and maintaining a service to people rather than boasting about profits that it makes from not providing an efficient service.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I join in this debate on Bill C–73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, to register my disagreement with the government strategy dealing with Canada Post.

Members on this side of the House have found it very difficult dealing with Canada Post on any grounds. Rather than look at the questions of service and responsiveness to Canadians this government is looking at changes in ownership patterns. It is avoiding the major issue it is supposed to be facing.

I was happy to hear that the previous speaker from the NDP was quick to praise the operations of Canada Post in the old days under the Liberal Party. It is not very often we hear such complimentary comments. We all know that even in those days there were a few problems, but I thank him very much for his support and we hope to be able to return it to the fine levels of service in the next few months and years.

• (1810)

What has struck me, as a member of Parliament, is when looking at which departments are easy to deal with and which departments are totally incompetent, totally unable to respond and totally unable to answer a basic question, on a scale of negatives, Canada Post is front and centre.

Never in all my time as a member of Parliament have I ever been treated so poorly as I have in dealing with Canada Post. The only other organization to treat me so poorly was General Motors but that is another story for another time.

In dealing with Canada Post, I am struck by the fact it is unable to understand that its strategy may be wrong, it may in fact be making a mistake, that it should make changes.

When dealing with the Department of Employment and Immigration for example, the regional director will sit down and talk with a member of Parliament and say: "Well we only have so much money. We think we are going to do it this way. What do you think?" Do you know what? Its officials respond. They talk and they come up with a strategy. It may not always be the one wanted but you know it is the lack of questions dealing with the regional public administration in this House concerning employment and immigration. It is because of that level that these people seek out members of Parliament and try to develop a consensus.

On the other hand, Canada Post sends what can only be described as God–awful notices at the last minute on a Friday afternoon to indicate that on Monday something is being closed down. Its officials will meet you, under duress, but normally speaking they will not. If they do meet you under duress, it is to explain why things cannot be changed, and they always look so sad.

There was a period two years ago where I had a number of changes in the organization of mail services in Winnipeg North Centre. One of the key points of survival of an older community and older neighbourhood like Winnipeg North Centre is as it goes through a period of decline everyone wants out.

Businesses want out because they are insecure. They have older buildings or the streets are insecure or there is a poor traffic pattern. People living in older homes decide not to fix them up. So it is really up to public institutions to maintain an infrastructure, to make it easy for those who stay there to maintain a life in an older neighbourhood.

Let us take the matter of pulling out the services of mailing parcels, a very simple thing. Older Europeans living in Winnipeg North Centre send parcels back home. All of a sudden, they have to go far away to be able to do it.

Canada Post pulls out a map and says: "This is not far away, Mr. Walker, it is close by. Look at it." I say: "Have you ever got on a bus with those parcels? Do you know that the bus turns that way and the post office is that way? Do you know that you have to walk across seven lanes of Main Street, the worst street in urban Canada and wait for the bus and then get off and walk back across the street?" "Well, Mr. Walker, we have research," they say. I say: "Well that is great, is it market research?" They say: "It is great market research." I say: "Well I spent a couple of years doing market research." They say: "Great, we will get the guy to call you. You will have a great conversation."

It is now 24 months and counting and I am sure one day he will call me and have that meeting. If Canada Post is not willing to sit down and have this basic discussion about the information in which it is changing around communities then why should it be allowed to develop a corporate plan independent of parliamentary scrutiny? The answer is that it should not be allowed to. This

government should take responsibility for what it is doing because it is withdrawing basic services.

Back to that famous postal station where these people have to go down Selkirk Avenue, across the street, up on the bus route, and across the street to do their services. Well the post office is now making it more convenient for them. It has closed that post office so they do not have to worry about trying to go there, they can try to find somewhere else.

The frustration that we have is not in dealing with change, because no one in the House of Commons believes that there are not some changes in the service, but in dealing with the quality of the change process. If I phone up public relations in Ottawa and say: "This is what has happened to me in Winnipeg," they reply: "I cannot believe how bad the guys in Winnipeg are. They should not treat you that way, Mr. Walker. We will look right into it." He is right there beside the market researcher and returning phone calls. If phone calls to members of Parliament are not returned, my basic question is to whom do they return them? The answer is that they do not return them to anybody. The frustration with such a basic thing as the postal service is incredible when it should not be that way because you have to manage change.

A few minutes ago the member from Thunder Bay was up talking about what was going on in Red Rock and Nipigon and communities in his constituency. Three years ago, he and I were involved with a non-partisan tour reviewing the cutbacks of VIA Rail. We invited, in good faith, the Solicitor General who was the Minister of Transport. He was offered the opportunity, but VIA Rail was so busy that there was no seat available for the minister. He could only watch us from CTV and CBC.

We asked what the backbone of federal presence was in a town like Red Rock. There were two things. They were VIA Rail and Canada Post.

The government has taken out VIA Rail and that leaves Canada Post. You just heard the member talk about the quality of service as a result of recent decisions. We could go across the country, community by community, and make suggestions to the government as to how to look at issues as they are. One issue is ownership by employees when employees through their unions have made it quite clear that they do not want that strategy. It is trying to dump on to the employees, something they do not want. You have to ask what it is doing.

You say to yourself that perhaps there is a certain class of employees that is more interested than others. That is not ever spoken about and perhaps we should talk about that. Perhaps it is the first stage of getting the public used to thinking of Canada Post as shares and shareholders. Perhaps the next step after that is privatization.

If privatization is the issue, then put it on the table fellow members of Parliament. Put it on the table, Mr. Minister. Let us see the privatization strategy of this government. Let us not see this piecemeal strategy from one community to the next. Let us have a strategy for dealing with postal service in this country that makes sense. Let us see if this organization can manage change.

It was very boastful two years ago, but now we hear it is going to lose money.

When is that going to be announced? It will probably be late Friday afternoon when no one is paying attention.

Mr. Lewis: No, Wednesday.

Mr. Walker: Wednesday? It will be after we have gone home. Oh, that's brilliant. Tuesday? Wednesday? This is it. This is like drawing straws. These guys cannot figure which day is the most convenient for them.

I am sure that at the last possible moment we will hear the bad news. I am sure it will be lost because there has been nothing but bad news from this government. That is perhaps another question.

I stand up to oppose what is a very poor piece of legislation. Our critic has had a detailed explanation of our position. He gave it several says ago. Many members from this side have stood up to make the same arguments. We in this particular party have led the charge for the modernization of Canada Post, but in a responsible way that improves communities.

The government makes light of the fact that changes have to be brought in a responsible fashion. It will pay the price for that.

Madam Speaker, I call upon the government to withdraw this piece of legislation and start over again with building a more responsible postal service.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate and urge the House to support the motion that would cause consideration of this bill to be postponed for six months.

This debate on second reading gives us all an opportunity to bring before the House the problems that each of us get from day to day with Canada Post and to look at the administration of Canada Post.

I would first like to focus on the larger issue of Canada Post's labour relations. I practised labour law and they used to talk a lot about labour problems. Most of the time when there are labour problems, the real issue is management problems. Good corporations which have good labour relations have properly dealt with those relations.

Canada Post has, without question, the worst labour relations of any company in Canada over any extended period of time. There can be no doubt that it is the experience of all of us that the source of the problem is the management policy of Canada Post. The Conservatives seem to consistently endorse these policies.

Here is a company which still has over 100,000 grievances outstanding. I have personal experience from arbitrators who have been asked to deal with this. The inability of management in this case to get its act together has been completely beyond their experience. There is no doubt where the responsibility lies for this mountain of grievances that remain unresolved. It is with the management of Canada Post. They are unable to deal with the simplest of grievances. They allow them to build up, issue after issue after issue, so that the employees are effectively deprived of what they are entitled to under the law, which is a reasonable disposition of their grievance. That right has evaporated.

• (1820)

The Canada Labour Code has an essential bargain with the labour movement that falls within its jurisdiction. The bargain is this. If one gives up one's right to strike, except at the end of a contract, then the Parliament of Canada will assure an individual an efficient system of disposition of grievances. There is a system set up in legislation to do that. It is reinforced by the collective agreement.

However, here we have a management which has intentionally gone out to destroy the system by failing to deal with it. If anyone argues about the intention of Canada Post management in this regard, you first have the principle that their intention is judged by the effect of their acts. The effect is clearly to destroy the collective bargaining system and the grievance system. Second, it is clearly consistent with everything else that Canada Post management has done. It also spills over into the way in which they deal with the general public.

Let me say that in addition to the pile of grievances which have created an intense morale problem within Canada Post from coast to coast to coast, we see their other work—if it can be called that—with their employees through the rest of the collective bargaining process.

The employees of Canada Post—and I ask those from across the country who are listening to compare it to their own circumstance—have been three years without a collective agreement. Their management has not had the will or the ability to reach a collective agreement for three years. Only with the intervention of this Parliament was there any wage increase voted and that was after Canada Post broke its word to this Parliament and to its employees during the strike last year.

Canada Post, at that time, agreed on certain terms and conditions about the arbitration under which back-to-work legislation would be voted on. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers kept its side of the bargain and withdrew the picket lines. However, the moment the legislation was adopted and the workers went back to work, Canada Post took its part of the bargain off the table. It left the employees and the arbitrator without the agreement they had had from Canada Post.

We have an arbitrator now working on a collective agreement that is going into its fourth year. We have the grievances, the failure to have a collective agreement and a persistent pattern of management which seems designed to bring the whole post office machinery to a halt.

I will conclude with a reference to the other aspects of this "management" that the government wants its employees to buy into.

Each of us in our ridings have different problems, but let me refer to a couple in my riding. First, in Victoria, if you want to complain about the service of Canada Post you end up phoning somebody in Vancouver who has no idea where anything is in Victoria in any event and is usually not well trained to deal with the issue. This is a matter of intense frustration—and that is after you have had to take a long time trying to get through on the phone—to the people of Victoria.

The capacity for the public to make complaints or even ask questions about what is happening in Canada Post has been removed from our community which, after all, is the capital of British Columbia, a city of over 300,000 people. It has further taken the ability to actually confront a human being on a person to person basis. All you get is a disembodied voice on a telephone that does not know the nature of the problem in any event.

However, when you can get through that bureaucracy and you can get someone to respond, you get bafflegab. The best example I have is a problem we had in our constituency with condominium apartments. Canada Post decided it was going to compete with those companies that hand out flyers and it was going to offer a service to the companies that wanted the flyers delivered. It provided its own delivery system and hired workers who were non-union, non-bonded.

Mr. Lewis: Good.

Mr. Brewin: The Solicitor General says good, which tells you something about this government's attitude toward the rights of employees to collective bargaining.

It hired non-union employees to go around and deliver these on the weekend. It turned over the keys to apartment buildings which it had entrusted to the letter carriers, to these young kids who go out without a uniform on a Saturday or a Sunday. They were allowed into the building from dawn until late at night. They had complete access to the post boxes of all those who lived in the building. There are many, many seniors who live in these buildings who are very concerned about security. It created a great fear within many people about the lack of security this involved.

When we started talking to Canada Post about this, we discovered the heart of corporate mentality. It said the customers want this and that. It dawned on us, a group of seniors from these condominiums and me, listening to this official from Canada Post talk, that the customer to Canada Post is no longer the general public. It is no longer the individual member of this community. It is no longer the Canadian citizen and resident who established Canada Post through Parliament in the first place. It is now the commercial venture that wants to peddle its junk mail on the weekends.

I submit that what we have seen is the privatization of the mentality of Canada Post and this bill represents the first step toward the legal privatization of Canada Post because the bill provides for the establishment of shares which in this first instance will be available to the employees. However, it will merely take a stroke of the pen to extend them to those who wish to buy up our postal service and complete the process of privatization which has already begun.

It is a great tragedy for this country that what was an important public service has been destroyed by this government and its predecessor over a period of time. No longer can we say we have a confident Public Service designed to serve the people of Canada. We have an increasingly private company designed to serve the corporate sector in this country. It is a tragedy and a sad day for Canada that this has happened.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address this issue, Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

I find it a little strange that we are debating a bill called the Canada Post bill. It seems to me that the first principle is that the bill should reflect the reality that is out there. As far as I can recall, we have removed that reality. The name Canada Post, *Postes Canada*, is now called Mail/Postes. We have removed the name Canada.

• (1830)

Why are we calling this bill the amendment to same when it is no longer a reality?

Second, and more sadly I guess, is the implication behind the changes that have taken place to Canada Post. I cannot help but call it Canada Post because that is what it is in my memory bank and that is what it has meant to me as a citizen living in a major city but one who has also lived in the country and been part of that small constituency that appreciates and enjoys and recognizes the importance of a rural post office.

I know that when we go to the country in the summertime the first thing we look forward to is going to visit our local little post office. We walk the several miles. It is actually three and a half miles from our home in La Macaza. You go and chat, you meet all the locals, you catch up on the winter stories, what has gone on with everybody, who is well and who is sick, who has graduated from school, where they have a new job, meeting the new children and so on. It is really the centre of communal life in the small rural communities. One of the unfortunate realities of what has happened to Canada Post is the closing down of much of rural Canada.

Mr. Lewis: Rural Canada is alive and well.

Mrs. Finestone: I would suggest that the Solicitor General can make his observations. He is entitled to his point of view. I will respect the difference in his point of view. I hope he has at least the decency to respect and listen to what I have to say.

One of the other things that I would find as I went to Canada Post and to my local post office is that I could pick up forms, I could get information, I could send a money order or a money cheque because there was nothing available, no banking services. It was an important institution in the life of the community.

It seems rather a sad critique on this country and how we are looking to building a sense of Canadian unity, a sense of Canadian identity, when we would first of all remove, certainly in rural Quebec, one of the few places where you would see a Canadian flag in every little town through which one would travel. You would have the sense that you are a part of Canada because of the name Canada Post, *Poste Canada*.

It also would seem to be that if you move from the country area where it serves that important link, you move back into the city area and think about what Canada Post did on a national scale. Canada Post was a vital element in the supplementation and the subvention of our communication links through our magazines and our community newspapers and our books. Canada Post provided an important subsidy to the delivery of magazines and books and community newspapers and the little church newspapers that kept everybody in the countryside and in the community district well informed of what was going on at the local level.

The government has seen fit to cut more than half the kinds of money used to support our community newspapers. It is a very sad day if you add up all the factors that are cutting down the identifications that represent Canada and that make us feel there is a sense of nationhood. After all, we are more than just the reception and the delivery of service as a postal service. We are also the centre of much business activity.

That business activity which we subsidize in the way of books and literature and community news had a vital role to play. You come from an area where you had a community newspaper, you wrote articles in your community newspaper and members of your constituency have been deprived in many cases of your wise counsel occasionally, some that I would agree with and some that I would not agree with.

On the other hand, you had subsidized air freight and that has been reduced to the Northwest Territories and northern Quebec. If you have seen the price of a loaf of bread and meat and general food up in the north you would know how important that postal subsidy was.

Another thing came to my attention and it is just of recent date that I have noticed this. I do not know about you but as a young person I used to collect stamps and I used to collect the little identifications where the stamp came from. I remember being excited when it came from Europe and what little town it came from in France or England or Israel.

I used to know where it came from and they knew it came from Montreal and they knew that it was perhaps from one of their other friends in the city of Montreal. No longer. It says Canada and the date. That is all it says. Look at the cancellation stamps on your envelopes and see if you do not feel there is a loss of a sense of identity across this country because of a silly little thing like that.

I know this is all in the interest of business and certainly I do not agree that one should stay frozen in time. This is a changing society. It is certainly one in which we have moved to the electronic era, to instant communication of all kinds. The fax machine is a perfect example. I do not know now what we would do without the fax and without the car phone. I know life would not be as easy to get along with and we certainly could not cope with lots of things.

I am not saying we should not move forward but I am saying there may be lots of important business principles that are fundamental and changes are needed in our country. A country is not just a business. It is something we seem to have forgotten and I think that is a sad commentary and maybe it is part and parcel of the reason why we are all so cranky out there. We forgot there is something special about a country that is not bottom line business management.

City names have been removed from the cancellation stamps and now you only have a postal code, so you lose your local and regional identity. If you remove "Canada" from Canada Post and if you remove the flag from the rural and urban towns you have a loss of sense of unity. You have something rather strange going on in this particular bill in which the government feels that it should privatize—I should suggest not privatize, although I think that is what is in its mind as you look down the road. Rather, that it is going to sell 10 per cent of the shares to the workers at Canada Post.

I would like to know what kind of a gift package that really is. Canada Post last year lost something in the order of $100 million. You tell me as an enlightened person, are you going to go out and buy shares in a company that is losing $100 million? I do not know about you but I would not do that and I do not know that many of my friends or family would do that. I do not know why the minister thinks this is the greatest thing since sliced bread, that he is offering the workers of Canada Post who, by the way, have the worst record in the world as workers. I do not know if it is their fault or that of the inside organization or the management but they certainly do not have the best reputation in the world.

This minister tells us that this is a great scheme. He is going to sell of 10 per cent of the shares of Canada Post to its employees. As I said, I did not think it was such a great idea and then I come across the fact that the Conservative majority on the committee that was studying some of the proposals around what to do with the Canadian post office said in its recommendation number 36 that the Government of Canada should privatize Canada Post once adequate financial performance comparable to the private sector levels has been attained and once the industrial relations climate has been improved.

I do not think we have reached the financial well-being of the country, nor does it seem to me that the total industrial relations have been straightened away so that it would seem that even the opposite side of this House would agree that this would be a good idea.

It is our sense that Canada Post should remain a Crown corporation. It should remain a Crown corporation because it should serve us and serve the individual in our society. That is the whole point of having a postal service for anyone.

I do want to talk about one particular problem in my riding that I hope whatever happens will be addressed. That is the question of the supermailboxes. In my riding, in the new areas and in some of the older areas, the giant green supermailboxes are out there. I do not know if the postal service thought you should have one answer for anywhere across this land but in this city, in Mount Royal riding, in the kinds of streets and the type of people we have with the rough ice and snow that piles up, the cold and the sleet and the rain, and particularly the seasons of the year which are very difficult, the senior citizens in my riding cannot get to those boxes. They have difficulty opening the boxes. I would think that service to every home and every door in the metropolitan areas is an absolute must. I would like to see that extended to all the urban areas.

• (1840)

I can understand where that would be difficult in small towns, although I must say that there was a delivery by car and a lovely postman who used to drive up and drop the mail in your little box. It was a really important part of catching up on the news and gossip.

In the major cities in a northern country like Canada, we cannot afford to allow people to go out in the inclement weather and not be able to pick up their cheques.

Mr. Sobeski: It is healthy for them.

Mrs. Finestone: You think it is healthy for them. Well, not all these people are as healthy as you are and may you keep your good health.

Mr. Lewis: Come to a small town and find out.

Mrs. Finestone: All I can tell you is that it is not the best way. I object, Mr. Speaker. I would like to finish by saying that I really object to this legislation. It is not in the best interest of Canada. It is not in the best interest of the workers. There are a lot of things we can do to improve it, but this is not the right route. I would like it reconsidered.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, as I commence my remarks on Bill C–73, a bill to make changes to the post office act, what could I possibly say about the post office that has not already been said in this House over the last 100 or so years. I venture to suggest that everything that could possibly be said about the economies of scale, the cost of postage, the efficiencies of service, the hirings and firings and the patronage and the locations and closings of post offices around the country has all been said 100 times or more.

This particular bill has been described by our critics as the thin edge of the wedge in a privatization. While it in fact is not a privatization, they view it as a precursor piece of legislation. To say the least, they are very cautious about it.

Canada Post is by all measurements a large corporation in significant transition. It has had to move from the age of the hard copy, the hand-written letter, into the age of electronics. It now has competition in terms of communication from other couriers who handle niche markets from the fax machine and from parcel deliveries. In fact, if you think about it, what has really occurred is that the post office this country set up many years ago to handle the mail was to do its job then working with virtually the only medium that existed at that time for communication. In a sense the post office then had a monopoly on the totality of communication beyond the spoken word and that was the written word put in a letter, stamped and delivered by hand to somebody in another location.

Since we gave the post office that monopoly, copying many other countries around the world, we now communicate in many different ways. The simple radio was a means of communication. We have television and other electronic devices I made reference to. This means that no longer do we have to rely on the post office as a monopoly conveyer of communications. That has changed the role of the post office. That is why in some quarters the post office is looked upon as a candidate for privatization. It is not a monopoly, it is not an essential service the way it was 100 years ago, therefore, it may be a role that government does not have to play anymore. That has been suggested and our critics are very cautious about that.

The first thing I want to say about privatization is that our party is not prepared to accept half a privatization, a tentative or a punitive privatization or a little bit or a trial privatization. You cannot have half a privatization. Therefore, we are not prepared to support this initiative because it looks good.

I recall earlier in the day when someone asked the same question: Is this a privatization? There was one member opposite who was nodding his head. I know he does not speak for the government, or nod his head for the government, but there is a real sense in this House that the post office is a candidate and this bill is a precursor of that.

Other privatizations this House has looked at and accomplished by legislation over the last few years have made us aware of potential problems, challenges in the process of privatization, and none of that has been addressed as we look at the post office. It is totally premature to look upon this as a possible entry point to privatization.

One of those problems, of course, in privatizing is to get a handle on the value of the assets. In this case I recall in the early 1980s the process by which all of the lands which were used by post offices and owned by Public Works on behalf of Canada and its taxpayers were simply transferred to Canada Post. Millions and millions of dollars worth of real estate in large cities, small towns, villages all over the place was simply transferred to Canada Post without reference to its asset value. We have not begun to assess that asset value in Canada Post.

We on this side of the House are not in the business of giving blank cheques to the government. That is conceptually why we do not want to support this legislation here today.

I noted earlier today what for me was a very sad event. I am not so sure all members had noted it, but we gave third reading to a bill, Bill C–55, governing pensions here earlier today. Within that bill there were two clauses whereby this House gave the Governor in Council the right to make regulations which would override the provisions of the very statute we were passing. That is the first time I am aware this happened in this House.

Some members spoke to it last night but the government did not want to listen. That was called a Henry VIII clause. It is a reference to the last time in history when this really happened in a big way. It was when Henry VIII back in the 1500s decided he wanted that power over Parliament. He wanted the right to override by proclamation provisions of statutes that were passed by the House of Commons, by the Parliament in England.

He got that power, he forced it on Parliament, and the only time Parliament was able to get rid of that was when Henry VIII died, and they did get rid of it. I just want to point out that we in this House gave a blank cheque today to the Governor in Council to make regulations to override what was in our statute.

An hon. member: That was the most ridiculous thing.

Mr. Lee: That is not just a blank cheque, that is an abdication of our parliamentary responsibilities. If there ever was a thin edge of the wedge that is it. I am cautioning Parliament in that regard.

This bill is purporting to offer a form of employee participation in the profits of Canada Post. There was a time when Canada Post did not look for profits but in this case the corporation has modernized itself and it is pursuing improving economies, better management, more efficiency, and lo and behold, profit.

It has managed to derive a profit based in part I might add by the fact that it is not in a position where it has to write off or depreciate all of these assets of real estate and buildings that were given to it by the taxpayer about 10 years ago. That is water under the bridge. It is potentially a very healthy corporation and there is no reason in the world why it cannot break even and make a profit.

In any event the goal as I understand it from this legislation is to permit employees of Canada Post to participate in those profits, a form of profit-sharing by letting them acquire by purchase—although it does not say purchase—maybe the shares will be given as gifts, we do not know, with a limit of 10 per cent on the number of shares. They would be non-voting shares and they would be sold, given, transferred or rewarded to employees. In principle, one does not see much wrong with that unless you stop and look at the fact that we have a Crown corporation. I am not comfortable mucking around with the capital structure of a Crown corporation until we in this House have decided what we are going to do with the Crown corporation.

• (1850)

If this House had decided that it was going to be split seven ways or privatized or restructured in any way, then we could talk about all of these other things and business principles.

Right now I think the government is just trying to slide in a little bell and whistle here that is premature because this House has not decided what it wants to do with Canada Post. I know the government has not. If it has, it had better come clean and tell us and not try to slide the thing through with a bill like this.

Let me wrap up and indicate non-support of the bill. I caution about embarking on a quasi-pseudo privatization without fully endorsing the concept and thinking it through and valuing the assets. I caution also about the kind of clause that was contained in the bill earlier today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on the amendment. 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 nays have it.

The amendment is negatived on division.

Amendment (Mr. Boudria) negatived.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to continue this debate, focusing on one of the points that my colleague from the town of Mount Royal made about federal presence.

Before I get into the point of federal presence, I want to say up front that I am a fan of the post office of Canada. I know that the post office is probably one of the most efficient companies in Canada.

I remember back in 1981 when we were having difficulties with the post office. There was a major strike on at that time. The efficiency experts went into the post office. They were the types of people who used the same sort of measurement and standards they used in all corporations across Canada. When the study was finished, they discovered that the post office was one of the most efficient companies in all of Canada. It was running at about 97 per cent or 98 per cent efficiency.

When we got these numbers we were absolutely flabbergasted at how the post office could be this efficient and why so many people were upset with the post office. We focused on the area of metropolitan Toronto, which had a very high level of productivity and efficiency. This was even before it was in this mode of privatization.

The problem is that when 20 million pieces of mail are handled in a day, if 2 per cent of that mail does not get delivered within a cycle, which I think at that time was about 48 or 72 hours, then all of a sudden people start complaining; oh, I didn't get my mail on time, et cetera. But 2 per cent or 400,000 pieces out of 20 million pieces is really, by industry standards, not that bad.

As Canadians we do not really appreciate the post office as much as we should. But I take the government to task on this issue of dismantling the post office. When the member from Saskatchewan was talking earlier today, he talked about the fact that in his province close to 100 rural post offices had been closed down. In the country within the last seven years over 1,000 post offices had been closed. When the member for Halton—Peel said earlier today that he did not want to spend taxpayers' money subsidizing post offices, that is not the way to look at it.

We should realize that these post offices are instruments for pulling the country together, that they are a federal presence. Do not just think of the post office as delivering mail, think of what other supplemental services can be added to the post office so that the federal presence in the community can be enhanced. If there is one thing that we need in this country today it is national instruments that will pull us together. We need the federal presence in this country more than we have ever needed it before.

We know, for example, in some provinces in this country that they do not even fly the Canadian flag. One thing for sure about the post office; you could always count on the Canada word mark, that is the word Canada with the little flag over the *a*. Remember when that first space arm was opened up in outer space and that Canada word mark was on the side of that Spar Aerospace arm? That Canada with the flag over it gave everybody in this country a great sense of pride, a great sense of appreciation for the talent and the technology of Canadians. It was a patriotic feeling.

The post offices in this country, especially in rural areas, provide that same kind of feeling. They are not just delivery systems, they are symbols of the Government of Canada.

I was approached in my riding office about three weeks ago by a group called the Falcon Group of Canada. In fact, one of their offices is based here in Ottawa. These people have developed a very special technology and they have sold this technology to the United States postal system. It is called the "Postal Buddy Corporation". This postal system, which is like a computerized technology, allows postal patrons to file changes of address, notification for publications of their new address, it prints postage-paid change of address cards, it will organize information on travel trips across Canada. It is very exclusive technology and was developed here in Canada. Interestingly enough, it has been sold to the U.S. postal service before it has been sold to ours. I find that interesting. Mind you, I think that the postal service is going to be seeing them in the next week or so.

• (1900)

Here is an example of a Canadian technology, designed and made in this country, which allows the post office to be more than a place where you buy your stamps and get your money orders. It allows the postal service to have new opportunities for generating more revenue and to make it more profitable. That is where the post office should be heading.

If the revenue was there to make it a self-sustaining unit, especially in the rural areas, then surely to goodness the government would not be so preoccupied with closing all of these places which are instruments of national unity.

This debate tonight, where we are focusing on this 10 per cent employee equity participation bill, really should not be a front burner item right now. We should be using the post office to pull us together, to put the federal presence right across this country, especially when it is so inexpensive to set up and operate a post office.

When we get in this bill to where we are talking about this share distribution for employees, I say to myself that first of all there is absolutely no share rights in this share distribution. There is no definition as to how we are going to put a value on this. Just think of the massive amounts of land that the post office owns from coast to coast. How is that going to be factored into the value of the company? Quite frankly, I have never seen a real evaluation for the postal service in this country. I have never seen an evaluation for the land of the post office. How can we going to put a value on these shares?

We know the mistake that was made when we did the share offering on Air Canada. We put it out at almost $2.50 less than what the analysts said it was worth.

Mr. Soetens: What is it trading for now?

Mr. Mills: The member for Ontario asks what is it trading for now. That is another reason why we should not be in such haste to put out equity in the post office at this moment because the value of those shares is very low, especially property values.

Mr. Soetens: We made the right decision with Air Canada.

Mr. Mills: Well, you did not really make the right decision in the long-term and I will tell you why you did not make the right decision. The Government of Canada has now lost its ability to use Air Canada as an instrument of public policy.

That is the one major difference I have with many members on the government side. I really believe that there are times when these instruments like VIA Rail, Air Canada and the post office are instruments of public policy-making and the most important thing that we could be using them for today is pulling the country together.

Look at some of the tremendous difficulties that we are having, not every one but a lot of us, with the Voyageur Program, which is a fabulous program. I salute the Secretary of State for that program, but if we do not follow the programming of Air Canada then there are a lot of youth in this country who are going to miss the boat on the Voyageur Program.

Getting back to the post office, I have always been a big fan of the post office. I am not against equity participation, but at this moment in time when we have so little real definition to give for the value of these shares I just do not think it is a priority issue and it should be put on the back burner.

Let us go back to using the post office of Canada as an instrument to pull this country together. Let us also start looking at some of the alternative ideas out there for rural post offices so that they can provide more sophisticated services like the ones that this Falcon group provides.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to the House today about Bill C-73 which will enable Canada Post Corporation to create an employee share ownership plan to allow employees to invest in their company.

Canada Post has changed to better serve Canadians and to meet the challenges of the globally competitive world evolving around us. The participation of employees through the share plan is a common sense next step to ensure that improvement continues.

Over the last 10 years this corporation has learned a lot about corporate reshaping. Its management took the government department it inherited, stripped it down to the basics and rebuilt it. That modern post office began in 1981 when Parliament took some 63,000 employees, fully one-quarter of the Canadian Public Service and said: "Okay, you are a business. Act like a commercial corporation".

Back in 1981 the mail had become increasingly irregular. Strikes denied Canadians their postal service for weeks at a time. Annual deficits reached $600 million at that time and to try and equate that, it worked out that probably 5 cents on every letter that was mailed was a subsidy that the taxpayers paid.

The plants of Canada Post 10 years ago were inefficient. They were outdated and contained obsolete equipment. Previous governments had always found more pressing needs for their limited resources than investing in the capital assets for the post office.

This new Crown corporation had annual revenues of more than $1.5 billion but it had no accounting system. It operated from one end of the country to the other but no one knew where the money was going at any given time.

In order to meet the enormous task that lay ahead Canada Post had to begin thinking like a business. By asking Canada Post to prepare and submit annually for approval a five-year corporate plan the government recognized and encouraged this needed change in attitude. As a result Canada Post began to emphasize a corporate culture stressing such values as customer sensitivity, quality, and reliability.

These values are not easily instilled but the corporation has worked over the years to ensure that these will be the values which their employees live day to day.

It is no exaggeration to say that changes the corporation had undergone are staggering. They stood everything on its head, examined every process, questioned every assumption. They had to challenge their people every day. They demanded their creativity and their complete commitment. In other words they said to the employees: "Don't leave your brains hanging on the outside door".

The process was a tough one on every one from the executive offices to the plant floors. Some left but many soldiered on and this is a tribute to the quality of these people who have indeed done a fine job.

The purpose of this legislation is to permit these employees who have contributed so much to acquire a piece of Canada Post and enhance their success. Clear evidence that their efforts were beginning to bear fruit appeared in 1988-1989 when the corporation turned a profit for the first time. This point bears repeating as taxpayers are no longer forced to pay for their postal service twice, once when they pay their taxes, and again when they buy their stamps.

Canada Post has made progress over the last 10 years but it can feel its competitors breathing down its neck every day, not just in Canada, but from around the world.

The sales force is slugging it out with the courier and parcel business and the advertising delivery companies such as newspapers.

Even the basic letter mail is under threat from facsimile machines and new technology such as electronic data transfer. If you have paid your bills lately through an automated teller bank machine then you know what I am talking about.

The corporation's development of new technology and new markets means employees will be fundamental to building on that achievement as the corporation expands its courier, postal, and mail information transfer business. Employee participation as proposed in this legislation will contribute to a new sense of partnership between management and employees. The whole point of the plan is to form a partnership whereby employees feel more on the inside than on the outside in order to meet the competitive challenges that business faces.

• (1910)

I am pleased that it has discovered a growing market out there for its systems that can be put into place to get its operation under control. I am talking about these new technologies that have been developed through Canada Post. Indeed it is already close to a multimillion deal with the New Zealand postal service 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 approached the bank seeking assistance in upgrading its postal system. This sort of recognition by a major multilateral organization like the World Bank sends a clear message of the high regard in which Canada Post is held internationally.

The opposition would have the government return Canada Post to the days of the pony express. I would urge members opposite to take a close 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 last decade. The new Canada Post is providing Canadians with postal service for the 21st century. The members opposite should accept once and for all what all Canadians and Canada Post know, that Canada Post has become a world leader in its field. The government knows that and that is why I will be supporting Bill C-73.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I want to just follow up. I am actually a great believer in employee involvement in the ownership and management of companies because I think it furthers the idea of partnership in making progress. There is also the concept that employees—not just management and not just executives—create the success of any corporation and any endeavour.

However, I do not think that is what this bill is all about. If this is what Canada Post wanted to accomplish with this bill, it would have worked with its employees to see what kind of greater partnership they would be interested in in running the mail service in this country. It would have been a mutual deal. It is not. That is the reason you have had the comments from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It is quite clear that the government is following a matter of political ideology and launching the way to privatization of postal service in this country, just as it has with a number of other areas of public enterprise that still serve major public policy purposes.

I want to talk about CN Express, for instance. Again, the government went through a two-stage process of hiving off the trucking operation of Canadian National. A short time later it privatized it. With Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, it hived off and separated the two operations of Nordion and Theratronics. A short time later, it privatized them.

We know perfectly well that the public never finds out in these privatizations the worth of the property that was invested in and nurtured over many decades. They do not know what it was sold for and what special deals were made behind closed doors to the benefit of the purchasers.

Let me give just one example of CN Express, which became CN Route Canada and then Transport Route Canada and then went bankrupt. That deal included $60 million worth of real estate bought and paid for by the taxpayers of Canada. It was transferred to private ownership and then bled off to other companies before the company went bankrupt. It left hundreds of employees across this country without jobs and in jeopardy for their pension plans and other benefits that they were entitled to.

The same problems have occurred in other privatizations. We have to remember that this is not something that just appeared out of thin air, whether it is Canada Post or CN Express or Air Canada. This is something that Canadians have invested in because they believe it is something that is good for Canada.

The two most essential public services that Canadians have invested in are communications and transportation. We put a lot of money into those public services because we believed that there is a cost to being Canadian. We pay that cost so that people in the far reaches and in the smallest communities of this country can be part of the community of Canada.

However, it has cost us money. When you have invested in a property, you expect to know that you are getting value for it when you sell it. That information is never available to Canadians. There is never an evaluation, as my friend for Broadview—Greenwood has said, of what we have invested, what it is now worth, what the purchaser is getting and what the taxpayer should get back in the public coffers as the price of that product.

The employees are getting nothing. It is a shell game. They get shares that they cannot vote on and do not know the value of. They do not know whether there will ever be any dividends on or any profit on these shares. Come on. Make me an offer that I cannot refuse. This is not it.

I do think that we are headed down the road of privatization, so I want to talk about some of the ways in which Canada Post has achieved what the member for Cambridge called efficiencies and profit. For one thing, it has jacked up the price of a postage stamp and virtually every service that it provides. It simply transferred the burden on taxpayers from general revenues to the price they pay for the service.

There is no cost saving. It is the same cost. It just means that those who are dependent on mail service to communicate with the rest of Canada are paying more and we collectively are paying less for a service that we think is important to national unity.

I referred earlier, when I spoke today, to the large numbers of seniors in my riding who have seen their access to postal services gradually shrink. These are the kinds of things we have to look at as a nation knowing that we are going to have an increasingly older population. How do public services adjust to allow older citizens to continue to be fully involved in their community?

Taking away services and asking them to go a mile to a post office or a mile to pick up a registered letter instead of across the street is not progress for society. It is a diminution of services. It is a reduction in the quality of life for Canadians. Yet I can tell you from numerous experiences in my own riding that Canada Post does not pay attention to these issues. This is because, as the member for Cambridge has said, its main drive is to save money to make profits and not to provide service.

With its ideology that the private sector can do it better, it makes absolutely stupid decisions like duplicating services within 100 metres of each other. Where there is a perfectly good postal station that is capable of delivering full services, Canada Post has to say: "Oh, no. That is not good enough. We need to privatize part of that service".

So 100 metres away it opens up a private sector outlet. Now, instead of the convenience of going to one location to buy stamps, weigh a package and pick up registered mail, you go to one location to do some of those things and then you go to another location to do others. In the meantime, you have spent 10 minutes pulling out into traffic and parking again to accomplish what you used to accomplish in two minutes in one location. That is why I say that what we are talking about here is a pattern of ideology and not better service and not less cost.

• (1920)

We have a post office that is saving money at a time when our trucking industry is in trouble in Canada. We also have a post office that says: "We will go where the best bucks are and if that means transporting the bulk of our mail by American truckers then we will use American truckers". Forget completely that the Canadian trucking industry is bleeding to death.

Does that make any sense in the public interest of this country for a public corporation to be seeking only the best price and not the public good? Of course it does not make any sense.

Anybody can make money by cutting services, by sticking up community post boxes and by doing crazy little things like having a group of homes in the middle a built-up area where everybody else gets door-to-door mail delivery and a handful of homes do not. Is that what we believe in in this country?

I always thought that we believe that wherever you live in Canada you are entitled to be treated equally by your public institutions or at least fairly. Is it fair that I get door-to-door mail service five days a week and my neighbour, not five minutes away, has to bundle up her two little kids in the cold and truck off down the street to get her mail? Of course that is not fair and that is not Canadian.

Anybody can make money if they are willing to mistreat people, to cut out jobs, to abuse people and to have them working in abusive working conditions.

The Solicitor General is sitting over there acting as if none of this is important and none of this matters.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since this is for the record, was that 600 feet? I just want to make sure for the record that this long trek with the kids was 600 feet.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to say to the hon. member for Ottawa West that her time now has expired. I will let her finish in 30 seconds.

Mrs. Catterall: Simply in order to respond, it is obvious that the Solicitor General has never bundled two kids in the middle of winter and trekked them anywhere. I made no reference to any number of feet.

I resent the interruption and the lack of concern of the Solicitor General for the diminution and the degradation of service to Canadians.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a number of questions and attempt to address them with respect to the government's attempt to amend this particular act.

The first question I want to ask is how will it improve mail service for Canadians? No one has addressed that. There is an assumption that if this were going to happen then that would follow. I am not sure that is true.

Before I get into that and give you specifics as to what has happened in my own constituency, I want to talk about the efficiency factor. Everyone knows that we are spending roughly $155 billion, we are collecting $125 billion in revenue and there is approximately a $30 billion shortfall. We have to be sensitive to losing money in whatever sector. However, when we talk of efficiency, we have to talk about it in terms of the impact it has on citizens.

We know that as a result of some of the changes that have occurred recently in Canada Post the last few months and years, there are in fact fewer services available to Canadians. We know that in some instance the quality has improved, but there are instances where the quality has not improved. If we want to be fair we have to acknowledge that.

We know as well that the prices have gone up rather dramatically. I am not even talking about the goods and services tax that has been added to stamps and a number of other products.

Efficiency is important but at what cost?

The basic premise here is Canada Post is supposed to provide a service to all Canadians in a fair, equitable, sensitive kind of way. This is what has happened in my constituency. I want to give a few examples.

There have been many changes to postal outlets. There have been some closures, but in many instances it is really the amount of service. The number of services available has changed.

For example, in 1989 Marion Pharmacy was changed. A full postal outlet in this area closed despite numerous letters and petitions and Canada Post was supposed to offer certain services but never followed up.

Metro Drugs on Autumnwood Drive closed in the fall of 1990. There are other examples as well. McCullogh Drugs (Tache and Marion) closed within the last two years, as did the Drake pharmacy outlet in 1991, despite all the comments that were made by senior citizens from the area.

In all of these areas the people who have been most affected are seniors, people with disabilities, particularly if they happen to be physical disabilities. I think we have to recognize that.

I want to tell you about another recent change. Roughly a month ago I was at a meeting in St. Germain which is in the southern part of my riding, a small little community. Canada Post was there. It was a really fine meeting. It was explaining to the citizens exactly what was going to change.

It would appear at first glance that it is going to replace what the citizens had with something that is perhaps roughly of the same quality and I hope so because I want Canada Post to know we are watching very carefully.

How will this particular bill improve the service of millions of rural Canadians whose post offices have been closed? It will not. How will this particular bill improve, for example, the supermailboxes?

We know that they freeze up, you cannot get them open, and we know people are inconvenienced because they are not always easily accessible. How will it improve these kinds of services? There is no way it will improve them. I am told as well there has not been a significant amount of consultation with respect to these changes.

I want to tell you a little anecdote. A woman called my office. She had addressed correctly in a package a watch she was sending to Calgary with her return address. Lo and behold that company had closed. Lo and behold the watch never came back. It cannot be found and Canada Post will not make up the loss.

When I ask the question of how will the service be improved, no one has bothered answering me and I am not at all convinced, if I look at the record of Canada Post over the last few years, that the service will be improved.

[*Translation*]

On the contrary, I believe that it will continue to deteriorate and I am very sad about that because, as I just said, most Canadians in my riding and elsewhere in Canada will be affected, and especially seniors, people whose mobility is reduced, who find it difficult to go from place to place. I do not like that.

[*English*]

The other major question I wanted to ask is how will this help employees? Many of you will know there are a number of employees of Canada Post who have not had a contract for a number of months. It is more accurate to say in a number of years. They have been through the various steps of conciliation, arbitration, who knows what else, and still nothing has been done.

For example, I had a postal worker, a delivery person, who asked me a couple of months ago what is happening. Why is nothing being done? How will this improve the plight of the worker? I cannot see it.

When we look at the offer that has been made we are talking about 10 per cent of the shares but they are non-voting shares so the employees cannot be part of the decision making. They cannot be part of the board. What is it you are really getting?

Of course this is the first step toward privatization. Let us not kid ourselves.

I am one of the people who believes that under certain circumstances and certain conditions it can be extremely helpful.

I was visiting with 400 plus employees of Air Canada at the front today. I asked how many jobs had been lost since they have been privatized. I asked whether they expect more jobs to be lost. They do. Lo and behold, they are very suspicious. I suspect they are even more suspicious than politicians on the opposition side. They believe that there are going to be announcements just a few days after the House rises. It will be very interesting to see whether this prediction comes true. I hope not. I really and sincerely hope not.

• (1930)

Ask Air Canada, which is now privatized, how successful it has been in trying to find a level playing field. Ask how successful it has been in persuading the government that it should have access to the Japanese transportation lines. Ask and you will be told it has had no success at all; none whatsoever.

I would not be surprised that once the Canadian Airlines deal is completed with one the American airlines, it may give Air Canada access to the Japanese market in order to tell it to be quiet. We will see whether that prediction comes true.

I hear the hon. minister making all kinds of comments. I hope they are recorded in *Hansard* so we can follow them up later on.

Finally, I ask all members what happened to Route Canada. Do you remember that? It was going to be excellent for everyone. It persuaded long-term employees to leave CN to join this new corporation. What happened to those long-term employees? To make a long story short, my colleague referred to it, it went bankrupt and lost virtually everything. Some of you will know that it is in the courts today. Some people never got paid all of their wages, I am told. Some people have lost their pensions. Some people have lost pensionable years because they could not continue to work. Many of these people were not able to find jobs subsequent to that. In other words, the workers got shafted royally.

Anyone who thinks that privatization is the panacea, I think we have to look at both sides. In some cases it works because the conditions are appropriate, the commitment is there, there is some protection for the workers, some long-term planning, some adjustment programs for those who have to leave. However, in many instances it has been a dismal failure. We still have to see how it is going to work out with Air Canada. Certainly we have a lot of proof when we talk about Route Canada.

[*Translation*]

I also asked a second question: What does this bill provide for the workers? Many of them have been without a contract for three years, I believe. They went through several stages in the hope of reaching an agreement, but nothing, absolutely nothing, has come of it. They become frustrated and offended, and who wouldn't? Anyone who is without a contract for three years, after going through all those stages in the hope of coming to a solution, would be frustrated by less than that.

I do not believe that the employees will be well served by this bill, especially in view of the agreement allowing the sale of 10 per cent of the shares, since, as I just mentioned, they have no say in the corporation's future.

I see that my time has now expired.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words in connection with this piece of legislation. It appears that from the opposition side we are talking about just about everything other than the piece of legislation. It is saying that Canada Post should keep every post office open everywhere and at the same time it is running Canada Post down.

I would like to speak from the side I came from of being raised in the country. I noticed my friend from Prince Edward Island mentioned the farmer who liked the idea of going 600 feet. We have been doing that all our lives to find that the mailboxes are frozen shut. The farmers have had to deal with that all their lives. They take the children out bundled up or bundle up themselves to go out and get the mail. There are a great number of people who have never experienced this business of having the mail dropped off at their door while they sit inside.

I am not a total advocate of Canada Post. I have had my concerns about its operation.

It is almost like a bank. Everybody loves to hate it, it seems.

In deference to it, certainly it is getting better at the business of attempting to make itself more productive and efficient and I would like to give it some credit for that. We are moving to have an independent or free enterprise retail space, initially in my area, but not the kind of co-ordinated phase-in that we probably should have had. In my riding it has gone from a small post office in a very small municipal gathering to retail free enterprise and is working out very well with more service hours, longer hours and more service hours on the weekends and so on. It has worked reasonably well.

I want to say that initially when it did it, it certainly was not handled in the best manner. It is getting on to it now. It is getting better organized and knows how to handle the phase-in so that the service is franchised into many outlets with longer hours, into shopping centres and this sort of thing and people appear to like that. We have to go with change. It is certainly not necessarily right that everybody trucks to the post office for their mail. The bill does not have too much connection with it.

The legislation is to allow for a stock purchase. People who work for organizations get a lot from that. That will have them develop more interest in their organization as Canada Post employees. That is an important aspect of this legislation.

I want to take a few minutes to say that as a person who has not always lauded Canada Post for its operation, and I still at times feel it could operate much better, it is certainly improving to a great extent. The delivery time is up to a very respectable level these days.

Also, as we are making the changes to a more private enterprise, that is retail wise, that sort of phase-in is being done in a planned way. It has been done in a way in which it communicates with me as a member of Parliament. We know what it is planning on doing. When that happens it is also communicating with the community. It is communicating with the business community, with its workers, those who use Canada Post, the clients. It is certainly doing a much better job.

I wanted to take a minute in the midst of all this condemnation of Canada Post to stand up and thank it for its drastic improvements in the delivery of mail and also for its improved productivity and efficiency as it moves into 2000 in mail delivery.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak again on Bill C-73. Because the post office is so important to rural Prince Edward Island and so important in the federal district of Cardigan, I take this opportunity.

We have all heard the government's song and dance that the bill is going to improve service for Canadians. After almost eight years we know what the Tories mean when they talk about improving services. The government is closing post offices in rural Canada. That is hardly improving services. It is eliminating Saturday rural mail in Prince Edward Island. Improving service? I doubt it. It is removing the identity of the province. Improving service? I doubt it.

• (1940)

As my hon. friend from across the way indicated, the government did this everywhere else in 1982, but Canada Post realized how important this was for rural Prince Edward Island. It was financially profitable for Canada Post to continue delivering mail on Saturday but, for no reason at all, the government has now decided to eliminate it. This has caused a lot of problems for the older people in particular who live out in the country. There is certainly no way that they will ever get a newspaper on Saturday. This is just some of the unfairness of this government. If this was a financial move that would save dollars for Canada Post there would be some sense to it, but it has lost dollars doing it.

Along with this is delay in unemployment insurance cheques. Is that what we call improving service? To the vast majority of my constituents the answers to these questions would be no.

The government is trying to pass the bill off as the best way to improve postal services across the country. It says the post office employees will be able to buy shares in the company and have a stake in its operations. The Tories are saying that by having union members take a cut of the profits, the productivity of the post office will improve. To be honest, I do not think Canadians believe the government.

If you ask me the only people who will benefit from this plan are the people at the top, people like Donald Lander who makes hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, not counting these great Christmas bonuses the government likes to give to its patronage appointees. It is the managers making over $100,000 a year who will buy the shares in the post office. It will not be the letter carriers who make $3,500 a year. Who is the government trying to fool?

As I said earlier today, this bill is an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act. If government was truly honest it would call the bill the sell-out of the post office act. The Tories say that only employees of the post office will be able to buy shares. Most Canadians know a little bit about stocks and they know that a stock is only worth something if you can sell it to somebody else. The unions representing the employees say they do not even want to own the post office. What is the point? The point is that the Conservative government is only creating the foundation for completing the privatization of Canada Post.

Let us look at the situation. Hundreds of rural post offices have been closed over the last few years, reducing services but improving profits. Processing stations have been closed, reducing services and increasing profits. Door-to-door delivery in new subdivisions has been eliminated in favour of the so-called supermailbox, reducing services and increasing profits. Literally thousands of semi-post offices, half drug store half post office, have been opened across the country. All of these things have reduced services to Canadians in the interest of profit.

The government is fattening the young calf for the slaughter. The true objective of the Conservative government is to sell the post office, and this bill is just the first step. The post office is the latest addition to the obituary of national institutions. Air Canada was privatized a number of years ago. At the time the government said it was to improve services. Today Air Canada is run by a couple of Americans who have destroyed airlines in the U.S. The service is now so good that you cannot get a direct flight from Charlottetown, a provincial capital, to the national capital. That is what we call service.

Petro-Canada is on the list as well. The government privatized that one not so long ago. It said it was to improve services to Canadians and allow for more oil and gas exploration. Today Petro-Canada is floating in a sea of red ink. The company is being forced to close thousands of stations across Canada. On the good side, Petro-Canada has recently opened its first gas station in Vermont. That is improving services for Canadians.

I certainly do not want to sound too harsh but it seems to me that everything the government touches goes wrong. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has been suffering from budget cuts for a number of years. The government is so committed to serving Canadians that it forced the CBC to fire 1,700 people, close 11 stations, and cancel one of the most popular programs in Atlantic Canada, *Land and Sea*. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, if you were to see that program you would understand how informative it is. It is an indication of how unconcerned the government is.

Back in 1985 the Deputy Prime Minister, then Minister of Transport, commissioned a study that said VIA Rail needed to be improved. It needed to improve its services to Canadians. In January 1990 Canadians finally saw the improved service when VIA Rail cut a third of its routes and cancelled "The Atlantic" out of Halifax, not to say what it did on Prince Edward Island. If that is what we call service, it must be Tory service.

The bill has nothing to do with improving services. If the government wanted to improve services, it could have stopped closing rural post offices. The government is only interested in its own business agenda to the detriment of the Canadian people.

I have said before and I will say again in most parts of rural Canada the post office is the only place that we see the Canadian flag flying. In these difficult days of constitutional negotiations and concerns about national unity, rural Canadians need to feel that they belong to this country.

If the post office is privatized you will see two levels of service, one for the large urban centre where the post office can make a profit, and a lower service for the people in rural Canada.

People in all parts of this country need to feel that they belong to this country and they certainly do not feel they belong to this country when they pay taxes, see their services removed, see their post offices closed, have their unemployment cheques delayed three or four days—

Mr. James: And farmers' cheques.

Mr. MacAulay: And farmers' cheques, too. I am a farmer and I am well aware how bad I needed cheques, or how bad the bank needs it through me. I am well aware.

I believe my hon. friends across the way do not understand what it truly feels like to be waiting for an unemployment cheque on Wednesday or Thursday, but just because of a little blip in the service it does not come until Monday. Possibly they needed something and were not able to buy it. Our hon. friends across the way seem to forget that. I deal with that every day. It is so unfortunate that the government seems to forget.

As I mentioned before, it is impossible to understand why a government would discontinue Saturday rural mail everywhere across the country. Is that why it was discontinued in Prince Edward Island? It was making a profit. When it cancelled Saturday mail delivery it meant that it was not circulating the local papers. It lost the contracts. In fact Canada Post lost dollars by eliminating Saturday rural mail. But as the hon. minister indicated, it was that way across the country. Sometimes things have to be done differently.

I urge the government not to sell Canada Post.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity for the second time today to speak to the principle of this legislation, which is an act to amend Canada Post Corporation.

This morning I spoke to the amendment by our party to have this legislation considered six months' hence or, preferably, never.

• (1950)

My main arguments this morning had to do with the question of why this government was proceeding to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act in the way it has chosen to when there are so many other concerns across the country, particularly in rural Canada, about the operation of Canada Post.

I would like to speak tonight to some of the problems concerning Canada Post and the direction in which this government would want to move that corporation.

This morning when I addressed this issue, I closed by referring to the communities in my riding that have seen their rural post office closed and their postal services systematically reduced. I was mentioning the case of Judique which was recently notified that its rural post office would close and which last night confronted the minions of Canada Post Corporation that were sent to lay out the community's options and calling this a consultation.

I might have mentioned the case of Petit de Grat, St. Joseph du Moine, Monastery, or Orangedale which lost its post office a year or so ago. The Canada Post building which used to be in Orangedale is a pizza parlour and the local residents get their mail from a green box which is located next to the Kwik Mart store.

One community which did not take the closure of its rural post office lying down was the village of Mabou. Under the leadership of Tom Kent, Pauline MacDonald, Herbert Jeromel, Father Bob Neville and many others, this village rallied to fight Canada Post and make the closure of this post office a national issue.

In the process they managed to shame Canada Post into making a small concession in its rigid rural conversion agenda and to allow this community to set up a community corporation, Mabou Communications Limited, to operate the Canada Post office in Mabou and to sell out of that building a range of ancillary services such as computer services, fax services, stationery supplies and other related services in an attempt to make that building a communications centre serving the village of Mabou and all of the surrounding communities which come to Mabou to do their postal service and also many of the other related services they have need for.

I might say that under the very able managership of Pauline MacDonald at Mabou Communications Limited, if it is possible to make a go of it, it will be successful. It is not going to be easy because they have not been given very much co-operation by Canada Post in being forward looking and seeing how we could make this rural post office work and working with the communities to that end.

The Mabou post office and what they are doing with the Mabou post office I think is a sign of what what Canada Post Corporation could be doing to enhance and extend, instead of reducing the services, which it provides to the rural part of Canada.

What Mabou is doing could be a real pilot, could be showing the way for the future, if Canada Post and this government are willing to look and see what they are attempting in that very proud and very innovative community.

Many on this side of the House have expressed a concern about what will happen if Canada Post is privatized. That is something which the minister in charge of Canada Post and many other members on the opposite side of this House have acknowledged is not only desirable but in fact is really the ultimate aim of this government.

Indeed, we are seeing evidence of this in practice with the decision that is before us in this bill which begins the road toward privatization. It makes it easier to accomplish. We are also seeing it with some of the service reductions which are taking place in the rural communities, for example, the end of subsidies to weekly community newspapers. *The Oran*, for example, out of Inverness in my constituency sells its papers across western Cape Breton, and has many subscribers all across Canada, indeed all across North America. But given the distances involved, it cannot really operate unless it has some assistance with the mail distribution costs.

Canada Post, in ending the subsidies to these community newspapers like *The Oran*, *The Casket*, and others in my riding and in other ridings in rural Canada, makes it harder for these newspapers to do their worthy job of communicating to the communities that they serve.

Another example is the dramatic increases in the costs of rental for post office boxes. The people who live just outside the fringe of communities that have still their rural post offices, have to rent boxes. It is another example of a reduction in service or an increase in price and a movement toward this cost recovery philosophy of Canada Post, and very likely making Canada Post ready for privatization.

Another example, of course, is the centralized sorting which we are beginning to see increasingly with Canada Post. If a resident is mailing a letter in Antigonish to St. Andrews or Lower South River, which is five or six miles away, very soon that letter will take the long trip to Halifax before coming back to the community where it could almost be delivered faster by hand. That is supposed to be improved service.

What these trends mean and show us is the inevitable logic of privatization, what will happen if privatization of Canada Post occurs in the kind of country that we live in. What will it mean? It will mean essentially that we will move to two classes of mail service; one service for urban, densely populated Canada, and the other a lower level of service for the rural, less populated parts of this country. What we will see will be higher prices for all categories of Canada Post service, or a much reduced service.

I realize I have very little time left so I want to close with a suggestion for Canada Post and for this government. They have taken a road that the only way for Canada Post to make a profit is to streamline, rationalize, cut costs. That has meant all of those activities and all of those decisions which I have described earlier. But that is one way of ensuring the profitability of Canada Post. If it withdraws itself to the urban core of Canada and eliminates all the unprofitable parts of the country, then it will probably be able to make a profit because of the higher cost of servicing the rural parts of the country.

Has this government ever considered something like this? It could use the facilities of the rural post offices that it has built and maintained for so many years to deliver government services which are currently offered by the various departments, such as Canada Employment Centres, unemployment insurance, the income security programs, which are also being centralized. Why not create itinerant offices on a part-time basis in some of those rural post offices which Canada Post is now trying to unload? Why not use these facilities to deliver federal government services directly to the people where they are, rather than having the people who live in rural Canada travel miles and miles to get government services?

That is the thinking we on this side of the House would like to see adopted in changes to the Canada Post Corporation and in modernizing and making contemporary this very fine and very important institution.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member opposite describe what he would like to see done with Canada Post, as he addresses what is in Bill C–73 before us tonight, it sounds as if he wants Canada Post to be run the same way it was being run 25 years ago.

• (2000)

We know that we had a corporation then that had a lot of complaints. When I came into this House in 1984, over half the complaints I received were all related to Canada Post. I can tell my hon. friend those complaints have diminished to maybe no more than a couple in a month now.

An hon. member: They have given up on the government.

Mr. Belsher: No, they have not given up on the government.

Some members have mentioned the community mailboxes that have been used. They were tested and one of the test areas from 1983–1984 was in my riding at Sardis, British Columbia. I can tell you they were reasonably well received because it was not a case of the post office expanding to door to door delivery to all the new urban areas that were coming in. This was an experiment and it has proven to be very successful.

There have been times when things have not gone that smoothly, such as the replacement of the green boxes with the new superbox. It was just a couple of weeks ago I found out that the corporation had not communicated well enough with some of the citizens involved and I had to intercede on their behalf. I must say that the corporation did respond and is coming to an amicable solution to the problem we identified a couple of weeks ago.

When we come to the closure problems we have encountered in many of the rural areas, I can give examples of where it has gone very smoothly and I can give examples of where it was planned and where Canada Post Corporation has had to change their mind.

One that has gone very smoothly is at Huntingdon, British Columbia in my riding. I did not receive a single complaint from the people who were getting their mail from the Huntingdon post office because Canada Post came and communicated with them and they came to an amicable solution about how they would get their mail service and it is an ongoing thing today.

Three or four years ago when the closure of the Cultus Lake post office was announced, we did not agree with it nor did the citizens there. I felt they were using the wrong reasons for closing it. The building had burned down. The post office was using a disaster as its reason for closing it down. That decision was changed and the post office has been rebuilt and to this day is servicing that area.

I can think of no better way to make sure that the employees feel a kinship to the corporation they work for than if they own a piece of the action. That is what this legislation is all about. It allows the corporation to put up to 10 per cent of the value of its assets in shares that can be sold to the employees of Canada Post. That is what is permitted in this legislation we have before us this evening.

I feel that Canada Post has made great strides in the last half dozen years that I have been closely watching them from here in Ottawa. I see how the people are reacting to Canada Post as I go back and forth to my riding. Is the corporation loved by all the citizens? No, it is not. However, I can tell hon. members that the mail is certainly coming through on a more consistent basis than it did in the past and the service is improving. We also have more outlets for people to buy their stamps, mail their parcels and get their money orders than we had when I started here.

I will be supporting this bill when it is time to vote on it.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–73 is a phoney piece of legislation. It is bogus. It provides for the sale of 10 per cent of Canada Post to its employees.

I guess the first question Canadians should be asking is, exactly what is the government trying to achieve? What is the hidden agenda here? What prompted this move on the part of the Government of Canada? Is it simply being magnanimous on its death bed? Is it trying to redeem itself in the eyes of the 57,000 or 60,000 loyal employees of Canada Post? Exactly what is the agenda of the Conservative government?

Bill C–73 will allow in a very general way the Government of Canada to sell 10 per cent of the corporation to its employees. Bill C–73 does not define employee, it does not quantify the assets and liabilities of Canada Post, it does not indicate whether these shares will be transferable and if so under what conditions.

The government claims that with the sale of these shares to Canada Post employees, somehow morale will improve, somehow the post office will become more efficient, somehow services will improve to the Canadian taxpayers but it fails to explain how.

If this government was serious about making peace with Canada Post employees, it would ensure that the workers who are presently working would be working with a contract. As I understand it, the employees have been without a contract for almost three years. Canadians suffered through a very serious postal strike last summer. We all recall the images of senior citizens waiting out in the heat of summer to pick up their pension cheques. We are reminded of how people were unable to receive mail for an extended period of time.

This government ought to make peace with its employees rather than trying to hoodwink them and Canadians into believing that somehow this legislation will improve service and morale.

As I indicated, this bill does not provide specifics. One thing is clear. This government is trying in a very surreptitious fashion to privatize completely Canada Post. We on this side of the House, the Liberal Party, vehemently oppose the privatization of Canada Post. It is a public service and therefore it should be in public hands. One should not make a profit, we believe, in providing service to Canadians. It would be easy for Canada Post to make significant profits. It made profits in a few years. Last year it lost $100 million. It blames that loss on the strike. Yes, it is possible for Canada Post to make profit but at what expense, at what cost?

Post offices are being closed. A significant number of Canadians have to walk to supermailboxes in order to collect their mail when a great number of others are able to get door to door delivery. It is possible to create a profit at the end of the year but one could only do so by either increasing the cost of sending a letter or a parcel or by cutting back services.

We believe that this is a first step toward privatization. It gives the government the authority to privatize 10 per cent of the corporation for now. One should point out that even though "selling shares of Canada Post", those who purchase those shares would have no voting rights at all. They would have no say in the running of the corporation.

Surely if the government was sincere and honest and desirous of having its Canada Post employees work closely with management in improving Canada Post, it would be selling these shares with the right to vote and the right to participate in the decision–making of the corporation.

Thank God we are on the eve of a general election campaign because if we gave that bunch across the way any more time, they would even sell this building here, the House of Commons, to the highest bidder. They have proceeded in the last eight years to privatize all kinds of different institutions. If given the opportunity, they would privatize Canada Post. That is their agenda. In fact there was a Conservative report that was brought forward a number of years ago that indicated quite clearly the intention of the government to privatize. Why would someone want to buy Canada Post? Why would a group of individuals with a lot of money want to buy Canada Post? They would want to buy Canada Post if they were able to turn a profit.

• (2010)

The question then becomes should the delivery of mail, should postal service in Canada create profit? It seems to me that providing a service and making a profit at times are diametrically opposed. If you are interested in keeping the price of a postage stamp as low as possible and keeping service as high as possible, then you are not going to make wheelbarrows full of money at the end of the road. It does not make sense. If you privatize, if that is the intent of the government, which I believe it is, at the end of road the buyers of Canada Post will want to increase profit. We believe on this side of the House that can only be achieved by hiking up the price of a stamp or cutting back on service.

So it is conceivable that in the not too distant future there will be no such thing as door-to-door mail delivery. Not just people living in new subdivisions, but everyone in Canada will have to walk to the end of the street, key in hand, to collect their mail from a supermailbox.

I do not believe that Canadians want that. I do not believe that senior citizens want to or will be prepared to walk to the end of the street or walk a number of blocks to a supermailbox. I am afraid if the government continues on the path it has embarked upon, the inevitable result will be a cutback in service.

I do not know when we are going to have that debate. Perhaps it will take place during the general election campaign in the not too distant future, the debate over whether Canada Post ought to be privatized. We know the position of the government and it will have to justify and argue its position in the general election campaign. It will have to explain to Canadians why it wants to diminish the postal service, why it wants to privatize the postal service in Canada.

I believe that Canadians will send a very clear message to this government that they will not accept the privatization of this very essential instrument and institution in Canada that has served to unite this country from one coast to the other.

This government, as I indicated previously, during the course of its two mandates has proceeded to privatize a number of Crown corporations. It will be recalled that one of the first moves of the 1984 Conservative government was to do away with the Foreign Investment Review Agency. The government made it clear back then that there was a huge for sale sign out on the front lawn of Parliament Hill.

Again this is part of that agenda which the government has been discharging over the last number of years. We know, if given the opportunity, it would bring in legislation for the complete privatization of Canada Post.

In closing, might I again say that the Liberal Party opposes this bill. We opposed it at first reading; we will oppose it here at second reading; we will oppose it at committee. We believe it is a fraudulent piece of legislation. It is dishonest legislation because the government really has not indicated what the purpose of it is in a straightforward manner.

We know that the employees of Canada Post have seen right through it from the moment the minister made his announcement that he was going to sell 10 per cent of the corporation to the employees. The first reaction of the employees was to ask: "Who in the heck are you trying to kid?"

I urge hon. members opposite to realize the writing is on the wall, to realize that they have a few short months left of political life here in the House of Commons of Canada, to come to their senses and to vote against this nonsensical piece of legislation.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak long. I will be very brief. I only want to make about five points.

The first point I want to make is that Canada Post is totally mismanaged. It is full of neo-Conservative ideologues who think they are running some sort of modern corporation and have no idea how to run it.

Mr. Lewis: Based on your background in business?

Mr. Waddell: No, based on my understanding of humanity and based on seeing what is happening in this country. I invite the Solicitor General to listen to this. The Conservative government could fall not on free trade and all the other big issues such as the Constitution, which it should fall on, but it is going to fall on an issue like the post office and I will tell you why.

The post office is a symbol to Canadians. When you go to a small town on the prairies or a small town in my riding, you see a Canada Post office and it means something to people. It was a symbol of Canada. This Conservative government has taken this symbol and destroyed it. People understand that, especially the people in the small rural areas where it has been devastating to these towns.

In my area it has moved from a perfectly good post office where there was good service and good wages for people to this low-wage clerk, Mac's Milk, 7-Eleven stuff in which mail is sometimes thrown around or lost. There is very little security. People try and do their best but they are $5 an hour clerks rather than people who really wanted to do that job and their priority job was the post office.

I said bad management. The government missed the boat. Look over in Europe and in Britain specifically where Canada Post could have got into the area of telecommunications. It is into courier services, but not really into it the way it could have been. It could have built a modern communications system building on the basis of the Canada post office which was a symbol and a great institution in Canada and a government organization. Instead, it threw it away.

Canada Post has terrible labour relations. It is 19th century labour relations in this outfit. It deals badly with other people. It deals badly when I deal with it as a member of Parliament.

We have a situation in this country where everybody pays the same for a stamp. We all pay taxes equally and yet some people have door-to-door delivery of mail and other people do not. That is not fair and that is not equality.

New subdivisions have these post boxes. I spent months trying to get one of these post boxes moved from the front of a person's house who was getting all kinds of people coming by his house to pick up the mail. I had a lot of trouble with Canada Post.

Canada Post has bad labour relations, poor management and very little view of the future. It has this kind of blinding neo-Conservative philosophy.

Do you know something? This government will spend millions of dollars on the 125th anniversary of Canada and all the propaganda about what a great country it is. We do have a great country but look what makes it a great country: good medicare, good social services, national radio and television like the CBC. We used to have a railway system in this country and we had a post office that we could be proud of. It was a symbol in every little town in Canada.

The government could have modernized by keeping the structure of what was known as the post office. I say to this government that it is going to be defeated on issues like this.

Government has dismantled the Canadian postal system. It has this terrible system now with increased costs for stamps, with very little good delivery. The result is a national institution has been destroyed. It has the gall to come to this Parliament and bring in this bill to do this phoney privatization of share scheme.

If you want to deal with your workers go and have good labour relations. Be honest and straightforward with the workers and restore the post office to the Canadian institution that it once was.

• (2020)

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the main motion. While I did speak earlier today it was on the amendment and I spoke having recently discussed some difficulties we have in the business of compensation for fisher persons and plant workers in my riding and indeed this is going to be endemic in Newfoundland and Labrador within a matter of days.

I want to get back to the issue of the post office. I want to go back to 1988 when I was first elected. I have said this many times. I have 260 communities in my riding. Not one is even semi-urban; they are all rural. The largest is a town of about 6,500 to 7,000 people. I have about 10 towns that range in population from 3,000 to 6,000. In the remaining, the populations vary from about 100 to 500, basically no large populations, so essentially it is a totally rural district.

When I was campaigning, you could leave one of these communities and travel across the island of Newfoundland, not on a passenger train but on a CN system. You could ship freight by train that ran across the island. You could visit any of these communities. In each of those communities there was a fabric of this country which the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam talked about as did my friend from Toronto, the hon. member for York South—Weston. In practically every one of these 260 communities there was a small building with a red sign on it that gave the name of the town, gave the postal code and flew a Canadian flag.

In each of those buildings people would gather to pick up their mail and to talk. Senior citizens used to go and get assistance with applications for various pensions. The postmaster or the postmistress in each of these small post offices—in fact, in one case it was in the basement of a house—were always receptive to people in trouble.

Often it had very little to do with the postal system or any difficulties with anything to do with the post office. It had to do with it being the building with the Canadian flag that was a representation of the fabric of the country and the presence of the federal government. It was where people could go if all else failed and talk to the person in charge of that postal unit. They knew they would get help.

In times of trouble and in times of great anxiety like we are going through right now particularly in my province, particularly in my riding, I cannot begin to describe what a source of relief that is, just to go and communicate or commiserate with somebody having the same problem.

Members on the opposite side would say: "That's not the purpose of the post office". I would have to agree. I could not sell the post office changes or my reluctance to accept these changes and the reluctance of my constituents on the basis of what I have just talked about. I can on the basis of the service that it gives to the individuals.

Bill C-21 tremendously altered the unemployment insurance system to the point where it was not in the favour of those people I represent in this House. With the exception of that bill and the very unpopular move to introduce the goods and services tax at the time when the economy was about to break into a recession and the government knew it but went ahead anyway, this is the third most despicable, trouble-creating and troublesome move the government has made.

Why has it been that way? Because it causes jobs to be lost.

The facts are very stark. In 1986 Canada Post had a 10-year plan that was to close 5,221 rural post offices, 10,000 jobs, 83 per cent of those belonged to women, and this government talks about jobs for women, fair play for women.

As I stand in this House tonight, over 1,000 of those rural post offices have been closed and the plan proceeds to continue until I suppose the last of the 5,221 doors is shut.

Now we cannot travel across Newfoundland. We cannot go to Sydney and get a train and travel to the rest of the country because the train system is gone. We cannot go to the post office with the little red sign and the Canadian flag because that is being shut down. Practically every other institution that people knew and cherished and lived by is being shut down. Jobs are being lost.

So when I hear there is a bill to do with Canada Post I get very excited and think this is a bill to change all this around. This is a bill to right all these wrongs for the people in Hare Bay, Shearstown, countless communities in my riding. I thought it was great. I was going to have a good look at this bill because everything was going to be made right.

I look at Bill C-73 and what do I see? I do not see anything that makes me happy at all. I am not about to sit down tonight, write all my constituents and tell them that all the problems of the post office are about to be solved. In fact it is going to make the situation a little worse.

In the middle of this gigantic and enormous close-down of 5,221 rural post offices and 10,000 jobs, we are now told that the government wants to sell 10 per cent of Canada Post Corporation to the employees.

That in itself sounds pretty harmless I guess, but the problem is the employees do not think this is a good idea. Why would one want to sell something to somebody when they do not want to buy it? Why would one want to do that? It is bad enough to sell something to somebody who wants to buy it, but when they not want to buy it there must be a reason for doing it.

The head of the union himself asked why post office workers want to support the efforts of Don Lander to eliminate their jobs and attack their union. Why would they buy into an organization that was doing in their jobs? It does not make a lot of sense to me.

The bill itself does not talk at all about any of the problems of Canada Post Corporation. To read the bill one would think that everything was rosy, everybody was fine, all the post offices were operating and all the customers were happy. Turning to customers, I thought Canada Post existed to give service to the customers. But now I find out it is for another reason. If they are going to sell something eventually—I suppose this is the first step to privatizing Canada Post—somebody who is going to buy it is going to want to make a profit.

I am not going to buy a business just for the sake of buying it. I want to make a profit. Is the name of the

game for Canada Post to make a profit, or is it to service the public? I would suggest it is to service the public.

It is like saying that we have a great armed force but we want to make money on it. We want it to defend the country but we want to make money on it. How ridiculous a statement that is. I would submit to the House that the same pertains to wanting to make a profit out of service to the customers of Canada Post.

When you confuse your aim in doing something in this world you always end up mucking it up. I think this is what has happened to Canada Post, and this bill is going to make it even foggier.

No matter how much my colleagues and I try—and we have discussed this—we cannot find anything in this bill that makes us happy. We cannot find anything in this bill that builds up any kind of warmth in our stomachs and in our hearts.

• (2030)

Before I sit down I have to say that I am sure some hon. members on the government side must find some of the detail in this bill somewhat difficult to take sitting down. I suppose they will be standing up pretty soon, but I will feel sorry for them when they get up vote. Some of them might think of the constituents they have and the complaints they have had about closing down and tinkering with rural post offices. Some of them may not even be around when we vote on this subject. I would not blame them.

We have a bill that does not address the problems with Canada Post that people have realized since 1986. It exacerbates them. On that basis alone my party cannot support this bill. Certainly when my time comes the bill will not be getting my vote.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I intend to speak for only a couple of minutes because I already made, I hope, an eloquent denunciation of the bill during consideration of the hoist motion.

I want to add information that has come to me in the last half hour from those who have been watching this debate on television. It demonstrates the arrogance of Canada Post that has conned the government into introducing this legislation as a further step toward privatization.

The very day we are debating second reading and approving in principle this bill, Canada Post is taking yet another step to devalue Canada Post and the service it is providing Canadians. Starting this weekend, right across Canada, Canada Post is going to stop processing the mails on the weekend. It is going to a five-day week so a letter mailed on Friday will not be processed until the following Monday or Tuesday, adding yet a further delay to the service in Canada. Even if the employees turn up for work on the weekend they will be put to other tasks than the processing of the mail.

There are problem after problem after problem with Canada Post. Each of us in our own constituencies have heard them: lack of personalized response, an attitude in favour of the corporate customers that want to mail junk mail, not the individual homeowners who receive the mail, the citizens of this country. There are impenetrable labour relations' problems.

Rather than try to go along with the government's ambitions of privatizing Canada Post, the time has come that there be in every constituency in Canada an effort to develop virtually a royal commission at the constituency level.

In my riding starting next week we are going to pull together those who have come forward with various complaints about the service of Canada Post, those who have complained about having to go to Vancouver to talk to anybody about a complaint, those who complain and quite properly about the kind of service they have been receiving from Canada Post, the employees, and the union. We will pull them together to begin to see if we can develop an alternative to the kind of service we have been getting from Canada Post so that after the next election there will be in place a whole new approach to providing service in Canada, and not just the privatization of this once vital service in this country.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to speak but the very careful suggestion that the hon. member for Victoria, which I thought was an excellent suggestion about Canada Post, brought a thought to my mind that I felt I had to share with the government. Perhaps the Solicitor General in assisting his colleague, the minister responsible for Canada Post, the government House leader, who I think spends very little time frankly on his Canada Post responsibilities—

Mrs. Sparrow: Come on, Peter. Leave him alone.

Mr. Milliken: He is busy doing his House leadership job and I recognize that. It is tough for him to get time so perhaps the Solicitor General could help him out on that.

I want to make a suggestion on how Canada Post could save money. Maybe it has already implemented this but I am not sure. It used to produce an audit. It hired an auditing firm. I think it was Peat Marwick Thorne, but I do not want to damage the name of this good firm. I am not suggesting that there is anything wrong with Peat Marwick Thorne, but it used to provide this audit. If that is not the firm that did it, then my memory has slipped. Members on all sides of the House I am sure received this audit which said that 98 per cent of the mail was delivered on time. It was one of the great things because it did not give the parameters. They said they would check mail that was postmarked on such and such a date to see if it was delivered within two days. If it got there within two days, which was the designated deadline, then it was delivered 98 per cent of the time. Their figures were very impressive.

I have not seen one of these audits lately. Either the figures have gone sour or else the auditors realized they were being set up for a con job by Canada Post. This is what happened. I discovered this myself after a bit of investigating. If you mail your letter after 3 p.m. on any day it doesn't get postmarked until the next day even if you mail it at the post office.

Go and check it out. Go to the post office and try to register a letter and get it postmarked after 3 p.m. It cannot be done. Registered or postmarked, they will not stamp for the day it is mailed if you mail it after 3 p.m.

Mr. Lewis: Get up earlier in the morning.

Mr. Milliken: The Solicitor General says to get up earlier in the morning. That is the way he treats Canadians. Get up earlier and then your mail will get postmarked in time. If you do not mail it before 3 p.m. then it is postmarked the next day.

What does the auditor do? He looks at the postmark and says: "Oh, this wasn't mailed today on June 18 because it is postmarked June 19". If I mail my letter tonight it will be postmarked tomorrow. If I mailed it at 3.01 p.m. it would be postmarked tomorrow. You put the mail in the mailbox down the street on the corner at 10 a.m. Collection is at 2 p.m. and it does not get to the post office till after 3 p.m. It is considered as having been mailed the next day.

It may take three or four days to get delivered, but according to the audit it has taken from the date of the postmark, so it is counted as having been mailed that day. What a con job. That is management. That is Tory mismanagement of the post office in this country. It is a disgrace. They are trying to hoodwink Canadians by this policy.

The hon. member can wag her finger to her heart's content. I will not be intimidated by this kind of tactic. I know what is going on and so do Canadians. They are being hoodwinked by this government into believing that Canada Post is providing superb service. Look at the ads they used to run. Does the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception remember these ads?

Mr. Mifflin: Yes, I do. Who paid for them?

Mr. Milliken: You would get them in the weekly newspapers. Who paid for the ads? It was Canada Post. Canada Post must have taken a loss that year. It ran full page ads with the results of this phoney audit. I have no doubt the audit was correct as far as it went, but then it excluded all this evidence of the non-postmarking of the envelopes. It was unbelievable.

That is the kind of thing that causes Canadians to lose confidence in the government because they feel they are being hoodwinked and bamboozled at every turn.

That is exactly what this bill will do. I fear for the employees of Canada Post who somehow think it is a good investment to buy these shares. These are non-voting shares in a company which is 90 per cent controlled by the Government of Canada that is trying to squeeze every cent it can out of this company.

It is a sad commentary when a government introduces a bill like this. I am pleased that the Liberal members in this House are going to be able to condemn this bill and oppose it.

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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

* * *

CONTRAVENTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–46, an act respecting contraventions of federal enactments, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties prior to the move that I am about to make, so it shall not come as a surprise to anybody.

• (2040)

On behalf of the government I wish to point out that clause 66 of Bill C–46 would abolish the right of the Crown to refuse to issue a passport or to revoke it as a consequence of a charge or conviction under the Contraventions Act. This clause would affect Her Majesty's prerogatives.

His Excellency the Governor General has been informed of the purport of this bill and has given his consent, as far as Her Majesty's prerogatives are affected, to the consideration by Parliament of the bill, that Parliament may do therein as it thinks fit.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have a ruling to make on Bill C–46.

There are two motions in amendment set down on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C–46, an act respecting contraventions of federal enactments, both in the name of the hon. member for Niagara Falls.

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 are grouped for debate and a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motion No. 2.

I will now proceed with Motions Nos. 1 and 2 in the House.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to put the motions in the place of the hon. member for Niagara Falls because of his annual meeting this evening. I believe there were discussions and it was agreed that I could stand in his place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. MacLellan: As far as our party is concerned, we would agree.

Mr. Waddell: I agree.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (for Mr. Nicholson) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C–46 be amended in Clause 8

(*a*) by striking out, in the English version, line 16 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:
"purposes of this Act;"
(*b*) by striking out line 18 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:
"ceedings under this Act; and
(*f*) providing for subparagraph 18(*b*)(iii), section 20, subsection 21(2) and sections 24 and 27 to have effect or to cease to have effect as if they had come into force or been repealed, as the case may be, in the parts of Canada that are specified in the regulations.";
(*c*) by adding, immediately after line 4 at page 5, the following:
"(8) Subsection (1) is amended by striking out the word "and" at the end of paragraph (*e*) thereof, by adding the word "and" at the end of paragraph (*d*) thereof and by repealing paragraph (*f*) thereof."

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C–46 be amended in Clause 86

(*a*) by striking out line 34 at page 39 and substituting the following therefor:

"86.(1) This Act, other than subsection 8(8), subparagraph";

(*b*) by striking out line 40 at page 39 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) Subsection 8(8), subparagraph 18(*b*)(iii), section 20,".

He said: Mr. Speaker, these technical amendments flow from the legislative committee hearings and would allow a pilot project to be undertaken regarding the non-resident defendant provisions of the legislation.

Clause 27 permits the non-resident defendant to plead not guilty by mailing in submissions. Clause 24 permits the non-resident defendant to plead not guilty with representations by mail.

Several jurisdictions have expressed concerns about the administrative difficulty which could be encountered in bringing these into operation. Some jurisdictions would like to see the results of a pilot project before the non-resident defendant provisions are implemented more broadly across the country.

The proposed amendment would allow this aspect of the ticketing program to be tested in specific locations, thus giving us the flexibility to determine whether these sections can be reasonably affected.

The principle of pilot projects to test these provisions was put forward and accepted at the committee hearings, and the proposed motions seek to ensure that pilot projects can be set up in particular locations which have been identified in co-operation with the provinces as suitable areas for proper program testing.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the member for Lethbridge has made a good point. While I think it would be our hope that such a process could be done, it is fair to say that we really do not know the results.

Whereas the various jurisdictions have expressed concern as to this process and the concept is relatively new, a pilot project is a very prudent way to go.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would agree to this amendment as well. We did discuss it in committee but not at great length. I was not really aware that there would be a pilot project. However I must say—and I will say this in my speech at third reading—I was impressed by the public servants that came before the committee. They were very straightforward with us.

I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt. They need a pilot project. I think we should give them that leeway.

My friend, the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys, would agree with me that we had a very good legislative committee, a very straightforward group of civil servants who presented things and did not duck any of the questions. When they did not know the answer they told us so. It was a real pleasure.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, as our party's justice critic, I would agree to these amendments. We can deal with them tonight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 1 agreed to.

Hon. Charles Mayer (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read a third time. By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mayer (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about this bill. My colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, said that he was very impressed by the public servants on this and I was as well. I do not know if it was because they had all the answers or because they were so calm. I knew they really believed in the bill. They were speaking so effortlessly and had all of the answers and I felt my first instincts on this were correct, that this is a good bill and that there is nothing here of great substance with which to find fault.

There are two aims in this bill. One is to decriminalize approximately 3,500 offences by creating the option for the enforcement officer to issue a ticket to an offender rather than pursuing a summary conviction or an indictment and to free up the court's time by eliminating the need to hear these minor offences.

That is not to say that in the regulations right now, 12 departments, agencies or groups in the federal service everyone has to plead guilty. What it does mean is that if someone is charged and ticketed, under the regulations designated under this bill, they can plead guilty and pay their fine. They do not have to appear in court. They can send in their money as is the case in other instances in which this is being used in the provinces.

That is not to say that the ticketing officer or the officer making the charge has to instigate the charge with a ticket. The officer can still bring a charge through a summary conviction or an indictable offence.

• (2050)

That is the choice of the officer. That does not mean that the person so charged has to plead guilty or does not get a chance to plead his case. He can and has that opportunity. What it does do is free up a good deal of the court's time. The process of having to come to court to pay these fines is no longer necessary. It makes considerable sense. It makes a great deal of sense.

The government has said that this bill will be revenue neutral. It will be better than revenue neutral because although the process will be revenue neutral, we will save a lot of the court's time. This will be a financial benefit to the justice system.

I feel that there is a possibility in this bill that we can expand to other regulations. We must be very careful to state here that this deals with regulatory offences. It does not deal with offences under the Criminal Code. That is very important. Proceedings under the Criminal Code will proceed as they have in the past. This deals with regulatory offences.

There has been some suggestion by gun owners that this is an attempt to perhaps circumvent their rights and that is not true. This has nothing to do with gun control. It has nothing to do with the Criminal Code. It has to do with straightforward, regulatory offences.

The one concern that people could have is that the regulations to be designated under this bill are through Order in Council. That is, the Parliament of Canada or the committees do not designate what regulations are to apply. The regulations to apply are designated by Order in Council. That means the government designates.

The concern is that what will happen is that very important and weighty regulations will be brought under this bill such as strong environmental regulations to stop the pollution of our streams and of our air. What will happen is that these companies will lobby the government to include these offences under this bill. The reason is that the maximum fine under this bill is $1,000. You can have any regulation apply but the maximum fine is $1,000. You cannot fine anyone more than $1,000. If you are a young offender, the maximum is $100.

You could see that a corporation which had polluted a river or severely polluted the atmosphere or otherwise caused environmental problems would be very pleased to have its offence handled under this act as a regulatory offence with a maximum fine of $1,000.

This is maybe a little exaggerated. It may be going too far to say that the government would do a thing like this. I think that may be true but it is going to mean that we as members of Parliament are going to have to watch this very carefully.

This bill does have the support of all of the attorneys general in Canada. They seem quite content that this is going to be a major step forward. As I have mentioned, the Department of Justice is only administering this bill. There are no Criminal Code offences and the regulations apply to other departments and agencies.

I would also like to point out that this bill is not a new idea. It is an idea that has been promoted in the past. The Law Reform Commission in 1976 came forward with a document which set out this idea and promoted it strongly. That was 16 years ago. It took 10 years for this government to adopt the thinking that this may be a good way to proceed with offences such as speeding in your boat out on the lake for instance. We have it now, six years later, as proposed legislation.

I want to point out that here is a tremendous example of the value of the Law Reform Commission of Canada. This government doing away with the Law Reform Commmission as a result of its recent budget makes Canada the only country in the British Commonwealth, other than Zimbabwe and Bangladesh, without a Law Reform Commission. It is the only government in Canada that does not have a Law Reform Commission. Now that Quebec is instituting legislation to set up a Law Reform Commission, all the provinces have Law Reform Commissions. A federal country with a federal system of government depriving the provinces of access to this creative legal thinking without the federal government having this is just preposterous to say the least.

I would like to end this very important point of doing away with the Law Reform Commission by suggesting that this is not the only idea that the Law Reform Commission germinated. We have read citings in various court cases. I think 44 cases of the Supreme Court of Canada cite the documentation and the legal thinking of the Law Reform Commission, not to mention considerable articles and legal books on various points of law. Most recently in the legislative committee on this bill doing away with the Law Reform Commission, various groups came before the committee to plead with the government to change its mind in doing away with this very important organization.

If you could say that one group was more effective than another, it was the multicultural groups in Canada. There has been some very good work done by the Law Reform Commission on multiculturalism and the law which finished its first draft and was supposed to be the subject of meetings with the multicultural community four days after the budget was tabled. However, the budget was tabled and those meetings were cancelled. We do not know what is going to happen to that very good piece of legal thinking. Whether it will ever see the light of day no one knows. The thinking among the members of the multicultural community is no. This whole effort and this very important document will go to waste which is in itself a very unfortunate thing.

I also want to say that this has been a very important project on behalf of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka who has been very instrumental in pushing the government to bring this legislation forward. I feel he should be credited for the work he has done.

This is, as I say, a step forward. I think we are going to have to watch the way matters proceed with respect to this legislation. One of the ways is certainly with respect to the pilot project which my colleague, the member for Lethbridge, has mentioned, and also with respect to what regulations are brought forward under this bill.

As my colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, has stated as well, I think it might be important to bring the new regulations that may be applied under this bill before the House of Commons before they are actually included under this legislation.

I want to say that I think this bill should pass. In my opinion, it is a step forward and it is going to be a benefit.

• (2100)

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise as the NDP justice critic to speak on this bill, one in a long series of justice bills that we have been debating in this House.

This is a ticketing scheme for minor regulatory offences. Currently, just to explain how the law works, a person wishing to plead guilty to an offence, even one as minor as picking flowers on federal property or speeding in an inlet or lake, must appear in court. Even in that person's absence, if the person does not appear, a trial must be held and witnesses must be heard. It is an expensive and time-consuming process.

We have an alternative method of doing things. We have ticketing offences in the provinces, traffic tickets for example. Bill C-46 proposes a ticketing scheme for minor regulatory offences and was designed primarily for the following reasons.

First of all, it decriminalizes minor offences against federal laws and regulations. As my friend pointed out, not the Criminal Code but other federal laws and regulations. Second, it avoids the need for a court appearance when a ticket is not contested. Third, it encourages improved enforcement. I might add as a Scotsman it is probably going to end up a little cheaper.

Bill C-46 does not create new offences. It only changes procedures that deal with existing minor federal offences. We are told that the government expects there will be over 400,000 tickets issued in the first year this scheme comes into effect. These fines will be paid. They will go into general revenue and so they will not be an additional means of raising funds, say for Agriculture Canada or Environment Canada. Savings will be realized as a result of a decrease in demand placed upon our courts. It seems like a good idea financially.

I spoke on the bill in the House at second reading and I will not repeat that speech. It was on Monday, April 6, 1992. In case members want some bedtime reading tonight, they can get *Hansard* and have a look at it.

One point I did make in the speech and I will reiterate was that this idea which we all agree now is a good idea and is going to save the government money and streamline the judicial process was first introduced in 1976 by the Law Reform Commission of Canada. That is the same Law Reform Commission the member previously said the government is going to abolish.

It was doing good things. This is another argument to buttress the opposition's point of view that it really was not too intelligent to get rid of the Law Reform Commission of Canada because it advanced some of these ideas that ultimately became law. Here is a perfect example.

I should say also that I was impressed with the way the civil service and the committee brought forward the bill in a straightforward way and said when they did not know the answers that they did not know the answers. That is why I am prepared to agree. I was prepared and did agree to a pilot project in this matter.

Mark Berlin of the justice department notes that all provinces have a similar program in place. It is probably a result of provincial representations that the federal department is taking the initiative.

They did hint at a few things like using credit cards, Visa cards, and various ways to pay fines. I do not know how that is going to work. I told them not to get too fancy. Look at how the provincial traffic schemes work and try to follow that. Do not get too fancy or you will end up like the post office.

I will end with two wishes. As the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys pointed out, a lot of this law, as many laws, is in the regulations. I hope the regulations will see the light of day. I hope the department will publish them, show them widely, so that we can change them and make them better.

Finally, my last wish is this. I know it is a bit late to do this now but I have a bill in front of the House called the Plain Language Act in which I have asked that the government draft bills in plain language, plain English or plain French. It is too much to expect us to speak in plain language in the House but the government could draft in plain language. The government might want to have a look at future bills, especially the regulations under this bill, and draft them in plain language so Canadians can understand exactly what is meant by the regulations. This would be a good bill to begin with.

I have talked about plain language, about open and competent regulations and about how important it is that this bill pass because it is overdue. It will make a better process and I hope a cheaper process for Canadians. Having finally got to the end of a long series of justice bills, I am pleased to sit down and to shut up. In plain English I say I am finished speaking and I hope this bill will pass.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I will not repeat everything that has been said *vis-à-vis* the bill, but I want to stand on behalf of the Minister of Justice and the parliamentary secretary to express their deep appreciation for the co-operation that they have received and the very good scrutiny that this bill received by the justice committee.

I must say with respect to the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys and the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, I feel like we almost live together, because we have done so many bills over the last while. We have become almost like brothers in a way, not to say that there are not some very sharp differences, as you might guess in a family, Mr. Speaker.

Having been through Bill C-49, the sexual offences bill; Bill C-17, the gun control bill, and then the gun control regulations that we just finished off today, as well as bills that the others have done on terrorism, jury trials, and then acting for the distinguished Solicitor General on Bill C-36 the Parole Act, these have all been huge bills.

It is too bad in a way that our constituents could not see the enormous good work that is done by members on all sides of the House at the committee level. Once the television lights are turned off and we can put ourselves around a problem, we can usually come up with some very sensible solutions. We only go mad, Mr. Speaker, when the television goes on us and we have to put on a show it seems. I guess that is just the way it always will be.

I also I want to express on the record to our long-time colleague, the distinguished member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who has been a member in this House for many years that this bill was pushed by him over all of those years and he deserves a lot of credit for it.

Mr. Speaker, this is good public law.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to present Bill S–11, an act to amend the Airport Transfers (Miscellaneous Matters) Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I must receive unanimous consent to propose Bill S–11. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Doug Lewis (for Minister of Transport) moved that Bill S–11, an act to amend the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act, be read the second time and by unanimous consent referred to the Committee of the Whole.

• (2110)

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, having consulted with the gracious and hon. members opposite, I think you will find there is unanimous consent to move all stages of this bill tonight.

Mr. Milliken: Oh yes, Mr. Speaker, we are happy to assist in passing this but I cannot let the occasion pass without making a speech.

I am sorry to disappoint the Solicitor General but there are some important points that have to be made in respect of this bill. If the parliamentary secretary wants to go first and make a speech I would be happy to hear him, otherwise I will proceed. We are giving our consent to put this bill through all stages tonight after the appropriate comments have been made.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank hon. members for that consent.

It was not long ago we discussed the predecessor bill, Bill C–15, which essentially set the basis for employee protection benefits associated with any lease or sale of federal airports. Bill S–11 is really a fine–tuning bill.

As the House will be aware, the process of devolution to the local airport authority has been long and involved for the first group of airports. Along the way we learned quite a few things.

Since we last discussed this issue, we have signed transfer agreements with four local airport authorities in Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Calgary. This bill represents some additional legislative requirements to complete the process.

Essentially it maintains the status quo regarding federal income tax; it sets out the local airport authority's powers for seizure and detention of aircraft in the event of non–payment of fees with due reference to the courts.

As well the bill addresses the qualification of investments and the connection with the transfer of the airports to local airport authorities.

Finally the bill makes it mandatory for the local airport authorities to respect additional provisions of the Official Languages Act, namely Part V, the language of work, and Part VI, equal participation of English or French speaking Canadians for leased airports within the designated areas as defined by the Official Languages Act.

It came to our attention after Bill C–15 was already in process that in order to ensure the continuation of the status quo with regard to payment of income tax, a legislative amendment was necessary and hence the clause in this bill.

I should perhaps also expand on why clause 11 is required. Prior to June 1, 1992 federal trust, loan and insurance companies as well as federal pension funds were permitted to make investments accordingly to the legal for life rules. One investment described by the rules was a mortgage on a leasehold interest.

Since the concept of leasehold does not exist under Quebec civil law, mortgages on airport land would not be eligible investments. This could have made it difficult for the Montreal local airport authority to obtain long–term financing.

As of June 1, 1992 the date of the coming into force of the new financial institution statutes, the legal for life rules were removed. Now any investment can be subject to a "prudent portfolio requirement". However federally regulated pension funds continue to be subject to the legal for life rules, but will be moved to the prudent portfolio concept in the future.

Therefore, the proposed clause 11 will ensure that there are no obstacles for pension fund investments in mortgages on airport land.

I believe the bill is pretty well self-explanatory, and I would like to close my remarks now by recommending it to you, and asking that Bill S-11 be given your consideration in as expeditious a manner as possible.

I thank my hon. colleagues on both sides of the House for their great co-operation in this matter in particular and for the their support of the local airport authorities in general.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am not a member who likes to rise and say I told you so, but of course the Solicitor General, who I believe was Minister of Transport when this bill was originally introduced in the House, the divestiture bill as we called it, I think it was Bill C-15 might want to learn something from this little exercise because this is a case where unfortunately it shows up the problems that occur when the government does not listen to the opposition in this House.

The government would not have to introduce this bill tonight if it had listened to the opposition when Bill C-15 was before the House. I do not want to unfairly malign the Solicitor General but I suspect he was Minister of Transport at the time. Perhaps we will have true confessions later tonight.

What happened on that occasion and I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, will remember it because you I expect were listening to the debate and probably noticing how right we were when this bill was discussed in June 1991.

Time and again, members of the opposition rose and said that they could not understand why the government was not having the Official Languages Act apply in certain particulars to this bill. I have a string of members who rose and spoke on this issue. They were the hon. members for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Hamilton West, Gander—Grand Falls and Ottawa—Vanier. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier was particularly explicit in his explanation as to why Parts V, VI and VII of the Official Languages Act ought to apply to this particular bill.

He spoke eloquently and at length pleading with the government. Let me quote his words from page 998 of *Hansard*: "I intend to explain to the House the impact of this oversight or this government decision not to include Parts V, VI and VII". He gave a lengthy explanation and he went on to say:

> 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 right of individuals, the right of Canadians to equal employment opportunities but also the right to work in federal institutions in the language of their choice. If this policy applies to Air Canada, which we know must follow all of 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.

This was all said in a desperate effort to help this government out of a mess that it created. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier moved a motion to amend the bill. He moved:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be read for 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 of page 2 and substituting—"

I do not need to read the rest of it, but he wanted to put the act in.

I may have maligned the former Minister of Transport because I see he spoke right after and he was Solicitor General. One can only assume that he opposed this very sensible amendment moved by my colleague the distinguished and very capable member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Here we are, almost one year later, and the government is coming back to Parliament on bended knee asking the opposition to pass the amendment we wanted the government to pass one year ago. Indeed, it wants more amendments. Many of them were the ones that were mentioned at the time.

Tax exemption has been included in this bill. My friend, the government House leader disparages the other place and speaks in uncomplimentary terms from time to time about the other place. Yet the Senate had hearings on Bill C-15. The question was asked, apparently by an officer of Transport Canada why this tax exemption was included in this bill and not in the original bill.

The answer was: "At the time we came forward with Bill C-15 there was no definitive decision from Revenue Canada whether or not under existing law they would qualify". Subsequent to the tabling of the bill, it became clear that they would not qualify under the existing legislation because authorities were a unique corporate institution". If it became evident after the tabling, why did it not fix it up?

It shows the indecent haste with which this government tries to force bills through this House. It ignores throughout the strong advice of the members of the opposition who try to correct the blunders that the government so obviously made in introducing the legislation.

The hon. member laughs. It would be a laughing matter if it did not cost so much money to run this House. We have a reasonable opposition here which speaks for such a brief time on almost every bill anyway. Instead of listening, the ministers flit off and go elsewhere. The members sit and laugh and ignore the remarks of the opposition, thinking they are a waste of time. It shows that our remarks are not a waste of time. If only somebody had paid attention government members would not be here today with this other bill. It would not have taken weeks getting it through the other place. This is an expensive process. Hon. members opposite laugh about it and think it is a joke. I do not think it is a joke.

• (2120)

Then there were the sections on seizure of aircraft. Sections 4(5) and 4(6) of the Aeronautics Act give the transport minister the power to seize and detain aircraft for non-payment of landing fees or terminal fees. Sections 9 and 10 of this new bill give the local authorities similar power.

Why was it not in the original bill? An officer of Transport Canada said: "We did not know at the time the first bill was introduced. We discovered after we did work with lawyers on the other side that it would be prudent to put it in." If we had spent a little bit of time thinking about it, there might have been some lawyers in this House who might have thought it was prudent to put it in.

Mr. Comuzzi: You and I.

Mr. Milliken: As the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon says, maybe we would have thought of it if we had gone to the committee.

Maybe the government should hire us on in the government departments. That would be a disappointment though. Then we would not get to speak in this House. We could give them some advice on how to fix these bills up, but we give them that advice freely in this House and it is freely ignored by the government.

I have to say I find it sad that in spite of the very serious efforts of at least four members during the debate in June 1991 on this bill, I believe all at third reading, and the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier to rectify the blunder, the government ignored all that advice. Now, as I say, it is back here on bended knee asking us to pass this bill tonight.

Of course, having put these amendments forward on a previous occasion, we are happy to support the bill tonight and to facilitate its speedy passage in the House. I am sorry that kind of co-operation is necessary given the complete absence of co-operation when the government voted down our amendment a year ago and refused to listen to the very reasoned and sensible arguments put forward by so many of our members at that time.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I know we are all anxious to get this over with this evening especially on a matter where we find ourselves to be in so much agreement.

I want to add to the comments of my colleague from Kingston and the Islands. Again, it is nice that the Solicitor General is here, who was Minister of Transport at the time. The same as my colleague, we always hate to say we told you so, but in all humility, we told you so, we told you so, we told you so.

I would just like to comment on the bill itself before getting down to the particular amendments that we moved and supported in committee in March 1991. I want to comment very briefly on the purpose of the bill before us which is to amend the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act, the main provisions of the bill being to continue the existing status under the new local airport authorities recognizing that this does not represent any change in moneys paid to the government; to extend to local airport authorities the same powers, procedure and detention of aircraft as currently exists in relation to major non-payment of fees; to regularize the status of various financial investments for the purposes of security; and the one I want to add a few comments on, to extend Parts V and VI of the Official Languages Act, namely language of work and equal participation

provisions to airports that are leased by the federal government to local airport authorities. This particular provision, Parts V and VI, does not apply to airports that would be sold in the future.

In committee on March 13, 1991 my colleague, the transport critic for the New Democratic Party, the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, supported at that time by the Liberal member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon and the Liberal member for York West attempted to correct the language aspect of the bill.

In committee on the date I referred to, my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan in reference to the amendments which he moved at that time which now appear before us as Parts V and VI said: "The purpose of the amendment is to have all aspects of the Official Languages Act apply to these airports".

I recognized that we had testimony from all local airport authorities involved to date indicating they did not feel it was appropriate. On the other hand, yesterday we also heard testimony from the union that indicated it felt it would be important for its members. Certainly in talking with it after the meeting about this particular clause, I understand that even though its members would no longer be part of the federal Public Service, because of the expertise they will have developed whether it is in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal, or any of the other areas, they will be prime candidates for open competition within the federal Public Service.

As they move up the ladder within the local airport authority their expertise will be something that will be sought. It is to the benefit of the union's members and I think also to the local airport authorities to have staff appropriately trained in both official languages based on the existing legislation.

I realize that at this time it may only affect the local airport authority from Montreal and Mirabel but over time it may affect others. Until then it will not be an onerous condition on the western airports.

Montreal was very clear that it will have the most highly qualified bilingual staff of any place in the country and so I do not think it would be an onerous burden on it.

Following the member's comments, the member for York West said: "I would like to support the motion of Mr. Angus which is analogous to the very same amendment that we put forward as our fifth amendment".

Following that intervention, the member for Manicouagan said: "I listened carefully to what Mr. Angus had to say. I was concerned about the same points during our public hearings. I do not believe that including Parts V and VI of the Official Languages Act would add anything at all to this bill. Only the Montreal airport authority would be bound by these sections since Montreal is at present the only bilingual district recognized by the Official Languages Act. The people of Montreal have made it very clear that they will be competing with airports on the east coast of the United States, Toronto, and elsewhere. They want to be free to conduct their affairs in the language best suited to the circumstances.

It seems to me that by including Parts V and VI of the Official Languages Act in Bill C-85 we would be putting the Montreal airport authority at a disadvantage because Montreal is the only place where these sections would apply. They would not apply to Edmonton, Calgary or Vancouver because these cities are not recognized as bilingual districts by the Official Languages Act and therefore their airport authorities would not have to comply with these conditions. I would ask the committee to consider this point. By including these two sections in Bill C-85, we would be putting Montreal's airport administration at a disadvantage".

The government side did not listen to the amendments or suggestions put forward by both representatives of the Liberal Party and of the New Democratic Party, in particular the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. It did not listen in committee. It did not listen to the amendments and the arguments and suggestions later put forward in the House. Now, as my colleague from Kingston and the Islands has pointed out, we have had to go through the lengthy and costly exercise of having it

come back through the other place with significant argument and study there, and back to the House here.

We, along with the Official Opposition, are granting every co-operation we can to see this matter is dealt with as expeditiously as possible in this House tonight. We are happy to do that but we do state again that we wish the government would be more sympathetic and open in future to hearing reasoned arguments based on study of the legislation and its real implications rather than simply ignoring advice coming from the opposition because it is the opposition side.

We are happy to support these amendments and hope that we do not have to do this kind of particular exercise too much more often in the future.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, very succinctly. I was not going to intervene in this discussion after my colleague from Kootenay had expressed those thoughts, along with my colleague from Kingston and the Islands. We on this side of the House right from the inception—I am glad that the former Minister of Transport is here—of the transfer of jurisdiction to local airport authorities supported that legislation with great enthusiasm. Many of us on this side of the House felt that the local airport authority was the only way we could compete in a global economy in so far as airport business was concerned. We were then in the process of an open skies debate. As a result, we felt that the local airport authority was a very good idea and supported it fully.

Since that time though, I have been very disappointed with the speed with which we have been able to proceed with the local airport authority in getting these airports in Canada transferred over to the proper jurisdictions. I can say, having been on that committee that my former colleague discussed, having visited with the local airport authorities in Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Mirabel in the Province of Quebec, they were all enthusiastic about going along with the legislation for the local airport authority, but for some reason or other it was constantly delayed.

My concern, and the reason for getting up, Mr. Speaker, is that I know there is a very active local airport authority in my riding of Thunder Bay which wants to look after and take over the airport facility. They are very keen, they are very knowledgeable. I would not want to let this opportunity go by without impressing upon our colleagues across the aisle how important it is that they proceed with this proposal with all dispatch.

I just make that message and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity of saying that.

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 the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Paproski in the chair.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. House in committee on Bill S-11, an act to amend the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act.

Clause 1 agreed to.

On Clause 2—

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Chairman, could the parliamentary secretary advise the committee whether the words in clause 2 amending the original bill in so far as it deals with the Official Languages Act are the same as those contained in the amendment moved at third reading by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, on June 3, 1991.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, I do not have that old amendment before me. I am sure that if it was prepared and drafted by my hon. friend, the member for Ottawa—Vanier, the intent at least, if not the exact wording, would be very similar.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Hon. Doug Lewis (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read the third time? By unanimous consent, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Lewis (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): By unanimous consent may I call it 10 o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 10 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. Friday, June 19, 1992, pursuant to a special order adopted earlier.

The House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 19, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, many people would have us believe that you cannot have good environmental policy without drastically affecting industry or, conversely, have effective economic policy without destroying the environment. Sarnia—Lambton is an exception to the rule.

That is because the petrochemical refining companies in my riding are making a positive commitment to the environment. Specifically, their initiatives deal with separating themselves from our beautiful St. Clair River.

Polysar Rubber Corporation has committed $50 million over the next three years toward a target of 100 per cent reduction in spills. Dow Canada spent $5 million in 1991 and will spend another $8 million this year for its river separation project.

Novacor Chemicals has pledged $3 million a year over the next three years for capital programs, new monitoring equipment, containment basins, and environmental training for its employees. Shell Canada will also be spending millions at its local refinery and chemical plant.

We can all be proud of these companies in Sarnia—Lambton which are making environment a number one priority—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry but the time has expired.

ALEXANDRA, P.E.I.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Madam Speaker, this year the community of Alexandra, Prince Edward Island, is celebrating its 200th anniversary. Over the last 200 years many things have changed in Alexandra, but one thing has stayed the same. There is a great sense of community pride among the people, especially this year. Since the spring, events have been held commemorating the last 200 years of accomplishment. Very special events will be held on Canada Day, including the dedication of a conservation area and a reforestation project.

This year, as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Confederation, we should also give special recognition to communities like Alexandra that are a great part of our history.

I congratulate the organizing committee for its efforts and urge everybody to come out on Canada Day and help Alexandra celebrate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Marcel Tremblay (Québec-Est): Madam Speaker, two reports stressing the negative impact of the constitutional crisis appeared on June 9. A comment in Marie Tison's article for Canadian Press reads as follows: "The Quebec question continues to have a negative impact on the Canadian dollar, according to the analysts."

I want to urge Canadians to be united on reaching a consensus that meets their needs and expectations, so that we can continue to benefit from the excellent trade relations we have been able to establish throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I would also ask all members of this House to continue to express their confidence in this country of ours, a source of untold riches for this generation as well as a magnificent legacy for the next.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I rise in regard to a provincial housing project in the Bluehaven neighbourhood of my riding. The residents have been extremely concerned about the impact on already high levels of density and anxious over environmental hazards since the project sits adjacent to a closed landfill site.

Last year I wrote the provincial ministers of housing and environment about both fears and on the latter the minister informed me and residents that no environmental risks existed and the government therefore gave the green light.

Last month, however, environmental officials clearly contradicted the minister on two different occasions by pointing to elevated levels of methane gas which may "represent a hazard to the people".

According to residents, the ministry has not undertaken any serious or ongoing testing to date, which is both dangerous and irresponsible. I call upon the provincial government and its local representative to order environmental officials to immediately investigate and initiate the necessary testing and monitoring so that the community's public safety on this can be fully satisfied. The onus is clearly on the provincial Government of Ontario which approved the project—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I regret the time has expired.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, it is only 400 weeks until the end of this century. The earth summit is over but the urgency of population, poverty, climate change, species lost and environmental degradation remain.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment would have Canadians believe that they fought a vigorous battle on these issues in Rio. In fact they did not. There were no efforts to lead and Canada lost a great opportunity.

We like all nations must face the population tsunami that is heading our way. Three children are now born every second while 40,000 children under the age of 15 die every day from malnutrition and preventable disease. One acre of tropical rain forest is lost every second while one acre of Canadian forest is lost every five seconds. The level and rate of greenhouse gas emissions is rising.

The conventions on climate change and biodiversity will only work if we turn these words into action.

Today Canadians are the largest per capita producers of garbage on earth and the largest per capita emitters of greenhouse gas in the developed world. We must change if we are to survive and pass to future generations a habitable planet. That was the message of the earth summit.

* * *

MERCHANT MARINERS

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Madam Speaker, June 18 was a red letter day for our merchant mariners. Bill C–84 was given Royal Assent and as a result these brave seamen will at last be able to receive the same benefits as those enjoyed by wartime veterans of the Armed Forces.

The new benefits become available on July 1. Members of the House should know that applications for benefits will be available at all 32 district offices of Veterans Affairs. The Minister of Veterans Affairs tells me that any of our constituents who fall into the new category of merchant navy veteran should get in touch with the nearest district office.

Our wartime merchant mariners have been waiting for something like Bill C–84 for over 45 years. We can be proud that it was this Parliament that finally heard their pleas.

* * *

SUDAN

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Madam Speaker, the military government of Sudan, controlled by Islamic fundamentalists, seized power from a democratically elected government in 1989. This government is notorious for human rights abuses and continued prosecution of the brutal civil war against non–Muslims of the south.

• (1410)

Amnesty International and Africa Watch tell of house arrests, torture houses, disappearances, amputations, summary executions, and crucifixions.

Last month, Hassan Al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front and considered to be Sudan's real leader, was granted entry to Canada. He met with external affairs officials and meetings were arranged with Conservative members of this House.

Canadians and Sudanese have a right to know: Why was he allowed into Canada? When will Canada's welcome end? Why would members of this government meet with Al-Turabi, the *de facto* leader and author of the present tyranny imposed upon the people of Sudan? Will Canada's government now pledge all its efforts to support Sudanese human rights and end its civil war?

* * *

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, a few hours ago in this Chamber Russian President Boris Yeltsin said his country is giving priority status to property rights. It is ironic Russia thinks this is a cornerstone of democratic freedom when Canada so far has not given its citizens the same right.

So it is we get bad laws which trample property rights like the one Ontario is now contemplating which would allow homeowners anywhere in the province to open up apartments in their homes even if that is in clear contravention of municipal zoning laws.

Imagine the possibility of rooming houses or bachelor apartments mushrooming in neighbourhoods where it would affect the enjoyment and value of properties that others worked lifetimes for.

Zoning laws are there for a reason, to protect the integrity of neighbourhoods. I denounce this law as a flagrant betrayal of fundamental human rights. It could only spring from the minds of socialists who believe the state should always lord it over the individual. Even the Russians do not buy that one anymore. Is comrade Bob Rae listening?

S. O. 31

BREAST IMPLANTS

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of health said in the House yesterday that the health department was unanimous in defending the Meme breast implant. In fact, health and welfare listed breast implants as high-risk devices in 1983 and health and welfare scientists recommended the Meme be removed from the market in 1989.

The parliamentary secretary said the CMA did an arm's length review and did not find evidence to prove silicone gel implants unsafe. In fact, it was a government financed study, published in the CMA journal at the government's expense and request, which the CMA has said is not its policy.

The deadliest inaccuracy of it all was when she said "there was no evidence proving that breast implants are unsafe for women". The director of the USFDA said recently, after extensive review, "we know more about the life span of automobile tires than we do about the longevity of breast implants"; that women are at risk and the risk is unacceptable.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. If there is something that should be withdrawn, it can be withdrawn during the member's statement. I will listen briefly to the hon. member.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I will be brief and I thank you. The hon. member said the parliamentary secretary to the minister of health and welfare had said the report in question was unanimous. If she would check—

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is a point of debate. The hon. member can correct the record later. It is not a point of order at this time and the hon. parliamentary secretary knows it.

* * *

TELEPHONE SERVICE

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, the recent decision by the CRTC to move from a monopoly telephone service to a competitive one sounds goods. In fact, for many businesses across Canada it is good, and for many others who live in the urban belt

of Canada. However, there will be a price to be paid. Most Canadians will probably see that in increased local service charges.

My concern is that the greatest price will probably be paid by the constituents I represent and others like them in rural areas of Canada. You cannot take away the lucrative long distance service and not expect some fallout. Where will the axe fall? In all likelihood on the most costly and least profitable areas of services; rural Canadian telephone service.

I predict the results will be increasingly exorbitant costs for those Canadians who do not yet have any telephone service, and a slowdown and deterioration of needed service upgrades.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, the annual report of Canada Post Corporation was tabled today by the government House leader. It gives us the sad news for all of Canada.

It tells us what most of us had predicted all along, that the loss at Canada Post Corporation is $128 million. In fact that loss was quite predictable. Had it not been for a $32 million profit from the sale of assets, in other words selling the furniture to pay the rent, the real loss would have been $160 million.

I have to wonder as a Canadian why it is Canada Post, which is losing money, still saw fit to spend $32 million to buy a share in an Australian company that delivers mail in Europe, namely G. D. Net.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

MEME BREAST IMPLANTS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, first of all I would just like to thank President Boris Yeltsin personally. He has agreed to intervene in looking for a prisoner of war of the Korean war who has been missing since 1951. I wanted to thank both President Yeltsin and the Prime Minister for agreeing to intervene in this case personally.

My question is for the Acting Minister of National Health and Welfare. In the absence of the minister, the acting minister, the parliamentary secretary and most other ministers, I will direct it to whichever minister wants to answer.

Yesterday the parliamentary secretary, when asked about Meme breast implants, told the House that "there is no specific scientific evidence...that they are unsafe for women".

According to the official minutes which I have in my hand, of a meeting of the research and standards division of the department of health of the federal government on January 6, 1989, "the risk and severity of complications seemed to outweigh the possible advantages of the Meme implants". According to these minutes, "the complications include severe persistent infections; the foam can elicit a marked foreign body reaction".

Why did the former minister, the current Minister of Communications, put the health of women at risk by ignoring the official minutes of his own department?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, first it was the elderly, and now they would have women believe the government does not protect them.

We took appropriate action. We are now analysing what we have and waiting for more information. The moratorium is still in place and is supported by the manufacturers. Above all, Canadian women should be told, not once but repeatedly, that the government's foremost concern is their health, which is their responsibility as well. We will maintain the moratorium, and we are waiting for all the information to be in before taking further action.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): I think it is particularly unfortunate that the women in this government are defending an indefensible position on the breast implant.

My question is directed to the Acting Minister of National Health and Welfare. In fact, the minister himself should have been here today to answer these questions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Copps: His predecessor, since January 6—

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member does know that making a point of noticing the presence or absence of anybody in the House is not possible. The hon. member does know that ministers have other functions that they must attend and that sometimes they cannot be present.

I would appreciate it if she would put her question right now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Copps: Madam Speaker, my question was directed to the Acting Minister of National Health and Welfare, because this is an issue that concerns all Canadian women, and the minister should be here to reply.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unless the hon. member for Hamilton East puts her question immediately, the Chair will have to recognize another member.

• (1420)

Ms. Copps: Madam Speaker, my question is this. Considering that specific and unanimous information against the use of breast implants was available to the government since January 6, 1989, why did the minister and his predecessor continue to ignore the facts and thus put the health of women at risk?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I remind the hon. member that if we want to defend women's rights, we should start by showing some solidarity as women.

I am here to answer questions directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who was called away from Ottawa, for humanitarian reasons, I may add.

I maintain that this government's foremost concern is to protect women's health. I want to ask the women opposite to stop trying to alarm their peers, and I repeat that no action will be taken by the government until all the results are in.

There is a moratorium, the manufacturers are abiding by that moratorium, and we will continue to protect women's health.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, solidarity means protecting the health of women, not falling behind a government position which is clearly wrong.

I would like to ask the acting minister of health, and we would certainly like to ask the minister if he ever sees fit to come back to the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Nepean.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, my question is for the acting minister of health. I am concerned that maybe the minister was not listening so I will redirect the question.

A senior health and welfare official clearly documented the health risk associated with the Meme breast implant. I quote: "The risk and severity of the complications seem to outweigh the possible advantages".

Fourteen months later the former Minister of National Health and Welfare said in this House, in response to a question by me: "We are confident in the success and the safety of these devices. Let us not create false fears among women".

I ask the minister carefully: Would she please explain once again why her government ignored for so long the urgent warnings provided by her senior officials concerning the safety of the Meme breast implant?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): The Minister of National Health and Welfare is carefully monitoring all the recommendations and information coming in, Madam Speaker. In English or French, the answer is the same, and I maintain that we are taking care of the health of Canadian women. We are maintaining the moratorium, and as soon as we have enough relevant information, we will take appropriate action.

I repeat that health is also women's responsibility, and I urge them to see their doctor and get the information that applies to their specific case.

[*English*]

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I will put my supplementary question through you to the acting minister of health.

It was three and a half years ago that these same government officials recommended to government that distributors be asked to voluntarily stop selling the Meme implant.

How could the minister inform the women of Canada for years that the Meme was a safe product when senior officials of the department had called for a ban as early as 1989?

This boggles my mind. Why did the government not act immediately in 1989?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I prefer to concentrate on the present, not on the past or the future, and we are now analysing the situation. Meanwhile, research continues because we are concerned about women's health. Major funding has been allocated to breast cancer research, and that is what we, as a government, are doing.

We must speed up the pace of research, and we must set women's concerns at rest by giving them appropriate information and especially by avoiding alarmist statements.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, in fact the Department of Health and Welfare Canada listed breast implants as high risk devices in 1983. Then its scientists recommended that the Meme be removed in 1989.

I want to ask the minister who is responding today: Why did the minister of health at that time not take the very serious advice of his own scientists and immediately remove the Meme implant from the market and save the disfigurement and the terrible health costs numerous Canadian women have suffered since 1989?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, we must have complete information before taking concrete action. I maintain that there is no consensus or unanimity, either among the patients or in the various reports.

As a responsible government that cares about women's health, we are compiling complete data so that we can then take the required action. In the meantime, the moratorium is still in effect and we are respecting it, in co-operation with the manufacturers.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, in fact the health protection branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare grandfathered the Meme implant. It did not do studies on it itself. It did not take the health of Canadian women seriously.

There is a track record on thalidomide, on the IUD, on DES, on Depo-Provero and on breast implants. There is a long litany of women's health concerns that were not taken seriously.

Therefore I want to ask the minister: Will the government now agree, after questioning many times from this side of the House, to an inquiry into the actions of the health and welfare medical protection branch, a complete public inquiry so that these questions can be answered once and for all?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): If I understand correctly, Madam Speaker, we are being asked to do more research so that we can make decisions—

Ms. Black: No, no, an inquiry.

Mrs. Vézina:—or investigate to find out what happened in the past. That is just what we are working on. We are collecting the information so that we can give women that assurance.

Madam Speaker, I am a woman too and I understand that women are torn and worried about the present situation. As women, whatever my colleague opposite thinks, we are trying our very best to defend women in a government that we have trouble running financially. We want to secure the health of Canadian women.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the same minister.

The minister has stated now in the House two reasons to explain the negligence of this government. The first is that we should forget the past and the second is that there were budget constraints. That is very poor solace for all the women who have been affected for over the past three years by the Meme implant.

I want to ask the minister very clearly: Is there not a clear ministerial responsibility to take action for the negligence of the past three and a half years? When is the government going to act on that negligence and ask the minister responsible at that time to resign?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I have just been given a list of the steps taken to ensure that this government made the right decisions for women's health. We did the required research. We had to obtain information from outside. I maintain that this government in the past eight years has done all it could to ensure the health and safety of women in Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, the minister has said that she has just received news about government actions, about what it is doing.

Three and a half years ago the government had a report from its own officials which said the consensus of the meeting was that the net result of this review was significantly negative. We did not have to wait till today. The government had the information three and a half years ago.

We on this side of the House want to know when this government will take responsibility for the negligence that took place. What actions is it going to take now to ensure that all women who were affected during that period of negligence will get proper treatment, proper compensation and proper care from this government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I asked the people opposite to show some common sense. With his political experience, the hon. member knows very well that a minister who is replacing another does not know in detail all the information that has been reported.

• (1430)

It was a briefing note to remind me of all the measures and steps taken in the past five years on this breast implant issue. It shows our concern to find the right solutions. I maintain that women's safety is a priority for this department.

* * *

CANADIAN AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Yesterday, 500 Air Canada employees gathered in front of Parliament to protest the government's inaction on the unstable Canadian aviation industry.

The only way to save this important industry is solid leadership from the government. What does the government intend to do to ensure the survival of an aviation industry that is controlled by Canadians and maintains good jobs in Canada?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the government intends to maintain the present legislation limiting foreign ownership of Canadian airlines to 25 per cent and requiring that effective control remain in Canadian hands.

[*English*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, despite widespread turmoil in this industry, the government has had nothing specific to say about the future of the Canadian airline industry.

Today the open skies negotiations have been resumed and given the many public indications, which surely the minister cannot have failed to notice, both Canadian air carriers are looking to establish strong links with U.S. carriers.

How is the government proposing to ensure that Canadian air carriers will not become mere regional feeders for U.S. megacarriers?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, this is precisely why my predecessor has instituted the open skies negotiations with the U.S. These negotiations are ongoing with success and we hope to have a new agreement signed by the end of this year.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NUCLEAR TESTS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and has to do with the Russian President's visit. Our two countries share all sorts of concerns about the economy, the environment and international policy. However, the international community is worried because President Yeltsin has decided to end his moratorium on nuclear tests; they are to start again this fall.

Has the Government of Canada encouraged Russia to restore this moratorium and redouble its efforts to achieve an international moratorium?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I know that today and yesterday, the Prime Minister had discussions with Mr. Yeltsin on co-operation in various fields. The issue of co-operation on nuclear matters also came up. He no doubt knows that some concern has been expressed publicly for several months now on the nuclear installations in the former Soviet Union, among other things.

I am waiting for a report on those discussions and I will be pleased to provide my colleague with the part on nuclear tests, the subject which concerns him, once we have an opportunity to find out what was said in the discussions between the two leaders.

[*English*]

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, the various treaties and accords with Mr. Yeltsin which have been announced today do not include, so far as I can tell from the information which has been given us, any information or suggestion that we are trying to persuade the people of Russia to take action to ensure the moratorium on nuclear tests which is due to end this October will be continued. This is a crucial issue for all Canadians and all people throughout the world.

Will the Canadian government take advantage of this important visit and push for this moratorium to continue in the future and for it to be extended to all countries throughout the world?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, as I just indicated there have been discussions between Mr. Yeltsin and the Prime Minister on a range of issues. Some of them pertain to nuclear safety. A nuclear safety initiative was made public today.

As the member might know there has also been some concern, probably more of it voiced in Europe and Germany, around nuclear safety power generating stations which is also related to this issue.

On the issue of testing I will have to await, as he will, an opportunity to hear what the contents of the discussions were. I will be happy to inform him as soon as I get that information.

* * *

GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is also on the Yeltsin visit and is directed to the government House leader.

The government House leader, who is from the prairies, is fully aware that three-quarters of Canadian aid to the former Soviet Union was in the form of grain credits. The Prime Minister signed a treaty with President Yeltsin in February for a five-year contract for 25 million tonnes of grain.

My question is very important to the prairies. There are now some stories and rumours that the port of Churchill may be about to close. In view of the importance of that port to prairie Canada, can the government House leader tell the House today whether or not the Prime Minister had a chance to raise the issue of grain shipments to the Soviet Union with President Yeltsin? Was the suggestion made that some of that grain should go through the port of Churchill so that all Canadian ports can benefit from increased trade with the federation of Russia?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, we know how important the market to Russia is for Canadian farmers.

The Canadian Wheat Board has always maintained and tried to ship wheat at the preferred customer location destination and we will continue to do that. I would expect this was likely raised with Mr. Yeltsin this morning. The main thing is that we maintain those sales and keep the sales moving to Russia.

There are no plans to change anything at the port of Churchill. We hope there will be an opportunity for some of those grain products to go through that port. That is a decision the Canadian Wheat Board and the buyer will have to make.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment.

On Tuesday in St. Anthony, Newfoundland, a thousand fishermen and plant workers organized a demonstration calling upon the government to pay attention to the fact that they have been without income since May 15 and asking it for assistance.

On Wednesday in the House the Prime Minister committed his government to bring in a program of short-term, medium-term, and long-term assistance. We applaud that on this side of the House.

Given that there are only a couple of House sitting days left and given that no information has yet been communicated to fishermen and to plant workers who are looking at a moratorium on the fishery for the first time in 500 years, can the minister, through the House, tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador what proposals and programs he will be bringing forward to provide immediate short-term assistance for those who have been without income for the last five or six weeks?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, as the Prime Minister indicated on June 17 in this House, the government is well aware of the situation in Newfoundland and Labrador, for that matter, all of Atlantic Canada and the state of the fishery.

He indicated then that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who is in Newfoundland today would be coming back with proposals for the government to consider.

I would like to be able to inform the hon. member of more details today but it is not possible. I would not want him to leave the impression that because the House will adjourn it will be impossible for the government to take the necessary action. If it is not possible to make an announcement or state the government's intention before the House rises, the government will still have the ability to do that after and as soon as possible.

• (1440)

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): A supplementary, Madam Speaker.

More than 60 members of Parliament from a variety of political parties, including independent members, have officially asked for a proper emergency debate on this issue.

For the first time in 500 years we are talking about a formal moratorium, a close down of an industry that is the backbone of the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador and certainly in similar straits in other parts of Atlantic Canada.

Will the minister tell the House today that before the House adjourns for the summer recess he, as minister of employment, together with the minister of fisheries, is prepared to come before Parliament and through Parliament tell the people of Atlantic Canada what their program will be? What measures are going to be introduced to ensure that people are able to maintain the basics of life and certainly the dignity to exist during the interim period until those cod stocks are rebuilt?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the government has already had occasion to act to protect the fishing families in Newfoundland and Labrador and in all of Atlantic Canada.

The Prime Minister indicated quite clearly that we were looking at options and ways of trying to address their concerns. He is talking about a moratorium that has not been announced. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is there consulting with stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador and with the provincial governments. As soon as the government is capable of making known how we can contribute to help those people in Newfoundland and Labrador, we will.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In addition to the 1,000 people in St. Anthony who demonstrated on Tuesday, just a few hours ago there was a demonstration in Clarenville in my riding representing two of the 57 plants, about 9,000 people involved in the fishing industry and fish plant operators.

These people are very worried. They do not have unemployment insurance or their unemployment insurance has run out. They have no fish and they have no idea what the short-term, long-term or interim plans are.

These people are crying out. They are asking for help. In view of the crisis situation, could the minister share with this House some indication of what his action plan is for the compensation for these people?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, it is too bad for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that it takes a demonstration to wake up the member.

On March 23, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I announced a task force to deal with that very problem. The member talks about the long-term problem of those fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not think that by inviting people to hold demonstrations it will address the problem. We have to find a way to solve the long-term problems of the fishery in all of Atlantic Canada and we have a task force doing that.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I have been quite clear. We are committed to help those people. We are in the process of analysing and trying to find out how we can best help them. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have our commitment that we will do that.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, this government including that minister, is responsible for mismanaging the fishery for the last eight years. I do not need lessons from him.

He tells me to wake up. I have made 25 interventions in the last three months. I think I have been awake for a hell of a long time.

This House is going to shut down on Tuesday. The Atlantic fishermen are afraid they are going to be forgotten. The Prime Minister stood in this House and gave a commitment to these people two days ago. For those people, the circumstances they are in, a day is like a year.

I ask the minister one more time and I do not want any smart remarks.

I want him to tell me that the Prime Minister has made a commitment. Will he take this commitment and turn the promise of the Prime Minister into reality and do it now?

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, I want to assure members opposite that we on this side do recognize the serious problem that is evolving on the east coast.

The member need only to look back to 1990 and 1991 to what this government did to be assured that there will be a program in place should we have to announce a moratorium.

* * *

AIRPORTS

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a question for the Minister of Transport.

As the minister knows, a significant part of the air transport side of his department is to check and maintain navigational aids at airports across Canada.

It has been brought to my attention that the private sector can provide a more economical and more technologically advanced system to check and maintain these navigational aids.

I would like to ask the minister if he is considering improving the method of checking these devices and at the same time saving the taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that Transport Canada uses the most advanced technology in the testing and calibrating of navigational aids and that our main concern is the safety of the aviation industry.

At the same time, we are examining proposals that have been made to us to maintain the safety at a lower cost and of course we are interested in it.

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, two days ago in the Manitoba legislature, the Conservative minister of trade raised his concerns about the NAFTA negotiations relative to the apparel industry.

It appears that the Conservative trade minister is concerned that under NAFTA, this government is going to force the apparel industry in Canada to buy all of its textiles either from Mexico or the United States. If that takes place, over 109,000 jobs will be at peril in Canada.

I want to ask whoever is the acting minister of trade today whether or not the concerns of the minister in Manitoba are valid? If not, will the government speak out today and say that no such deal will be signed to put those jobs at risk here in Canada.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that negotiations are ongoing. One of the areas on which there is considerable discussion is the textile industry.

Canada of course is at the table to protect the textile and the garment industries in this country because they are both creators of employment and very important to the economy of this country.

My hon. friend did not want us at the table. He did not want the Government of Canada to be at the table to protect the interests of the textile and garment workers.

Well we are there and we are doing that.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, I would like to have thanked the minister for his answer but there is nothing there to be thankful for.

I am going to move now on the NAFTA issue to another minister and that is the Minister of Transport, Madam Speaker.

President Bush has just signed a presidential order that will permit Mexican truck drivers to drive their rigs right into the United States through California and perhaps other states. President Bush, signing on behalf of Canada, may have done the same thing.

The reality is that under this presidential order Mexican truck drivers will be permitted to drive rigs that normally would have been driven by American truck drivers. As a consequence, jobs will be lost and wages will be lowered.

I want an assurance from the Minister of Transport here today that no such waiver will be given to Mexican trucks crossing through the United States and up into Canada. I want that assurance.

• (1450)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am not sure I understand the geography of the hon. member, but I can assure him that I attended the convention recently of the Canadian Trucking Association with the American Truckers Association and the Mexican Truckers Association. All of these players were very much in favour of free trade among the three countries in trucking.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment. The minister will know that the unemployment rate on Cape Breton Island is now over 22 per cent. Yet there is no increase, probably there is a decrease, in the amount of job creation funding available.

For example, for the North Sydney–Sydney Mines area there remains only $35,000 in the job creation fund and no more money will be forthcoming until April 1993.

When will the minister add some funds to the job creation program for Cape Breton Island?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the numbers for the region that the hon. member talks about but I can look into it.

What I can say is that last year the province of Nova Scotia, under the programming of my department, received over $110 million and that figure is not going down. I can look at the specific area that the hon. member has raised and can advise him accordingly.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, I am sure the minister would acknowledge that Cape Bretoners, like all Canadians, want steady jobs. They are doing everything possible to find

them and to save the jobs that are left. Yet the bankruptcy rates continue to increase.

I would hope that the minister would recognize that this is a very critical situation on Cape Breton Island. Will he acknowledge this crisis and do what he can to provide some assistance for the people of Cape Breton Island?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am ready to look at how we can ensure that all the programs we have at CEIC relevant to the area are being utilized. The hon. member, to help those people back home, could also give them hope. Interest rates have gone down again. We have the lowest rate of interest in some 20 years. We have the lowest rate of inflation in 20 years.

It may be funny to other members, but in a region like Cape Breton, because I am from Atlantic Canada, I know that this will be helpful. We will build on this with the programs we have in order to help the people in that part of the country.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The notion of low interest rate loans to small business is a sham. The fact of the matter is that the Canadian financial institutions in this country are not giving credit to businesses that want to expand.

What will the minister do to wake up the banking institutions in this country to the importance of small business to our economy?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. Banks have been very difficult with their credit. There is no question about that.

I, like the hon. member and I am sure others in this House, am getting complaints from the small and medium sized business community that the banks have tightened up with their credit and it is non-existent for some businesses.

We have encouraged, through my constant contact with the Canadian Bankers' Association, that this is the time that it should be supporting small businesses to encourage them to expand and grow at this particular time because the economy is improving. That is number one.

Number two is that with the changes we have brought to the Financial Institutions Act, trust and insurance companies can now make commercial loans. That will take a little time to get in place, I am sure, but it will provide competition for the banks and will provide commercial moneys to businesses which heretofore they have been unable to obtain.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

There are 1.7 million entrepreneurs in this country and they are looking for some very specific leadership from the Minister of Finance.

Would the minister be willing to write to the presidents of the financial institutions of this country, as well as their directors, asking them to give much more care and, therefore, ultimately more credit to this sector of the economy? Would the minister be willing to write a direct letter to the leaders of these institutions?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I will pass that on to the Minister of Finance as a suggestion, a representation from my hon. friend, who does come up with many positive ideas.

I might say that the entrepreneurs that the hon. member is talking about have asked for low inflation and low interest rates. They have asked for that and they have that now. They have a good, steady economic base from which to operate and that is very important. They also asked for that.

I might remind the hon. member that we are helping small businesses out that are having financial difficulties at this time through the small business bond program, which I will—

An hon. member: Nobody knows about it.

Mr. McDermid: The hon. member says nobody knows about it. I will rely on him to help us spread the good word about that.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, I would like to keep the same minister on his feet for a minute.

The government has a lot of credibility riding on its ability to achieve its deficit targets. After years of spending cuts, the GST, and sometimes painful restructuring so our trade can increase, Canadians want to know if the government is on track with the deficit or not.

I would like to ask the minister if he can give a report on Canada's fiscal position to this House.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that we have set goals for deficit reduction and we feel very confident that we can reach the $27.5 billion deficit figure for 1992–93.

There are so many encouraging signs in the economy today.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McDermid: Well, I listen to my friends on the Liberal benches who are guffawing about trade figures. In the month of April we had a record export figure of $12.8 billion. This is the fifth month in a row of increase. And I might say that of that amount, $10.8 billion went to the United States, which is also a record. The free trade agreement is working. We are going to reach our deficit figures because the economy is improving, interest rates are falling. We are pleased with the signs that we see.

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WATER

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister answering on behalf of the Minister for International Trade.

In Kootenay East my constituents face dangerously low water levels in the Columbia River reservoirs and they are suffering serious economic, recreational and environmental damage.

In 1961 the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker signed the controversial Columbia River Treaty which gave the Americans the right to drain fresh water out of B.C. regardless of local needs. In 1988 the Tory government signed the free trade agreement which further erodes Canadian control over our fresh water resources.

Now the government threatens disaster by completely giving in on Canadian control over our water resources to the U.S. and Mexico in the North America free trade agreement.

Will this government pull out of the current NAFTA negotiations in order to ensure that Canada can regain control of our precious fresh water supply?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, the short answer to that question is no, we will not withdraw from the NAFTA negotiations. That would be foolish. The hon. member's colleague just said that we should be there to assure that textile workers and garment workers are protected. So you can't have it both ways.

Second, Canadians have control over their water resources. It was proven during the free trade agreement debate time and time again. We still have control, and we are not going to negotiate anything away at all. The hon. member knows that.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, the minister may say that, but the reality is that the flow was increased a month ago from 8,000 cubic feet per second to 22,000 cubic feet per second. That is the kind of control that the free trade agreement has brought in. Now they are not going to be able to cut back because you cannot cut back on areas where you have made commitments in the past.

My question is this. Will the minister at least assure Canadians that he will specifically exclude fresh water as a commodity in the NAFTA negotiations?

• (1500)

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I know the free trade agreement inside out. I do not know where it says anything about river flows or fresh water exports or anything else to the United States.

It has absolutely nothing to do with the free trade agreement or the North American free trade agreement. The NDP is putting up another red herring in front of the Canadian people.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada reported that 166,000 students were out of work in May, an increase of 60,000 since 1990.

Why does the Minister of Employment and Immigration continue to reduce funding for student employment programs when unemployment in this group is at crisis proportions?

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, as the hon. member should know because the question has been answered a number of times in the House, contrary to what he is trying to suggest today the budget for summer employment was increased, not decreased.

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PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, in the course of Question Period I commented on the absence of the minister of health. It has since come to my attention that he was delivering the eulogy at a funeral. Of course I would not want it to be left on the record that I in any way expected him not to fulfil his responsibilities in that area.

I apologize for commenting on his absence when he was obviously doing something very important.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her apology.

Something for all of us to remember is that before we accuse someone of not being present sometimes we should inquire or simply not mention it, as that is what our rules say.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STATEMENT PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is another point I would also like to bring to the attention of the House. I made a mistake earlier this day when I recognized the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader on a point of order during statements by members.

The only reason why a point of order would be recognizable at that time would be if there was really something unparliamentary. As I had been speaking to someone who was at the chair with me, I thought maybe there was something serious I had not heard, which is why I recognized the hon. member. I should not have done so. The hon. member has other opportunities of putting something on the record. I am sure he would find the reason. I should not have recognized him on a point of order at that point.

I do apologize for the House. I guess it is a learning process for all of us.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I hope I did not inconvenience the House or the Chair with that intervention.

What I had intended to say at that time was that I thought the hon. member would find the record would show that the parliamentary secretary said yesterday the report was conclusive not unanimous, as the hon. member had suggested.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The point has been made. The hon. member knows that this a question of debate and not really a question of order itself.

I thought the hon. member was going to apologize for raising a point of order in the middle of the statement by members. This is why I recognized him.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I did.

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[*Translation*]

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to lay upon the table a Notice of Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, the Pension Plan, the Income Tax Conventions Interpretation Act, the Tax Rebate Discounting Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act and certain related Acts. Madam Speaker, I ask that you designate an Order of the Day for the consideration of the said motion.

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

STATEMENT PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, further to the point of order, I must say for the parliamentary secretary to rise during statements and to engage in debate is something I have never seen happen in the House.

I appreciate the Speaker getting up to indicate her unhappiness with the way things went. On the other hand, the parliamentary secretary has continued to put motives to remarks that I made.

I must say I reviewed *Hansard* very carefully before I made my statement in the House. The parliamentary secretary had said there was conclusive evidence and that gave the impression the health department was unanimous.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member. We are getting into a point of debate. I did admonish the hon. member for getting back into a debate on this very subject and if I have not accepted what the parliament secretary was saying about debating this subject at this time, I cannot accept what the hon. member is doing either. I do suggest we go to tabling of documents.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, I wish to indicate my appreciation for your ruling with respect to your apology to the House. That was the point I wanted to make.

I do want to raise a point about the fact that the person who caused that apology to have to be made was then permitted to stand up and make his entire point. It seems to me at the very least it should be possible for the member for New Westminster—Burnaby to be able to make hers back.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, it seems clear. The Speaker has ruled and has clarified the matter.

The parliamentary secretary having intervened a second time, the last time he spoke he apologized. The member has quite legitimately and quite properly made her point. Can we get on with the business of the House?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do agree.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

THE STATE OF CANADA'S FORESTS

TABLING OF SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Madam Speaker, I have the honour today to table, in both official languages, the second annual report to Parliament on *The State of Canada's Forests*.

Last year you would recall our report was called *The State of Forestry in Canada*. I believe the new name, *The State of Canada's Forests*, much better reflects the government's recognition of the public sensitivities to the multiple use we make of our forests, our dependence on our forests, our international obligations as the owners of 10 per cent of the planet's forest resources.

Public expectations related to the use and restoration of our forests are indeed very high. The issues covered in this year's report present a balanced picture of forestry in Canada reflecting society's demands for both a healthy and strong economy, as well as a healthy and pristine environment.

I trust the information presented in this report will provide a useful basis for facilitating dialogue and decision–making on the future of our forests.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 13 petitions.

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

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Is it not in order for members on this side to say something about the report the minister has just tabled?

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. The hon. member knows this was not a statement by a minister but a very brief explanation while he was tabling the report.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

REPORT OF CANADIAN SECTION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARIANS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the activity report of the Canadian section of the International Association of French-Speaking Parliamentarians on the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Affairs Commission in Paris on April 14, 1992.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATION OF 46TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): I have the honour to present the 46th report of the Standing Committee on House Management. Pursuant to Standing Order 113(a), this report is deemed adopted when laid upon the Table.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATION OF 47TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, I also have the 47th report of the Standing Committee on House Management. With unanimous consent, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day.

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

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West) moved for leave to introduce bill C-355, an act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Wappel: Madam Speaker, I have a very short explanation. This bill would amend section 52 of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. That is the section which permits the Security Intelligence Review Committee to make certain recommendations in connection with decisions that have been made by, for example, senior bureaucrats.

As a result of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada and a decision by the Chief of the Defence Staff, it has become obvious that those recommendations are toothless.

This private member's bill is an attempt to give some teeth to the recommendations of SIRC and to provide an opportunity for the minister in Parliament to explain why SIRC's recommendations will not be followed in a particular case.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Mr. Wappel moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

AUTHORIZATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

> That four members and two staff of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to London, England, from October 31 to November 5, 1992, to study the British comprehensive auditing system and information to Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

CONCURRENCE IN 47TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, with unanimous consent, I move that the 47th report of the Standing Committee on House Management presented in the House today be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*English*]

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

SHOP CANADA DAY

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Madam Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for this motion:

That in the opinion of the House the government will proclaim Saturday, July 4, 1992, as Shop Canada Day to keep consumer dollars in Canada and to support Canadian industry.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to table a petition signed by over 15,000 Canadians from British Columbia to Newfoundland that calls upon Parliament to withhold approval of the drug RU-486 and prevent the marketing and/or testing of this drug to induce abortions in Canada.

These petitioners state that the said drug RU-486 has been used to cause the abortion of the human foetus in the early stages of pregnancy and has also been shown in some cases to have caused serious injury and even death in one case to the mother when taken with prostagladins.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, today I have eight petitions concerning the Court Challenges Program. Your petitioners, who now number in the thousands, would like to see Parliament review the government's decision which abolished this program last February.

The Court Challenges Program has made it possible for the courts to hand down a number of important decisions aimed at clarifying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The courts have been able to rule on a broad range of human rights issues, including the rights of inmates, Canadians of native origin and disabled Canadians, as well as on issues concerning discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, race, ethnic origin, marital status and family circumstances.

The petitioners ask that the program be reinstated so that all Canadians can have access to this federal assistance which helps protect the rights of all Canadians.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present 10 petitions containing approximately 637 signatures from citizens of Burlington, Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Dundas, Mississauga, Oakville, Scarborough, Kitchener, Guelph, Toronto and all over southern Ontario.

The petitioners urge the government to stiffen the penalties for violent crime and points in particular to the death of Miss Nina de Villiers who was brutally murdered on August 9, 1991.

The petitioners ask the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General to continue to review all legislation that deals with public safety and to negotiate, where necessary, with the provincial authorities to ensure that the laws are amended to reflect the concerns expressed by the petitioners on public safety.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting to the House a petition collected by the Finch—Weston Multicultural Seniors Committee urging the government to amend the drug laws in this country that permit the Government of Canada, when it seizes profits from drug seizures, to put them solely and totally in the federal revenues of the federal government rather than trying to share those proceeds with local police authorities, local organizations and municipalities so that those groups which are on the front lines of battling drugs in our society may in fact

have the equipment and the financial wherewithal to try to combat those forces in a successful way.

I present that petition and hopefully the Solicitor General will amend the Narcotics Control Act to do just that.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I have the duty and the honour today to present a petition in memory of Ryan Garrioch. These are petitioners from the province of Alberta and the province of British Columbia who petition this Parliament to revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years.

IRAQ

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present two petitions. The first one has been signed by some 314 persons from the cities of Castlegar, Nelson and Trail and some 13 other communities throughout my constituency of Kootenay West—Revelstoke.

The petitioners state as Canadians, we have a deep concern for the suffering of Iraqi children. The United Nations and NGO reports tell of a million children at risk from malnutrition and diseases for which there is no medicine.

• (1520)

Therefore, your petitioners request that Parliament instruct the government to take an initiative at the UN to have the sanctions imposed on Iraq modified sufficiently to both allow the necessary amounts of food and medicine to reach these children in an unrestricted fashion and also allow for the reconstruction of those elements of Iraq's infrastructure crucial to meeting the human needs of that country's suffering civilian population.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, the second petition, under the provisions of Standing Order 36, is signed by a number of signatories from 12 communities throughout my constituency. The undersigned residents of Canada draw to the attention of the House that there has been a promise from the government to freeze unemployment insurance premium rates for three years and that the recent cumulative increases to UI premiums are unfair and insensitive to small businesses during hard economic times. Further, job losses due to business closures would further impair the chances for a full economic recovery in Canada. Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to freeze unemployment insurance premium rates for one year.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, I have the honour and duty under Standing Order 36 to present a petition to the House today from a number of residents of Calgary in memory of Ryan Garrioch and these petitioners request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lower minimum age of 13 years.

AIRPORT NOISE

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, I also present a second petition on a different issue. This is from hundreds of my constituents who ask that the Minister of Transport change the flight direction from runway 28 back to its original line of flight to prevent noise in their area.

I presented a petition previously on the other side of this issue. I would simply ask the Minister of Transport to try to develop a sensitive solution that protects all of my constituents from airport noise.

HOUSING

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, as you see, my colleagues here are all concerned about the co–operative housing program cut.

On December 17, 1991 the government stated in a news release an increase in the budget pf $6.1 million for 1992. However, on February 25, 1992 the co–operative housing program was cancelled altogether by the government. The co–operative housing program was highly successful in creating healthy, mixed income communities.

I join with my constituents in calling on Parliament to urge the government to immediately reinstate the federal co–operative housing program and to commit the $6.1 million that it already committed previously and cancelled to the program which had been planned for 1992

to permit approximately 2,000 co-operative housing units to be sponsored in 1992.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member agree with me that was very close to a speech and not presenting a petition?

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, I have three petitions today and I will be very brief with them.

The first one I would like to present on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Yellowhead. It has been signed by 150 residents of Drayton Valley and they are supporting a binding referendum on the Constitution.

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): The second petition I would like to present is from people associated with the Kids First Organization. They call upon the government to amend the Income Tax Act such that child related benefits and deductions for child care are fair and equitable to all family structures based on financial need and irrespective of child care choice.

POSTAL FRANCHISES

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): The third petition I would like to present is a petition from well over 1,000 of my constituents. This petition calls upon Parliament to influence the government to award a postal franchise to the Heritage I.D.A. in Edmonton, Alberta.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): It is my pleasure to present a petition requesting that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lower minimum age of 13 years.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first is one calling upon the Government of Canada to hold a national referendum in order to determine the wishes of the people of Canada on the issue of the amendment to the Constitution of Canada.

HOUSING

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): This petition, supported by my colleague from Ottawa Centre, deals with the cancellation of the federal co-op housing program and asks the government to reinstate funding for this important, low-cost housing program.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I have the privilege of presenting a petition from residents of Calgary, De Winton, Claresholm and Okotoks, Alberta calling upon Parliament to revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lower maximum age of 13 years.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

EMPLOYMENT

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have received an application pursuant to Standing Order 52 and I will recognize the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52 I wish to give notice of my intention to move the adjournment of the House for an emergency debate on the crisis in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. Fishermen and plant workers on the great northern peninsula of Newfoundland, in particular, and along the northeast coast and in other regions have been without income now since May 15 and have no prospect of any income because of a combination of reasons; no fish, various fisheries have been closed, ice conditions and a pending moratorium.

I ask Madam Speaker to give consideration to this petition for an emergency debate, that it be held as soon as possible and practically. I will conclude very quickly but I would remind the House that more than 60 members over the last two days of Parliament from this side of the House, in two opposition parties, from almost every province of Canada, including independent members—and this is unprecedented in my 13 years here—are supporting this petition for an emergency debate because they recognize that it would be improper for Parliament to close for the summer, close until September, without giving a proper opportunity for a debate on this crisis situation and without giving an opportunity for ministers opposite and for the government opposite to

present their program on how they intend to deal with this crisis.

With that in mind, I ask the Chair to consider this petition and to grant an emergency debate to give an opportunity for the voice of fishermen and plant workers to be heard as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not think anyone in this House is ignorant of the problems now facing people in Labrador, Newfoundland and the Atlantic provinces in general, and I am referring to people who work in the fisheries.

The Chair has carefully examined the requests that were filed this week, even and especially today, for an emergency debate on the subject. I do not think it would be reasonable to allow this type of debate today. In fact the Speaker with whom I discussed the matter earlier tends to agree, it is unlikely we could get the answers people are entitled to expect, and I think it would be wiser to wait, but only for a short while, before having this kind of debate.

• (1530)

I do not want the hon. member to see this as a lack of interest on the part of the Chair or failure to recognize the seriousness of the situation, but as an attempt to ensure that the purpose of the debate is served as well as possible. We do not think having this debate today would provide that kind of assurance.

Consequently, I cannot give permission for this debate today. However, I can assure the hon. member, and all members who asked the Chair to consider their requests, that the matter will be considered again during the weekend, and we will be able to resume our discussion when the House meets again.

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 310 and 350.

[*Text*]

Question No. 310—**Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East):**

Will the government direct the management of Canada Post (*a*) to respond favourably to any requests received from any of its employee union locals to mark the April 28 Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace where such requests are for (i) the lowering to half-staff of flags flown on or at corporation facilities (ii) the observation of one minute of silence at corporation facilities in each of the major shifts of workers present during the 24 hours of the day (iii) permission for employees so wishing to wear black arm bands (*b*) to consider seriously any other requests for the marking of the day received from any of its employee union locals?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons: (*a*) During a 1991 meeting between the parties at the national level on the April 28 Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace, the corporation expressed a willingness and remains willing to meet with the CUPW to endeavour to find a mutually acceptable solution to the union's request. No request was received from the union at the national level for consultation on this issue this year.

(i) The corporation is of the opinion that the lowering of the flag is not appropriate for this occasion.

(ii) The corporation workforce is located in facilities all over Canada with operations being conducted on an around the clock basis. Such request would result in a disruption of mail processing and counter activities.

(iii) The corporation has no objection to employees wearing black arm bands in any non-public areas; but employees who have any person to person contact with customers or the public are not allowed to wear these arm bands.

(*b*) The corporation continues to improve accident prevention Programs which strive to educate and encourage employees to work safely and ensures that employees are provided with and utilize the necessary protective clothing and equipment. The corporation and the union also meet on a regular basis to discuss health and safety matters. It is through these efforts,

throughout the year, that the corporation expects to reduce the frequency of accidents on the job.

Question No. 350—**Mr. Fee:**

For the period May 1, 1992 to June 12 1992, what has been the (*a*) total cost (*b*) cost per question (*c*) cost for this question, to the government for answering Order Paper Questions?

Mr. James Stewart Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): (*a*) & (*b*) Questions answered during the period of May 1, 1992 to June 12, 1992:

Question No.	Approximate Cost	Question No.	Approximate Cost
164	$5,930	277	$ 55
228	6,605	278	79
235	75	279	111
236	195	280	95
240	49	281	86
241	541	287	447
244	18	288	55
249	4,576	290	84
252	300	292	10
255	179	293	35
258	154	299	327
262	344	301	164
263	452	302	43
266	63	305	88
268	43	306	64
269	310	308	620
272	36	309	36
275	275	316	30
276	144	321	59

Total Cost: $22,777

c) $30

[*English*]

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

HOUSE OF COMMONS

BILL C–86

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, in relation to Bill C–86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, when the order for second reading is called, the Speaker shall recognize one speaker per party and immediately following, the debate shall be deemed adjourned and the Speaker shall adjourn the House forthwith until the next sitting day.

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order on this particular motion. Being a member from Toronto, as you know, this bill is very important to my community as it is to other members from Toronto. I need to get an assurance from the House that we are going to have sufficient time on Monday to examine this bill in detail.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I believe that Monday will be devoted entirely to debate on this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the motion as presented by the hon. parliamentary secretary. Does he have the permission of the House to present the motion?

Mr. Heap: Madam Speaker, in the name of the NDP caucus I present our agreement with this motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S–12, an act to amalgamate The Montreal Board of Trade and The Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 135(2), the bill is deemed to have been read a first time and ordered for second reading at the next sitting of the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration) moved that Bill C–86, an act to amend the Immigration act and other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, hon. members, a few days ago I proposed to Parliament a number of important changes to the Immigration Act.

These changes will give us the means to more effectively manage the immigration program, to better respond to the changes which have taken place since the current act was passed in 1976 and to position ourselves to meet the immigration challenges of the future.

[*English*]

However, before I address the substance of the proposed amendments, it is important to establish the context for change. Why now? What perspectives do we bring to bear when proposing these changes?

We begin this debate at a time when two issues of great importance dominate the national agenda and preoccupy the minds of Canadians. At kitchen tables, in coffee shops, in cafeterias, on buses, and in church halls across this nation, Canadians are talking about the unity of their country and about Canadian economic prosperity. These are bedrock issues for this country.

Canadians instinctively understand that you cannot have one without the other and yet incredibly we find ourselves debating that very possibility. I raise these issues because they are both inextricably linked to the issue of immigration.

This is a point I made in my presentation to the standing committee last month. It is a point that is well worth restating here on the floor of the House of Commons as we begin this debate on these important amendments to our immigration program.

In many ways, Canada's immigration policy is symbolic of the country itself and of the challenges that we face as a people. When Canadians are asked to describe themselves, to identify what makes them different from others, we often speak with pride about our compassionate and tolerant nature as a people.

We describe Canada as a welcoming nation. Whether we know it or not, we are talking about the values which underpin our immigration and refugee policies. Those policies are part of the face we present to the world. They are a calling card and observers judge us on the basis of what those policies tell them about Canada. The message is one of generosity and openness.

At the same time, these policies that we have shaped as a nation have in turn shaped us. They have helped us understand who we are as a people. They provide us with a mirror to look into our soul as a nation and while the reflection is far from perfect, it does represent a face that the world has come to trust. It is an honest face, one which conveys a compassion and pragmatism of an immigration policy that has served this nation well.

[*Translation*]

Like immigration, our unity debate is about who we are and who we trust. It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians will demonstrate the same compassion and tolerance toward each other as we have had the wisdom to adopt in welcoming newcomers to our shores. It may be our newest citizens who are best able to see Canada as it is.

Nineteen years ago, writer Neil Bissoondath moved here from Trinidad. He was 15 at the time. Today he writes: "Canada is a grand country, and it is that grandeur that I wish to leave to my daughter; its beauties, its immensities, its incomparable diversities. Those diversities include the duality that is her heritage from both her parents, for in her are blended white and brown, francophone and anglophone, native born and immigrant. To accept the division of this country is to betray decades of vision and effort. It is to betray generations, those of yesterday and those of tomorrow."

• (1540)

[*English*]

In a similar way immigration policy addresses public concerns about prosperity, a central objective of that policy. The objective over our 125 years as a nation is to attract to Canada people with the skills and talents we require to build a prosperous country.

At different times in our history the economic rationale for immigration has been more obvious than at other times. For example, at the turn of the century we deliberately recruited immigrants to open the west and less than 50 years later a new wave of builders arrived to participate in the post–war industrialization of Canada.

The bottom line today is the same as the bottom line of more than a century ago. Immigration is essential to prosperity. Immigration contributes to both the soul and sinew of Canada. Responding to the social and humanitarian concerns of Canadians and meeting our economic needs are central objectives of the policy. Managing the balance between these two faces of immigration is the key to a successful program that best serves the interest of all Canadians. We cannot have one without the other. The program would be incomplete.

The same logic holds true for the great debate that engages us today as a nation. Unity and prosperity are inseparable. I am confident that Canadians understand this logic. I am equally certain that immigration will continue to contribute to our unity and prosperity.

Like Canada itself, our country's immigration and refugee programs face important challenges as we move through the nineties. The world is changing around us and that change is placing new and mounting pressure on our programs.

Just a few weeks *The Toronto Star* ran two news stories side by side. They were prominently displayed. The stories touched a nerve which many of us will recognize. The first story described in typically dramatic fashion the recent United Nations report on global population. In big, dark letters the headline read: "Immigrant tide to grow higher. Throngs to flee poverty and turmoil of Third World".

The second story, the headline not quite so big, said: "Toronto woman faces 20 charges in immigrant scam". In 40 column inches of space *The Toronto Star* managed to capture the scope of our immigration challenge and the nature of some of the obstacles we face in meeting that challenge.

Those headlines were also typically provocative. They transmitted a sense of anxiety about the value and effectiveness of immigration. They represent yet another dimension of the challenge we face in sustaining the public's confidence in these essential programs for Canada.

[*Translation*]

This Chamber of elected representatives, this government whose role as steward is dependent upon the will of the Canadian public, has an obligation, indeed a fundamental responsibility to preserve and improve a vital national program in the face of increasing international and domestic pressures.

What are these pressures? How do they exhibit themselves?

We do not have to look too far to see evidence of change. The 1980s mark the start of a period of great migration.

Today, some experts suggest that as many as 80 million people are on the move throughout the world. Prompted by political and economic instability, environmental disasters or the simple desire for a new beginning, individuals and families have uprooted themselves in search of new homes.

Other factors contribute to that movement. Modern communication technologies spread images of the affluent west around the world. The growth of an international labour market has opened up opportunities for those with the special skills sought after by developed and developing countries. The scale of that movement can be startling to consider. For example, in 1983, approximately 95,000 people sought refugee status in all OECD countries. By last year, that number was more than 700,000 individuals, an increase of approximately 800 per cent. In 1983, Canada received 1,500 claims for refugee status; last year, it received 30,000.

In Europe this year, the Germans alone expect some 400,000 people to claim refugee status in their country. This large scale, unpredictable movement of people is a phenomenon to which industrialized nations like Canada have been required to respond. It is a phenomenon that is not going to disappear soon. A recent United Nations report on global population predicts an explosive rate of growth in the next decade. Most of those births will take place in the Third World, the primary source of today's immigration.

[*English*]

At home Canadians are concerned about the growing costs of immigration and about backlogs in applications which result in extended delays and increased frustrations. They are concerned about the fairness of the program for applicants tangled in backlogs. They want to be assured that immigration is being managed to bring the greatest possible social and economic benefits to Canada. They want to know that the laws which govern the program will be enforced, that we will deal firmly with those who have used our generosity.

All this adds up to increasing pressures on a legislative framework built to manage the demands of a simpler time.

The world is awash in a sea of change, but Canada has not been standing still waiting for events to overtake us. Since 1984 this government has pursued an approach of steady growth and adjustment of our immigration program. That approach is based on the recognition of immigration as an integral element of Canada's economic and social agenda.

The annual level of immigration has increased gradually over the last eight years. This year Canada will welcome 250,000 immigrants, almost three times the number we welcomed in 1983.

During those eight years we have either reinforced existing programs or established new programs to help immigrants adjust to life in Canada. From language training to community relations programs which breach barriers between newcomers and native born Canadians, work goes on to introduce new immigrants to their rights and responsibilities as new citizens.

In 1988 Parliament passed Bill C-55 creating the Immigration and Refugee Board. This was a response to the unprecedented level of refugee applications which had choked and overwhelmed the previous management structure.

Today the IRB and my department have virtually eliminated the enormous case backlog which built up in the late 1980s. The board is now processing and making decisions on all claims it receives annually.

• (1550)

We introduced the five-year plan for immigration in December of 1990. The plan was the result of more than a year of extensive consultations with governments and interested parties across Canada. We reached broad consensus on the numbers and categories of immigrants Canada requires in the coming years. Our objective was also to introduce a level of certainty to our collective planning to improve our management of immigrant and refugee programs.

Today we are taking another step in meeting the challenges posed for Canada by a changing world environment. The amendments we have proposed will give us the tools to adapt our immigration program to the realities of the 1990s and ensure that we have a program that is fair, balanced and effective.

The changes we have proposed involve improvements in three general areas. They will give us the means to more effectively select and process those who come to Canada by improving the way in which we manage the categories and numbers of immigrants and by improving the service we provide to them. They will give us the means to better protect Canadian society by tightening up enforcement and control measures to defend the integrity of the system and protect Canadians from those who abuse our generosity and break our laws. We will further streamline the refugee determination system in order to improve the effectiveness of an excellent program with fair decisions rendered quickly.

What about effective selection? To be effective Canada's immigration policy must balance our compassionate character as a people with our pragmatic requirements as a nation. This balance is reflected in the three fundamental policy objectives which underpin the program. We have a social obligation to reunite families, a humanitarian responsibility to protect refugees and an economic requirement to attract newcomers whose particular skills and talents contribute to our prosperity. The proposed changes will help ensure that we maintain a constructive balance between these three policy pillars.

At the present time we have the authority, Mr. Speaker, to set over-all levels of immigration; however, we lack the means to actually deliver on those targets.

For example, if 50,000 people, 50,000 eligible individuals, apply in a particular category during a specific year, the government must consider each of those obligations even though the annual plan may only have room for 25,000 applications. That is the law, and that is why we have backlogs.

The proposed changes will give us the means to more effectively control those numbers. It will introduce greater certainty to our planning. Greater certainty means fewer delays, it means more predictable processing times and greater fairness for applicants.

Specifically, I have proposed the introduction of three management streams for selecting immigrants. Stream one will have no fixed limit on applications for its various categories. The stream could include, for example, spouses and dependent children, convention refugees and immigrant investors. Applicants will be processed according to specific time standards. For example, our objective will be to process routine immediate-family applicants within six months regardless of whether the application is made in Germany or in India. Stream two will operate on a first-come-first served basis. There will be a ceiling for applications from each group within this stream. Parents and grandparents, refugees processed abroad, and immigrants with arranged employment could be included in stream two.

For some groups, once the ceiling was reached no more applications would be processed. Others would be able to reapply in the next planning period. These changes would stop backlogs from accumulating.

In the third stream, we select for excellence, accepting only the most highly qualified individuals. This stream could be composed largely of individuals from the independent categories or entrepreneurs, or people qualified in designated occupations.

Again, there will be a ceiling for each group within the stream. Only the allotted number of applications will be accepted. This approach to managing the program will give us the means to eliminate the build-up of backlogs which drain our resources and reduce our flexibility to help others.

[*Translation*]

The House should also be aware, Mr. Speaker, that these proposals do not change the decision-making authority for the selection of immigrants contained in federal-provincial agreements. In particular, the changes will be consistent with the Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration. The hon. member for Joliette was concerned about that at some point. These provisions will be fully respected.

We are also proposing a measure to further extend the economic and social benefits of immigration to the regions. Not every area of the country currently benefits from the program. Some regions find it difficult to attract newcomers.

In 1991, 3.5 per cent of immigrants went to communities of less than 100,000 people and only 1 per cent went to communities of less than 50,000 people. However, 68 per cent of immigrants went to cities of over 500,000 people.

To encourage a better distribution of this pool of talent, some skilled immigrants will be offered a contract-like arrangement. As a condition of their acceptance to Canada, they will be required to settle in a community where the number of people having their specific skills would otherwise be insufficient to meet the needs of that region. They would be required to live in the community for a limited period of time.

Individuals who choose to participate in this program will do so fully aware that their application has earned additional consideration as a consequence of their willingness to settle in a designated location. There is nothing coercive about this measure.

Our hope is that individuals will want to stay in a particular community once they are settled. But ultimately, that hope is dependent on a number of things, including the ability of the community to create the type of welcoming environment which will cause individuals to set down roots.

[*English*]

Canada has been ranked as the best place in the world in which to live. Surely those who prepared that assessment must have considered the generosity and openness of our immigration and refugee programs when they made their decisions. On a per capita basis, we accept more immigrants than any other nation in the world. Today about one in six Canadians was born somewhere other than in Canada. This year we will welcome as many

as 250,000 newcomers, or almost three times as many people as we welcomed a decade ago.

Even with the highest immigration rate in the world, we cannot meet the demand of all those who want in. Because there is a finite number of people we can accommodate each year, an increasing number of people are seeking ways to bypass the regular immigration process.

Canada is not alone in facing this problem; the Germans, the Australians, the British, the French, the Americans, indeed most developed nations, are faced with the same problem. It is an issue that cannot be ignored because it ultimately threatens the very viability of established immigration programs.

• (1600)

The federal government has an obligation to protect the integrity of these vital programs. We will respond to that need by taking a number of steps to protect these programs, at home, at our borders and overseas.

Overseas we will provide further training and technological assistance to our own staff and to airline personnel to help them identify fraudulent documents and intercept illegal migrants before they reach Canada. We will also extend the rule governing criminal inadmissibility. This will allow us to keep out individuals who may have a criminal record but who are known members of criminal or terrorist organizations.

At our borders, we will give immigration staff the authority to search individuals and to seize documents and vehicles used in smuggling people into Canada.

We will also expand an authority the current law already gives the department and that is the department's authority to use fingerprints and photographs to establish the identity of people seeking admission to Canada. These procedures will be extended to cover all individuals who make refugee claims.

Canadians want their country to provide protection to those fleeing persecution. They insist that we leave a light in the window for those hounded from their homelands. But Canadians have a right to know whom we are welcoming to this country on their behalf. They have a right to know who is entering their home.

When the generosity of Canada's immigration program is abused, the public's confidence in the value and effectiveness of immigration is shaken. Abuse of the program upsets everyone, newcomers and native born alike.

The problem of multiple refugee claims is a good example of an issue where the actions of a few people erode the confidence and trust of the broader community.

Yet we cannot effectively control this type of limited but costly abuse, largely because we lack the tools to monitor the identity of people. The fragility of the system became patently obvious when a single individual is capable of successfully making 17 refugee claims.

Expanding the use of photographs and fingerprints, with the appropriate safeguards for the individual in place, will help us eliminate a problem which hurts everyone.

At home, we are proposing a number of new measures, including legislative amendments to prevent criminals from using our refugee system to avoid justice in their own countries.

By defending the integrity of these programs, we achieve two things. First, we preserve the social and economic benefits of these vital national programs. Second, we maintain public confidence in our immigration and refugee systems.

Canadians have earned a special position in the world for our work on behalf of refugees. In fact these efforts earned the people of Canada the Nansen Medal in 1986. It was the first time the United Nations has recognized an entire nation for its work.

The plain fact is that Canada has the highest refugee acceptance rate of any nation in the world and it has occupied that position for some time now.

But despite our international reputation, we now have a refugee determination system that is working at maximum capacity and showing signs of strain. While we are able to process as many claims as we receive at some stages in the process, other components of the system, particularly the Federal Court, are experiencing large backlogs.

In addition, it is quite clear that we could not meet a sustained surge in the number of claims. The time required to process claims is still too long and that is not fair to claimants.

The speed with which we can remove rejected claimants remains slow and that erodes the effectiveness of the system. The consequence of this delay is the need for costly support programs, and that is certainly not fair to taxpayers.

It is our intention to further improve the decision-making process at the Immigration and Refugee Board. We will eliminate the first level hearing. This step will accelerate the processing times, cut administrative costs, and allow the IRB to direct its resources where they are needed most.

This is a change recommended by the Auditor General and the Law Reform Commission, and supported by the chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Genuine refugees should be able to get on with their lives as quickly as possible. The sooner decisions are made on the status of a claimant, the sooner a refugee can get off social support programs and become a fully contributing member of the community.

New procedures will allow convention refugees to be landed more quickly and take up employment sooner. The proposals will permit the spouse and dependent children of the applicant to be processed at the same time as the claimant. We expect to cut the waiting period for landed status after the IRB decision to six months.

It is worth noting that the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has lent its support to the changes we are proposing.

In a recent press release the UNHCR said:

> We expect that the new legislation will continue to work in the best interest of all those asylum seekers needing protection—UNHCR supports the fine-tuning of the legislation, insofar as it concerns asylum seekers in Canada.

It is an important endorsement because it lends perspective to the debate we are having and to the course of action we are following. This comment is particularly helpful because it may allow us to have a more reasoned debate devoid of the predictable hysteria of some of the government's more vehement critics.

We have also proposed a series of additional measures to help achieve better control over access to the refugee determination system. For example, in straightforward cases senior immigration officers will be given the authority to decide whether an individual is eligible to claim refugee status.

The dramatic increase in the number of people now claiming refugee status throughout the world has made it clear that ultimately the management and resolution of refugee issues require international co-operation.

European countries have perhaps been the first to understand this, and as a result they have recently signed agreements to share responsibility for examining refugee claims. The purpose of these agreements is to eliminate asylum shopping while ensuring that refugee claimants receive a full hearing in one of the states that is a signatory to these conventions.

Last year about one-third of all refugee claimants came to Canada through the United States and a further one-tenth through Europe.

It is important that the government has the legislative authority to enter into agreements with other refugee receiving countries similar to those that have been reached in Europe. This will help ensure that we can provide better and faster protection for those who choose Canada as their first country of refuge.

Without the ability to enter into these agreements Canada may be receiving large numbers of claimants from countries that, while party to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, would prefer to see another state provide the protection offered by the convention.

• (1610)

We are currently negotiating such an agreement with the United States in order to better share the responsibilities for the determination of refugee status between our two countries. We are also talking to the Europeans.

A fair and effective determination system must include the authority to remove people whose claims have been rejected. International authorities, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, clearly recognize that fact. As a result we will also be taking

additional steps to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of our removal procedures.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are aware, as are other members of the House, of the efforts my department has undertaken to improve our service to the public through our offices in Canada and overseas.

Those efforts will continue. Centralized information centres will provide people with quicker access to information on the status of applications. The department will increase the use of mail-in and drop-off services and we will introduce more user-friendly application and information forms.

We have also proposed a number of changes to make more flexible the way in which we handle documents for visitors, students and returning residents.

On a per capita basis, Canada receives more immigrants and accepts more refugees than any other country in the world. Our current Immigration Act dates back to 1976. It was not designed to handle the numbers of people now trying to enter Canada. The system is showing signs of strain. It is important that we act now to bring the system in line with the realities of the 1990s.

A failure to respond now will have significant consequences. Backlogs in applications will lead to longer processing delays and ever escalating costs. Illegal immigration will only continue to grow and our ability to control its impact on our programs will diminish. None of these results is fair to the prospective immigrant, the refugee and the Canadian taxpayer.

[*English*]

More important, our ability to respond to the needs of Canadians will be undermined if we do not act now. Without effective control over the number and categories of immigrants coming to Canada we cannot ensure that immigration continues to serve the best interests of Canada.

At the outset of this debate let us be very clear about whom these amendments are meant to serve. They are not meant to satisfy those who would have no room in their small world for the contribution of yet another generation of immigrants. They are not meant to satisfy those who deny their own immigrant roots or who fail to see the reality of a global community that grows closer together by the minute. Nor are they meant to satisfy those who feel Canadian resources are limitless, that there is no need for rules and that national borders are meaningless concepts.

These amendments to our Immigration Act will not satisfy those who want to slam the door and they will not satisfy those who want us to give away the store.

However, I am confident that the vast majority of Canadians will understand these amendments for what they are: pragmatic and sensible changes that will preserve the integrity of an immigration program that has contributed to our sense of identity and served as a source of prosperity for more than 125 years.

That is what these changes are about.

In closing, I would like to quote Neil Bissoondath one last time. He said:

> In the end I am as at home in Montreal as I am in Vancouver, in Toronto as in Quebec City, in English as in French. Nowhere have I felt myself a stranger. The immigrant who, 19 years ago, gratefully embraced Toronto has become the citizen who has gratefully embraced Canada. While I am abroad and miss home, it is this country—its air, its sounds, its smells—that I long for. It is here, everywhere, that I find the comforts of home.

All of us, no matter where we were born or where our parents and ancestors came from, can endorse such words, for they ring true. We have a great and wonderful country, the envy of the world, and let us get on with our work of keeping Canada unified, prosperous and generous.

As an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or (2) with respect to second reading of Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, and under the provision of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder, since we are only going to have one speaker from each party today, if I could get consent of the House to put a couple of short questions to the minister as we have him here in the House today and he may not be here for the debate on Monday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Hon. members have heard the suggestion. Is there unanimous consent for the member to ask a question?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister just gave notice that an agreement could not be reached pursuant to Standing Order 78(3). I have spoken with the opposition House leader, the opposition Whip, and there was no consultation whatever in respect of Standing Order 78(3). No request was made for an agreement, I am so instructed. I am the assistant House leader on our side. No request has been made through me or with me for any time allocation arrangement in respect of Bill C–73. This notice in my view is improper.

While I recognize Your Honour may do nothing this afternoon, I expect that on Monday this point will be argued in the House.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the facts differs from that of my friend opposite. There have been consultations with the House leadership of the Official Opposition and with the House leadership of the New Democratic Party and avenues, therefore, under Standing Order 78(1) and (2) have been explored.

I referred briefly and clearly to that situation in a discussion that I had with my hon. friend from Kingston and the Islands within the past hour.

Mr. Milliken: I agree that the hon. member indicated to me that it was the minister's intention to give the notice that he has given. That does not constitute consultation. That may be notice that the government is going to give notice.

Standing Order 78(3) is quite specific. He must state that an agreement could not be reached. A request must be made for an agreement. Some consultation must take place.

The House leader has told me that there was no consultation with him. The Whip has told me that he has not been consulted on this matter either. I have not been consulted on this matter. I do not know if some other member on this side was consulted.

• (1620)

I know it was not the hon. member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce who is the critic on this bill and I know it was not the deputy Leader of the Opposition. I would like to know who it was. If the hon. member thinks that consultation with various staff members of the members of this House is sufficient, the precedents in this House indicate it is not. The consultation must be with members. There has been no consultation and no request for an agreement with these members. If there has been, I would like to know with whom the consultation took place because there must be an attempt to reach an agreement with the members.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand what my hon. friend is saying. If he is offering agreement then we accept the agreement.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair will take the question raised by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands under advisement and has duly noted what was said by members on all sides of the House. On Monday, the Chair will probably be in a position to rule whether the time allocation notice given by the Minister of Employment and Immigration was in order.

Pursuant to order adopted earlier, I will now allow a period for questions to be put to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House and specifically the minister for giving me this opportunity.

I listened to the minister carefully and being a member in downtown Toronto we must listen to him carefully because 90 per cent of our time as members of Parliament in downtown Toronto is taken up on matters related to immigration.

I have not had enough time to read thoroughly and analyse the immigration amendments in total, and therefore I do not want to get into the substance of the bill. Our critic, the member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce, will begin that debate for us.

Many of the things that the minister said today I have good feeling for. There is one thing that I did not hear him talk about and that is additional support staff, additional man–years in order to make sure these changes, these transitions and this streamlining, can really be done.

I do not want to stand up here in the Parliament of Canada and sound like I am complaining, but I can honestly tell the minister I have no problem with the spirit or the caring or the attitude of the officials in the Department of Employment and Immigration. However, quite frankly, I find that their workload is just crushing. It is crushing to the point at which it is inevitable that the quality of their work from time to time suffers. It is crushing to the point at which at times members of Parliament, who have constituents coming at them and begging them to respond, end up yelling in a minister's office and to your staff. It seems to me that we are trying to do a lot of good things and yet we do not have sufficient man-years, whether they be in the embassies abroad or in our houses or in your department here.

My question to the minister is, in this amendment package has he arranged with the President of the Treasury Board or whoever is responsible for man-years in this place to give the necessary resources so that those positive parts of this process that we are obviously going to adapt in the next little while can be implemented in a way that everybody wins?

Mr. Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a fair question. I guess I could have asked my colleague, the Minister of Finance, or the Treasury Board to borrow more money on behalf of Canadians or to tax the people more to pay for increased resources.

What we have done here is look at the over-all situation and made conclusions on things such as our staff's having the tools it needs to competently manage immigration and our doing away with make-work provisions of the act. For example, if a student on a student visa in Canada changes his course of study he must go and reapply for another visa to keep a bureaucrat busy. Nothing is being accomplished.

We have done away with a lot of make-work provisions. We are giving ourselves tools that will result in a massive saving allowing us to reallocate these resources within the immigration envelope to better serve the public, to better serve our members of Parliament, and to better serve those people around the world who want to immigrate to Canada.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question of the minister. It concerns the consultation that will be held on June 29 and 30 in Niagara-on-the-Lake and will be hosted by senior Canadian immigration officials. They have invited their counterparts from western Europe, the United States, New Zealand and Australia to attend.

The purpose will principally be to further consider the regulations relating to the movement of refugees into these countries, largely from countries of non-white populations, largely from countries that used to be parts of the empires of western Europe or North America.

This consultation is one in a series that has gone on for several years now.

I have two questions of the minister. First, why is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees not represented in these meetings as a full participant? I understand that an observer from the UNHCR will be there but not as a full participant, yet this is part of the very essence of the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Second, is the reason for the time allocation, which the minister has moved, that it is a goal of the government to have the provisions of this act—especially relating to the port of entry, fingerprinting, the safe third country provision, increased fines for people who bring undocumented persons to the country and so on—in place so it can present it as a model to the other countries—western Europe, the United States, New Zealand and Australia? Or is it because it wishes to show those countries that we are just as tough as they are?

Is that the reason for the deadline? Second, what is the reason for excluding full participation by the United Nations?

Mr. Valcourt: The reason we are moving for time allocation is because this will ensure that the bill will get to a standing committee because there is a window of opportunity in late summer. This bill is not the result of any green paper or white paper. We have consulted, but we want the Canadian public, NGOs, lawyers and stakeholders to have the chance to appear before this committee and give their input to it.

That is why I insist that we complete second reading and send it to committee before we adjourn. That is the reason for the time allocation. It is important that by January 1, 1993 the real refugee person who is admitted to Canada and recognized as such benefits from the provisions in this act.

The hon. member has made many representations to me concerning the delay before refugees in Canada can reunite with their families. We got him to wait a year or two. Before he was landed, he could not. We are changing that.

• (1630)

There are many beneficial provisions here that will result in a more humane, more compassionate immigration program in Canada. The quicker we can get the legislative committee to do its job, I think Canada will be better for it.

As for his first question, the issue of the informal consultations at Niagara–on–the–Lake to be held at the end of the month, I can only tell the hon. member that this undertaking is one of national governments that have similar problems. These are informal consultations.

Officials of all these governments will be trying to learn from one another and see whether or not the mass movement of asylum seekers in the world is one that could benefit from a concerted approach. That is the reason why the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is there as an observer, to contribute however he can to this informal process.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, this year in Canada we are celebrating 125 years of Confederation. In those 125 years there has never been a government so abusive and disrespectful to Parliament than this present Conservative government.

We have before us today another example in Bill C–86 on immigration, a very long, very complex bill of 113 pages, 128 sections, tabled in Parliament and revealed to us for the first time on Tuesday of this week and then put to this House today for debate three days later.

We in the opposition have only had this bill, this very long, complex bill, for three days. The minister, with his officials who drafted the bill, who wrote the bill, who developed the bill, have had it for months, and are very familiar with it. We are today being asked to debate the principle of the bill, to debate the many complex issues in the bill, without having had the opportunity, because it is so complex, of analysing it properly.

I spent the entire afternoon yesterday and into the evening, from 3 p.m. until about 8 p.m., calling practitioners throughout the country, experts that deal in immigration, to get their views on the bill. They stated they have not had the opportunity to review the bill.

The minister stands before us today and much of what he said we could all agree with, very soothing words. A lot of the printed material sounded very good, but I have come not to trust the written material that is put out by this government.

There are some good parts to this bill and there are some parts that are obviously not good, but there are many other parts that can be interpreted either way and have to be examined and analysed, that will have to be examined in relationship to the present act and the regulations and practice. The impact on those sections could fall either way.

It is not enough for us to accept the words of the minister or the publicity that is put out by his department. The editorials are on both sides up to this point. Some have praised the minister's bill, some have condemned it. In either case, I do not know how they can come to such a conclusion unless they have more expertise with their newspapers than the practitioners and the immigration lawyers have.

I am amazed that the United Nations High Commission on Refugees should give a pat of approval to the bill. I wonder whether it simply read the minister's press releases or whether it examined the bill in great detail.

I talk about the fact that the government comes to us with such a complex bill within three days of presenting it, asking us to give informed comment on the bill. Worse still, the minister, having just initiated the debate a few minutes ago and without even hearing from the opposition, moves for closure on the debate by Monday evening. He does not even wait for the debate to get going but moves for closure on the debate before any of us in the opposition have said a word.

I said that this is probably the worst government in 125 years of Confederation with respect to Parliament, and I mean it. This government has introduced closure in the eight years it has been in power more than any other government since Confederation. It has used closure in

the last eight years more than closure was ever used from 1867 up until 1984.

The government has restricted the sittings of the House, has virtually ruined the committee system so that members of Parliament can no longer properly scrutinize the legislation that comes before Parliament.

The people of Canada expect Parliament to scrutinize clearly and thoroughly the government's legislation, but when you have the kind of farce that is being presented to us today, that cannot be done. There is no way that members of Parliament, even those who have become experts in the field of immigration, can deal with a bill like this within three days of its being presented to the House, without consultation and without analysis.

The government's soothing words with respect to reform of Parliament and respect of Parliament are just what they seem, they are part of the politics of rhetoric. It says one thing and does another thing.

Canadians deserve better from Parliament, especially when we are dealing with important matters. It is not only important that members of Parliament be given an opportunity to fully examine such bills, but the many NGOs in the field should be given an opportunity so they can consult with us and give us their opinions; the churches, the ethnocultural communities which are very concerned about immigration, and the immigration bar.

This bill impacts quite heavily on the transportation carriers. They should have an opportunity to examine the bill in detail too and to give us their views.

The bill makes changes with respect to the impact on health and social services. We would like to hear from the health and social services to see whether they confirm that immigrants are impacting in a very severe way on their health and social services. The bill talks a lot about terrorism and criminality. We should be able to hear from the police, from CSIS, and the RCMP.

It is very difficult at this stage to evaluate many parts of this bill. I can say to the minister that some parts, some clauses, are good, are positive. They are things that were requested and I give him credit for that. Others, in my opinion, immediately seem quite bad. Perhaps he has a good explanation for them, perhaps he can convince us they are good but they appear at first glance to be quite bad.

There are a large number of sections where we have not yet had a chance to evaluate their effectiveness, their impact, and consequently we condemn the fact this bill is being debated today and the government is trying to close the debate by Monday evening.

Immigration has played and will continue to play a very important role in Canada. Nearly all of us, except the aboriginal people, come from immigrant families; even the British and the French come from immigrant families. Immigration has built Canada into a great nation as it has built other countries, such as the United States. Like Canada, the United States is the great country it is today because of the immigrants that went to that country.

• (1640)

Every great new wave of immigration has brought new riches to Canada, riches economically and culturally. Consequently, we must have an immigration policy that is fair, humane and generous.

The Immigration Act that is presently the law of this land, which was passed in 1976 by a Liberal government and proclaimed in 1978, sets out the goals for immigration policy in Canada. Those goals remain in force today. They have not been changed and there is no attempt to change those goals by the bill that the minister has tabled.

I think I should put on the record some of those goals, not all of them, to remind the House and Canada of the purposes of our immigration law.

To begin with, it starts by saying that the purpose of our immigration law is to promote the domestic and international interests of Canada so our immigration policy or immigration laws are to promote the interests of Canada.

It goes on to say the bill will enrich and strengthen the cultural and social fabric of Canada taking into account its bilingual character.

Further, the purpose of our immigration policy is to facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian citizens with their relatives from abroad so as to promote family reunification.

It goes on to say that to ensure that any person who seeks admission to Canada is not discriminated against in a manner which is inconsistent with our charter of rights. Immigration policy is to be non-discriminatory based on

objective criteria which are aimed at the ability of the immigrant to adapt in Canada and to settle in Canada.

It goes on to say in those goals of our immigration policy that Canada has a legal obligation with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition, a great tradition which we have had. The minister mentioned that we won the Nansen Medal a few years ago for our record with respect to refugees.

It is also the purpose of our immigration policy to foster a strong and vibrant economy in Canada to maintain and protect the health, safety and good order of Canadian society and to promote international order and justice by denying the use of Canadian territory to criminals, terrorists, and so on.

Those are the goals of our immigration policy as set out in the law. Those have not been changed and it will be our job, our task, in this debate to evaluate the amendments that the government has put before us to see whether they correspond with those goals.

The bill before us contains very significant changes. In fact I would say that this bill sets out a series of amendments which are the most extensive we have had since the present act was enacted in 1976. We had Bill C–55 a few years ago, but these amendments are the most extensive amendments to the law up until this time. I would like to go through some of those more significant amendments in the bill.

In the bill the government proposes ending the so–called first stage hearings for refugees, the credible basis hearing, and we think that is a good thing. We congratulate the government for doing that.

Those first stage hearings were for the most part in recent months a waste of time and resources. The large majority of cases were being accepted. Consequently, those first stage hearings did not serve any great purpose.

On the other hand, the government in terminating the first stage hearings, the credibility stage hearings, has now given some of the authority that tribunal had at the first stage hearing to officers at ports of entry. It appears it has given them that authority without providing for due process of law.

What we have now is power being given to immigration officers and senior immigration officers at the border to refuse refugees who present themselves and make a claim for refugee status.

In some of the cases the matter will be sent on to an inquiry under an adjudicator. In other cases, the individual will be sent back from the country. In some cases, the refugee will be sent back to a so–called safe third country, and I will discuss that in a minute, in other cases sent back to the United States, and in other cases simply turned down without any hearing by an inquiry or an adjudicator.

With respect to the safe third country, we in this party have not accepted that concept. We did not accept it when it was proposed with respect to Bill C–55 a few years ago and we continued to reject it. We believe the International Convention on Refugees, which we have signed, and the protocol give those who claim refugee status universal access to a fair hearing to determine whether or not they are really a refugee.

We know that the United States which is a democratic country for many purposes has not been as democratic with respect to its refugee policy. As a matter of fact, for the last number of years the refugee policy of the United States has been tied to its foreign policy and has been politically motivated.

If the refugee came from a country which was more or less a right wing dictatorship and was being opposed by left wing freedom fighters, the United States was not favourable to those individuals fleeing those right wing dictatorships. I have in mind in particular Guatemala, El Salvador and other Latin American countries.

On the other hand, if the refugee claimant going to the United States came from a left wing dictatorship, such as some of the communist countries in Europe, the refugee was received very openly and warmly in the United States.

In other words, in our opinion, the refugee convention was not applied evenly to all types of refugees who appeared in the United States. Therefore, for Canada to return refugee claimants to the United States because we considered it a safe third country and the refugee claimant had to come through the United States by plane, truck, train, boat, or whatever, and to say to them that they do not belong here, they belong in the United States because it was a safe third country, we do not think this is a proper way to deal with legitimate refugee applicants.

Another change in the bill is the fact that the government is proposing that the refugee panel of the Immigrant and Refugee Board now requires the agreement of two members in certain cases to recognize the applicant as a refugee. Up until now, the recognition of only one of

the two was necessary for the applicant to be considered a refugee.

While it is true that the two are only required in certain cases, one of those cases is related to the possession of legitimate documents by the claimant. Anyone who deals with refugees knows it is very often natural that the refugee who flees his country as a political opponent of a regime, or who was being persecuted because of his religion, ethnic background, or colour will flee in the middle of the night, sometimes over mountains, through forests and whatever to escape that country and he will not have his documentation. As a matter of fact, in many of those countries he is refused documentation.

For us to insist in this country that every refugee applicant must have proper documents from his country, passports, travel documents and identification documents, because he is applying as a refugee and to turn him back or to make it more difficult for him I believe is not fair.

• (1650)

This morning I spoke to a Jewish man who fled Nazi Germany at the beginning of World War II. He got to Denmark and swam to a Swedish island in nothing but shorts and a T-shirt in order to get away from Nazi Germany and get to a country that would respect his religion and give him freedom. He was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and had no documents. Many people fleeing those sorts of conditions have no documents. We will want answers on that.

The bill provides for a better system of family reunification, and we give credit to the government for doing that, but I return to the question that was just asked by my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood. If you are going to do what the government says in its proposal with respect to family reunification, you are going to need the resources in the department to make that work. We would hope that will be the case.

Right now refugees have been without their families for up to five years. There are cases in my office where the individual is here and has not seen his family for five years because of the slowness in our process. Many of the NGOs have asked that the minister use ministerial permits to deal with these cases which are excessively cruel, but he has refused to do that. We still ask him to use his ministerial permits because that would be a way of dealing with these cases that are between three and five years, which is really inhumane when you come to think of it. A man is here and his wife and children are still in a country which is in turmoil and he has not been able to get them into the country with him even though he has been recognized as a refugee.

The measures in the bill to provide a system of discipline for those members of the board who misbehave and who are negligent is a good thing and we support it. There were cases last winter where members of the Refugee Board were rude to refugee claimants, slept during the hearings, laughed at their stories and even tried to use pressure, one to the other, to come to certain decisions. When this was raised with the chairman of the board, he said that there was not too much he could do because the members of the board were Order in Council appointments which, by the way, makes us wonder about the judgment in appointing some of these people. Nevertheless we believe that this is a positive step to put a measure in the bill to allow the government and the board to deal with members who are misbehaving or who are negligent in their duties.

Another major change in the bill is the increased authority given to the government, to the minister and to his officials to do things by way of regulation. There is quite a massive shift of authority from Parliament to the minister and to his officials in this bill. He referred to some of them. He looks on it as a more effective way of managing the immigration system and the refugee system. However, some of those decisions which are being transferred from Parliament to the minister and to the officials are ones that are open to abuse. While this minister might be a democratic-minded minister and may be fair, although some people might disagree with that description from time to time, we do not know what minister will be in that position. We do not know what government will be in power. We could have a minority government after the next election with the balance of power with the Reform Party which has been, for the most part, speaking against immigration.

We will want to examine very closely the many measures in the bill which will transfer authority to the minister and to the officials in the government to make regulations on these matters. For example, to make changes in the streams of immigrants, to decide which streams have priority over other streams, to decide that

they will suspend the list for a period of time and wait for others that they consider to be of better quality.

I use those words, but the minister in the publicity material that he sent out used these terms to choose those that he would consider to be the best.

We all want the best immigrants, but we all know as well that the term the best can be interpreted in many ways. It can be interpreted in a very subjective way and in a political way. We do not want that. We want people to be chosen based on fair criteria. We want the best but we want them chosen against rules and criteria which are fair and which correspond to the goals of our immigration policy that I referred to at the beginning of my remarks.

Among those increased powers that are being given to the minister and his officials, one would require the immigrant to settle in certain regions and provinces. This is one of those measures that requires much more analysis. It appears that it will be made a total obligation, a condition attached to the immigration visa or the immigration residency.

For two years, let us say a dentist, would have to live in northern town A or B no matter what happened. While it has always been the policy to encourage immigrants to go to certain regions and to encourage certain professions, trades and occupations which were in demand and to try and promote those in our immigration policy, it has not been made an absolute condition and obligation. One wonders again if this requires further examination and analysis and whether this is not against article 6 of our charter of rights which says that Canadians and residents of Canada can travel to any part of Canada, live in any part of Canada and work in any part of Canada that they wish.

The bill makes some important changes. Again it is hard to assess whether they are good or bad. There will be changes to the health provisions of admissibility. In November 1991 the minister and his officials told us that they were conducting a review with respect to medical admissibility in Canada. When the officials were before the standing committee a few weeks ago, I asked about that review. They told me it was not completed. Here we are, making changes to the law with respect to the admissibility clause with respect to health and social services with a statement that they will by regulation clarify whether or not certain individuals with health problems will impact excessively on the health and social service system.

We have always had laws to that effect but again I have to ask the question: What is really meant by that? To what extent are they going to exclude certain individuals with health problems from Canada if they impact excessively on the health and social service system? I give notice now that we will want to hear evidence on that before the legislative committee. If it is true that there is evidence to back that up, we will have to do something about it.

As I say, it says in the immigration policy that was passed in 1976 for which I voted at the time, that we have to protect our health and social service system, that we have to protect our communities and so on. On the other hand, we have a tradition of being generous and humane. We will have to see how this proposal balances off against those rules.

Again, I am asked to vote on this bill today and I do not know the answers to those questions. There will also be changes with respect to the ability to support oneself in the country based on welfare as a means of support. The provision may be a good one or may be a bad one. I am asked to vote on a bill that I do not have all the details about or on which I do not have enough information.

• (1700)

The government is transferring an additional burden to the transport carriers that bring people to this country. I do not know what the transport carriers will have to say about that.

I am also concerned about how we are going to keep these carriers accountable and under our control. They are going to be acting more or less as an extended arm of the Department of Employment and Immigration, of the Government of Canada, but they are not really employees who are responsible to Parliament or the Government of Canada. We are going to need testimony with respect to that matter.

With respect to the provisions for fingerprinting, photos and greater search and seizure at ports of entry, of course we have fingerprinting in this country but it is associated with criminality for the most part. It is the sort

of procedure we do not use unless there are good and very sound reasons that it is required.

As a matter of fact, under the Privacy Act of Canada, which is a statute, a law of this Parliament, fingerprinting is considered to be a matter of personal privacy and must be treated in very restricted ways. Fingerprints are considered to be something that cannot be used in a loose fashion and cannot be used for any reason whatsoever. There are certain provisions in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms that put limits on the use of fingerprinting.

I understand that there are also international human rights treaties that Canada has signed that set out limits on the use of fingerprinting.

In the material that was distributed by the minister and his department there is an implication that refugees and immigrants are for the most part out to defraud the government. While there are some who are, there is no doubt about that, it is a bad rap against the great majority of our refugees and our immigrants.

Another good measure in the bill is the one that would extend visitors' visas from three to six months as a general rule. I have to inform the minister that a lot of people who should be getting visitors' visas these days are not getting them. These people's families are ending up in the offices of members of Parliament and we are not getting good explanations as to why visitors' visas are not given.

These are cases in which there has been a death in the family in Canada and a person who lives in India, for example, and has a business there, has a home there, has other members of his family there, applies for a visitor's visa to come to a funeral but is not given the visitor's visa. He has all that evidence that he will return, and a return ticket as well. I have many examples of this happening.

While I welcome the extension of the visitor's visa something must be done to make the granting of visitors' visas more fair.

One of the provisions in the bill that I think is bad and do not understand at all is the greater use of detention. We are not talking about detention for people charged with crimes. We are talking about detaining potential immigrants and refugee claimants because there may be some doubt with respect to their claims. We are afraid that they will disappear so we put them in detention.

Under the present law there must be a review of that placement in detention within 48 hours and then every seven days. Most of these refugees and immigrants, many of whom cannot speak English or French, are not able to organize themselves properly to get a review within the first 48 hours but a great number of them do manage it in the first seven-day review. A great number are released at that review after seven days.

In this legislation we are changing the seven-day review to a 30-day review. That will mean that a lot of people will be kept in detention for 30 days without good cause, and at a great additional cost.

There is one of those detention centres in my constituency. They are going to have to triple the size. If we are going to keep these people in for 30 days and only review their cases every 30 days there is going to be a lot of injustice at a great cost to the taxpayers of this country.

As well, the bill provides for a greater use of deportation orders, as opposed to exclusion orders and departure notices. Again, I do not understand why that is necessary. That is another thing which I have serious doubts about, especially some of the cases mentioned in the bill and in the material. I am asked to vote on such things as a greater use of deportation orders and I am not convinced. We will have to get evidence on that as well.

In the moments that remain I would like to discuss some serious matters that are not dealt with in the bill. Probably the most serious is that there is still no appeal on the merits for refugee applicants turned down by the board. There is an appeal in law, but even that appeal in law is more limited in this bill than in the present law.

For years now the practitioners in immigration, the churches, the NGOs, have pleaded for an appeal process. The minister referred to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. It has also recommended that we should have an internal review or appeal process.

An appeal process is necessary because no matter how good this refugee board is it is going to make mistakes. It is composed of human beings. There have been some terrible mistakes. There is inconsistency in the board's decisions and there is no appropriate review or appeal process. The result is that some people have been deported from this country to areas of conflict, where their lives are going to be in danger, where they are going to be put in prison, while other people in the very same situation are admitted. There is great imbalance.

The way to deal with that is through an appropriate appeal process.

It could also be dealt with through a proper use of the provisions of section 114, which allows the minister to admit people for humanitarian and compassionate reasons. However, unfortunately this minister—and I still have not got a good answer from him—has virtually closed down the use of that provision to admit people on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. It is now more limited under his ministry than it was under the two former Conservative ministers, the hon. member for St. Paul's and the hon. member for Roberval. They used those provisions to a greater extent than he has. Now people turned down by the refugee board who, because their case is deserving, should be admitted under the humanitarian compassionate clause are not being admitted at all. Nothing is being done about that at all.

Last year only 23 out of 3,485 cases in Ontario and Quebec were accepted under those provisions. That is very, very few.

Another major matter that is not being dealt with, and it may be dealt with in the future but the minister has not taken steps to deal with it yet, concerns the many individuals and families who have gone before the refugee board and been turned down as refugees because the conditions in their countries have changed. A lot of them are from eastern Europe, from Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and the Soviet Union.

They have waited for two to three years to get their case before the board. They were legitimate refugees when they fled. They severed their ties in the countries which they left and came here. As a result of the slowness and the inefficiency of our system they have had to wait. Finally, they get before the board and are told: "No, you are not a refugee, your country, Poland, is now a democracy". Many of these people have established themselves in this country, have had children here, have married here, and yet they are being forced back to those countries.

The NGOs and many other people have asked the minister and the government to do something about that, to have more fairness and humanity. These people, many of them, have severed their ties in their countries of origin and were refugees when they came. It is not their fault they were not admitted as refugees. It is our fault as a country for having such a poor system.

The minister in the bill takes steps to regulate and place a greater burden on the transport companies, but he has done nothing yet to control, regulate and monitor immigration consultants and agents, and they do require regulation and monitoring.

• (1710)

While there are some good ones in the field there have been a lot of bad ones and that has been admitted. They have exploited many immigrants.

Again, I do not understand why the minister did not take this opportunity since he is opening up the act to do something about these consultants and agents.

Mr. Speaker, you indicate to me my time is coming to and end. There is much more that could have been said. In the last few minutes I would like to simply say again this is a very complex bill. I think to call the debate today is premature and it is worse still to close down the debate by closure on Monday night.

I want to tell the government that although there are some good things in the bill and there are some bad things, because there are so many things we have not had a chance to analyse and consult on what may be bad or good, we do not know, we refuse to vote favourably for this bill at second reading.

Not only will we vote against the bill at second reading but we will move that consideration of the bill be put off until a later time.

I also want to say to the minister that I hope if the bill is rammed through at second reading and sent to a committee he will have some fair consideration of the NGOs in the field. They, unlike the minister and his staff, will not be ready to appear before any committee within two or three weeks. They need to consult, to analyse. Many of them have volunteers. I am thinking of the ethnocultural communities, the voluntary refugee assist and support groups. They will not be able to come before us that quickly. You have to give them time to prepare themselves.

I would like to move, supported by the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys:

> That the motion before us be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "that" and by substituting the following therefore:
>
> Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to report stage and third reading of Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice of my intention to move the time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before recognizing the member, I would like to make it clear that once the Chair has recognized the minister on a notice of this kind, it cannot interrupt, and I will now first recognize the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

[*English*]

Mr. Langdon: I think that under the rules of the House it is not possible to move a motion when you have been recognized on a point of order. I think that this motion is, therefore, out of order at this stage.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully differ with my hon. friend from Essex—Windsor.

A notice of time allocation under Standing Order 78(3) is in order, either by rising in debate or by rising on a point of order.

Your Honour did recognize the hon. minister and I believe that his notice is completely in order.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, when the government members immediately prior to my intervention attempted to make a similar motion, our deputy House leader appeared in the House and pointed out that no attempt had been made in accordance with the Standing Orders to get agreement on a proposed allocation of time which is required before you make the said motion.

At that time you promised to take that point under deliberation and decide on it at a later time, I presume on Monday.

As far as I know, there has been no proposal for allocation of time put to us for which agreement was sought, and consequently I think the point of order that was raised by the hon. member from Kingston some minutes ago is still a valid objection to this motion at this time. We ask the Chair to take that under consideration.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before recognizing the parliamentary secretary, I would like to recall that the notice given by the minister concerns Bill C-26, the Public Service Reform Act, and not Bill C-86, the Immigration Act.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: You are absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker.

On the general point that my friend from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was making, I can assure him that were he to consult with his House leader or his deputy House leader and were the New Democratic Party to do the same they would find that consultation has taken place and that it is completely in order. I can assure my friend of that.

I do apologize to my friend from Spadina for the point of order's coming after his speech had begun. It was not our intention and it was intended that it be made between the speeches. We did not wish to be rude.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I wish to apologize. I thought the minister had said Bill C-86 and I apologize. My remarks were directed to the C-86 situation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker, independent members were not consulted on this motion. Therefore, we cannot give our consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think it is important to recall two aspects of the Standing Orders. First, it is a notice that does not require unanimous consent. It may be given by a minister of the Crown in the course of

debate. Consequently, unanimous consent is unnecessary.

Second, raising a point of order becomes a technicality. In the past, I have had occasion to recognize a minister on a point of order, but any minister of the Crown may rise to give this kind of notice within normal sitting hours.

So the minister may raise a point of order to give this kind of notice, and I have on occasion recognized a member on a point of order that was not really a point of order. I stand corrected if I am wrong, but I think the Standing Orders allow any minister of the Crown to give this notice at any time, within normal sitting hours.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to challenge your decision, but I would appreciate some clarification. Standing Order 78(3)(a) says:

> A Minister of the Crown who from his place in the House has stated—

Whatever the Standing Order provides with respect to time allocation.

• (1720)

From his place in the House infers that the minister had the floor. However, on a point of order, the minister does not have the floor in debate. Rising on a point of order means the minister wishes to make some kind of comment on how Standing Orders should be applied in the House.

Perhaps the Chair could tell me if the words from his place in this particular Standing Order mean or confirm that the minister has the floor whenever he rises in the House? The Chair just said that often a minister may rise to make a statement or comment.

As I see it, the minister is a member just like any other, and to speak in the House, we must be recognized by the Chair, either in debate or for a specific procedure. Sometimes parliamentary procedure says that with the Speaker in the Chair, a minister may do such and such a thing. Sometimes it says when a minister rises in his place, he may move such and such, but I always infer from that that he has the floor.

In this case, the minister did not have the floor. He rose on a point of order. I asked on what point of order, and the Chair answered: "Standing Order 87(3)." Well, Standing Order 78(3) says, and quite clearly, that the minister in question, from his place in the House, has stated at a previous sitting that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of sections (1) and (2), after the appropriate consultations.

My question is this: Did the minister have the floor to move the motion? I maintain that he may have been recognized on a point of order, but he did not have the floor in debate and could not do what he did without having the floor. If the minister wanted to do this, he should have been recognized in debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I certainly would not dismiss the opinion of a member as experienced as the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, but I can say that since I became Assistant Deputy Chairman two years ago, I have often given a minister the floor, without any objections from members or the clerks at the Table. I even saw the government House leader rise before the debate on the adjournment motion.

Finally, to ensure I am not mistaken, I will take the comments made by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier under advisement, to avoid creating a precedent and to ensure that the Chair is acting in accordance with the Standing Orders and the traditions of this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, because the bill as it stands has too many faults and too few virtues.

One fault which has been mentioned already by the previous speaker is that it takes too much of the power of debate and decision from the House of Commons. It asks the House of Commons to surrender too much power to the cabinet, to the minister, and to immigration officials such as the senior immigration officer at the port of entry.

Another fault is that it threatens to reject retroactively some of the over 300,000 applications for immigrant visas completed or in progress.

Another fault is that it opens the immigration process to what would in effect be planned discrimination. No matter what the intent was it would be not accidental but would be by order of the cabinet. That is by allowing rules of admission to be radically changed from time to time by the cabinet without adequate notice to the public or to Parliament and with no serious possibility of debate

in Parliament, let alone a vote to stop or amend any discriminatory aspects.

Fourth, by illusion or implication, it slanders refugee claimants, implying that there is a serious number of them who are fraudulent or criminally intending or even terrorist intending, whereas I believe there is either little or no evidence of terrorist activity. I know that when Bill C-55 was considered there was, according to the RCMP then, no evidence of danger to Canada from undocumented aliens. It also restricts the refugees' access to the refugee determination system and further restricts their right of appeal.

Fifth, the bill, which is over 113 pages long, is very complicated. It is being pushed at second reading before the parliamentary Library staff have had time to study and analyse it.

Sixth, because of these reasons this bill will intensify conflict and disunity and racial tension among Canadians.

The bill has some virtues. Some of them, as the minister has said, are on points that many of us have been asking to have amendment. First, I want to say that I agree with the minister that it is a good thing that the rate of immigration has been raised to 250,000 per year. I have supported any governmental initiatives that increased up to this point and I believe the proposal of the Canada Ethnocultural Council that immigration be roughly at the level of 1 per cent of the Canadian population is a very reasonable proposal. This government's policy roughly follows that. I have always supported that.

I also agree with the principle that he imposes no numerical limit on in-Canada landings, whether it be refugee landings in Canada or other landings for humanitarian cause, such as the alien spouse of a Canadian married in Canada. There is to be no limit by number of those.

I welcome also and I know the chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board welcomes the provision of a means of discipline of board members. I do not believe that all the troubles that we have heard about were to be attributed simply to lack of discipline. I think there were deeper troubles in that board, as I have said before in this House.

I am also quite content with extending the visitor's visa normally to six months. I wish, as my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce has mentioned, that it would be possible—I do not know why it is not possible—to enact a provision for bond. That is if a Canadian wants a relative to come over to a wedding, to a funeral or something like that, and offers a bond of so much money for performance by the visitor. I have been told by officials that the law will not make that bond enforceable. Yet such bonds are normally taken in a matter of bail of a prisoner or for that matter for the release of a person detained by the immigration department at the port of entry.

If bonds are usable in those cases, I do not understand why they are not usable in the case of visitors. I think every member of Parliament must have cases where we are quite sure that a visitor was bona fide but was refused a permit.

I also agree with the proposal to give permanent residents some sort of proof, a card to carry as permanent proof of residence, so they do not have to make special arrangements every time they leave Canada to make sure they will get back.

• (1730)

I welcome the abandoning of the credible basis part of the preliminary hearing in immigration and refugee board work. I do not welcome the handing over of other aspects of the board to the senior immigration officer at the port of entry, but I will come back to that later. To get rid of that very foolish legislation of five years ago on credible basis was really long overdue and I am glad that it will be done.

It will certainly be good news if the convention refugees, so determined in Canada, can be landed within six months, along with their spouses and children, but I wait to see whether that will happen. I have heard promises similar to that regarding spouses from other countries and certainly it has not in all cases been carried out. I do not have the complete list, but that is only a promise and there is nothing in the bill that I can see that gives the convention refugee the right to have that promise enforced. If the government says: "Well I am

sorry, we are too busy, you will have to wait a year", I believe he has no recourse. It is shaky.

I also believe, as my colleague from Notre–Dame–de–Grâce does, that much more debate is needed before this bill is accepted even in principle. I know that the government plans to force the vote on Monday. Our party will be voting against it because there is simply too much that is either unclear or outright wrong in the bill as it stands.

There was no broad consultation with the non–governmental organizations: the churches, the refugee support committees, the ethnocultural groups, many of whom are very active in this matter, and the ethnocultural council. There was very little consultation even with the experienced members of the bar or with individuals whose profession is to work with immigrants and with refugees.

That must be done in the next three months or so, but also with that there should be consideration of withdrawing the bill, as the government has done in some cases, in order to bring in an amended form after the public has had a chance to discuss it. I hope to return to that if there is time.

One question that some of us will want to examine in some detail is the one the minister raised of the UNHCR, United Nations High Commission for Refugees' statement of approval of the bill. It is well know that the UNHCR works within very close limits. It can operate in any country, such as Canada, only as a guest, and only with the goodwill of a government. It has no right to act against a government or in opposition to a government.

Furthermore it depends on voluntary financing. It is true that Canada is a generous donor to the cost of the UNHCR. It is equally true that the UNHCR in the past has always followed the practice of never biting the hand that feeds it. The fact that it has approved of this bill really just means that the UNHCR, as usual, publicly agrees with the Government of Canada. It is not a serious endorsation and whether anyone read the bill or not is open to question.

I want to begin with what I have been able to do in a hasty study and hasty consultation with some people with experience. I want to give a few examples. One would be an example of the anti–democratic taking of power from Parliament in the transitional provisions.

Section 107 of the bill on page 106 states:

> Subject to sections 108 to 116, every provision of the Immigration Act as enacted by this Act shall, on the coming into force of that provision, apply in respect of every application, proceeding or matter under that Act or the regulations made thereunder that is pending or in progress immediately before the coming into force of that provision.

This appears to people such as the newly claimed chairman of the immigration bar in Ontario to be retroactivity. This means that of the 300,000 or 400,000 immigrant applications that have been made or are in progress, perhaps some of them even completed, the fees have been paid, plans may have been made, some can be cancelled. They have acted according to the law and have been found acceptable according to the law but it can be cancelled by a decision of the cabinet or indirectly by a decision of the cabinet.

No Canadian citizen, no would–be immigrant even if he has paid his fee, no members of Parliament or Parliament itself will have any power to correct that sort of injustice. It is a very serious matter to introduce massive retroactivity into the proceedings of a government. It is generally considered to be quite un–Canadian.

Along with that section, on page 6 there is section 6(5) of the act. This one gives the cabinet wide powers to change the landing requirements for any country or any class of would–be immigrants. It reads:

> 6(5) Subject to subsection (8) but notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any regulation made under paragraph 114(1)(a), an immigrant and all dependants, if any, may be granted landing for reasons of public policy or compassionate or humanitarian considerations if the immigrant is a member of a class of immigrants prescribed by regulations made under paragraph 114(1)(e) and the immigrant meets the landing requirements prescribed under that paragraph.

In other words, as it was explained to us informally in dealing with eastern Europe, we might give certain countries a waiver releasing immigrant applicants from those countries from having to meet the normal requirements of independent immigrants to Canada.

We are told that it does not apply to family members and it does not apply to refugees but it would apply to those this government is most interested in, to the independent immigrants. There could be a rule set up for this group, a different rule set up for that group and a different rule set up for the other group with no control by Parliament and no real accountability to the public.

These designated class of people will not have to meet the provisions of the act except the landing requirements specified by their particular regulations. The designation for the classes for the relaxed requirements has the possibility of discriminating positively or negatively with regard to people's race, nationality, religion, national origin.

The government is particularly interested in using this for what it calls excellence. That is the third stream that the government wants to create as compared with family reunification or refugee. It wants to create within the independent immigrant stream the class of excellence. There is no indication of how it is to be judged.

Mr. Carter Hoppe, chairman of the immigration section of the Canadian Bar Association in Ontario says: "The immigration officials seem to want to have this retroactivity provision to clean up bureaucratic nightmares created by whom? Not only are the retroactivity provisions unfair from an applicant's perspective, but suddenly the rug could be pulled out from under her or him. It will not help us to attract immigrants and will send the wrong message."

This kind of change will engender rivalry and bitterness among Canadians and among immigrants of different nationalities, races, religions or skills and occupations which is my third point.

My fourth point is that by innuendo this act slanders refugee claimants in general.

• (1740)

Undoubtedly this act is intended particularly to target refugee claimants and when the amendments were first proposed or discussed with me was in connection with refugees.

The government keeps reiterating its emphasis on abuse although it has not shown that the refugees commit any more abuse than other people in proportion to their numbers. They are being made to suffer unfair restrictions on the rights of refugees both to entry and to appeal.

This is an attempt to curry favour with the powerful people we were mentioned earlier such as the powerful Conservatives who are more conservative than the Conservatives.

My next example of the flaws in this bill is that it seriously restricts access by genuine refugees to the Canadian refugee determination system. Section 46.01(1) seriously reduces the right recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in the same decision of 1985 of everyone physically present in Canada who claims refugee status to have an oral hearing. This it does by shifting the responsibility for certain decisions to the senior immigration officer who would not be told to hear the substance of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I see you are signalling me that the time is short but I thought I had five minutes left. Are you saying only two? The last speaker went on for about 50 minutes. I think the clock moves at different speeds.

The government claims that it has eliminated the first step of the RID but it has put important parts of it into the hands of the senior immigration officers such as, for example, the decision to send a person back to a so-called safe third country. The country most often talked about is the United States, which is nakedly violating its obligations under international law not to refoule refugees who are trying to get its protection.

The judge who acted in one of these cases, district Judge Johnson, said as follows: "It is unconscionable that the United States should accede to the protocol and later claim that it is not bound by it. This court is astonished that the United States would return Haitian refugees to the jaws of political persecution, terror, death and uncertainty when it has contracted not to do so. The government's conduct is particularly hypocritical given its condemnation of other countries which have refused to abide by the principle of non-refoulement. As it stands now, article 33 is a cruel hoax and not worth the paper it is printed on". That is referring to the UN convention on refugees.

Our government is negotiating to send refugee claimants back to the United States by the perhaps tens of thousands and without having given them a chance of a hearing without any guarantee whatsoever they would get a fair hearing in the United States. The evidence against that is that the United States sent 98 per cent of Salvadorans back to Salvador, clearly an unjust practice by the United States.

I want to say it is essential that there be time allowed to the public to study this bill and to make interventions. Until then I and my caucus will be voting against this bill.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the hon. member who is a very experienced member in this field had more to say on some points and I would like to have his views.

In my speech I had commented on the fact that the government in the bill is moving to a greater use of deportation orders as opposed to exclusion orders and removal notices. The hon. member knows that the deportation order is a much harsher measure. I am not convinced that we have to move more extensively to a deportation order.

Very often with the use of the exclusion order or the removal notice, the individual obeys, leaves and his rights are not as restricted as with deportation orders.

I am wondering if the member would mind commenting on that and also on the other point that I find quite hard. I do not understand it at all.

Is the government now imposing a 30–day review on detention as opposed to a seven–day review? I would like to know what his experience is. In the detention centre in Montreal they find that the great majority of those who are in detention get released at the end of the seven–day review. If you keep them there for 30 days, people who should not be there are going to be kept there fore 30 days, I think it is an unnecessary burden on the system financially and extremely unfair to the person that should not be there.

I am wondering if he would mind commenting on those matters.

Mr. Heap: I thank the hon. member for those relevant questions.

On the matter of the deportation system, I believe that it is very unfortunate that under the new orders even a person who has been given a departure order and is planning voluntarily to leave can be arrested and deported before the date on which the person had been asked to leave.

It is also true that in Toronto—I do not have direct experience, but the lawyers who work on this tell me—as in Montreal, most of the claimants are released on proper recognizance by about the seventh day, but very few of them by the second day, for the reasons the hon. member gave. The fact that these two changes of the law are put in reflects what a former director of refugee affairs, Raphael Girard, called "humane deterrents". In other words, we do not shoot them at the border, we make them wish they had not come. We make them write to their friends saying: do not come to Canada, you will be locked up for a month whether you have done anything wrong or not or you may be kicked out without any notice even when you were planning to leave. This is a form of harassment, punitive harassment of refugee claimants, that is a disgrace to Canada.

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C–86

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand that consultations have now taken place between the relevant persons and an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or (2) with respect to second reading of Bill C–86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, it is correct that consultations have now taken place on the question of allocating time to end this debate by Monday night, and it is correct that we have refused to give consent to that because we think on a bill of this nature it is indecent to impose the allocation of time after such a short debate and in such a manner. It is totally indecent.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 5.49 p.m., pursuant to Order adopted earlier today, this House stands adjourned until Monday, 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.

ADDRESS

of

HIS EXCELLENCY BORIS YELTSIN

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION OF RUSSIA

to

Both Houses of Parliament

in the

HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER, OTTAWA

on

Friday, June 19, 1992

APPENDIX

ADDRESS

of

HIS EXCELLENCY BORIS YELTSIN

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HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER, OTTAWA

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Friday, June 19, 1992

His Excellency Boris Yeltsin was welcomed by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, and thanked by the Honourable Guy Charbonneau, Speaker of the Senate and the Honourable John A. Fraser, Speaker of the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Hon. John A. Fraser (Speaker of the House of Commons): Order, please. The Right Honourable the Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, *chers collègues, mesdames et messieurs*. We are here today to celebrate the state visit to Canada by the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Boris Yeltsin. We are here, as well, to launch a new era of peace and partnership between peoples too long divided.

Fifty years ago this month, diplomatic relations were opened between Ottawa and Moscow. Diplomatic relations between us were born, as it turns out, of absolute necessity during the darkest days of the Second World War. Europe then lay in subjugation and Russia lay under the darkest siege.

I have stood before the War Memorial in St. Petersburg in the brutal cold of winter and I have listened to the winds whisper silently of great tragedy and enormous human loss in Russia. I have visited cemeteries from Dieppe to Sai Wan Bay and I have heard courageous veterans mourn fallen comrades sacrificed in the defence of liberty and democracy against the very same enemy.

[*Translation*]

The establishment of diplomatic relations at that time was both an act of defiance toward those who wanted to destroy us and an act of hope for better days. We indeed finally defeated our common enemy, but our relations drifted into the great desolation of the cold war. We found ourselves facing each other in a new struggle, a war waged not on the plains of central Europe or in the jungles of Asia but in the hearts and minds of men and women throughout the world.

This war as well is now over; the victory was won not by one army over another but by fundamental values and powerful ideas to which all can adhere.

[*English*]

Obviously, Mr. Speaker and fellow Canadians, the largest measure of the credit for this unique opportunity that now opens down the vistas of years must be given to President Yeltsin.

Courage is an abstraction to those at a relatively safe distance. But as it turns out, President Yeltsin was given no such latitude.

In the crucial days of last August on the top of a tank, at immediate risk to his own life, he dispatched the tyranny that had held Russia in the grip of fear and arbitrary power for 70 years.

The image of Boris Yeltsin last summer and his defiant message to the enemies of democracy everywhere, particularly in his own country, will remain as an historic symbol of courage and purpose so long as men and women gather in free Parliaments to defend the cause of liberty. And I tell you, Mr. President, all Canadians salute you for the extraordinary courage that you have demonstrated.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: President Yeltsin's success was the success fundamentally of the human spirit. His beneficiaries are us all.

Mr. President, you have offered us friendship and you have challenged us to join with you in bringing your country into the community of free nations. I know that I speak for every member of this House and that, sir, is a most rare occurrence.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: As I told you, sir, on both sides of the House, all of them are active supporters of mine.

I speak for every member of this House irrespective of political party because every Canadian believes fundamentally in liberty and democracy. I speak for all Canadians, Canadians across this land, when I say that all Canadians reciprocate your friendship and today we accept your challenge.

[*Translation*]

The ancient Greeks taught us that democracy is government by the free. The people of Russia are not yet fully free of the dead hand of debilitating ideology and the victory of values is not yet complete.

Mr. President, we understand that the way ahead is fraught with serious difficulties, even perils, and that there will be setbacks and course corrections along the way. Here in this House of Canadian democracy, I give you the firm assurance of our understanding and support. So long as your compass is set for democracy, Canadians will be at your side, Canadians of all regions, of all political parties, of all parts of society.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. President, on behalf of all members of Parliament and on behalf of all Canadians, it is with respect and admiration that I invite you today to address the Parliament and the people of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1120)

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Yeltsin spoke in Russian.*]

[*Translation*]

His Excellency Boris Yeltsin (President of the Russian Federation): Respected Speaker of the House of Commons, respected Speaker of the Senate, respected members of the House of Commons, respected senators, ladies and gentlemen, respected citizens of a free Canada.

First of all, Prime Minister Mulroney, I thank you for your kind words addressed to a free, democratic Russia and to its President.

Thank you for the warm reception. Like you, Mr. Mulroney, I do not always enjoy such a favourable reception in my own Parliament.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: It is a great honour for me, the President of Russia, the first to be elected to the highest position of a great state, to address you from the rostrum of the highest legislative body in Canada.

The moment has arrived when two peoples who have much in common can take a decisive step toward one another. Official relations between our countries, as you said, Mr. Prime Minister, were re-established 50 years ago. But today, unfortunately, one can see how little has been achieved, how many opportunities have been missed. Now we have a rare opportunity to make up for lost time.

When people speak about Russia and Canada, they generally comment on how similar our countries are. Canada is probably the only place where a Russian could forget that he is in a different country. The amazing similarity of the nature, climate and even the wide-open spaces of our countries has left an imprint on the character of Canadians and Russians.

I continually ask myself: given such similar circumstances, why have our countries developed so differently? Why do our peoples live so differently?

Canada is a recognized world leader in terms of quality of life. Life today in Russia is extremely disrupted, with conditions as tense as a taut string. It is easy to see the enormous damage wreaked on Russia by the 70-year dominance of the Communist totalitarian system. Here in Canada there are no echoes of the arguments with which party ideologues formerly explained the terribly low quality of life which Russians experience. Neither its northern position, nor its harsh climate, nor the alleged nationalistic narrow-mindedness of the Russian people, nor malicious neighbours are to blame for Russia's failure to develop. The main cause lies in the anti-popular stance of the former regime, in the ideology that was forced on the country. For years, the foundations that support life were systematically destroyed. But the citizens of today's Russia do not simply mourn over lost opportunities. Your country is an especially visible and attractive example of the goals which we are now pursuing.

Last August, when we faced the coup-plotters, a very dark cloud loomed not only over Russia, but over the whole world. But the collapse of the totalitarian system was total. The collapse of communistic ideology was total. Once and forever.

As the first president in the thousand-year history of Russia to be elected by all the people, I triumphantly announce this to you. Once and forever.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: The first thing we want to do now is re-establish a normal country, with a normal economy and a normal life. Not a super life, but a normal human way of life. Our tragic past has convinced us that one of the highest treasures that any human community can have is a normal way of life.

Russia knows revolution only too well. That is why I say today on behalf of all Russians that Communist revolution is an evil. We have opted for normal evolution. Russia knows arbitrariness and lawlessness all too well. That is why we have chosen a state based on the rule of law. We are more familiar than other peoples with the nightmare of totalitarianism. That is why we have chosen democracy and why we defended it in those days of last August.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: We know better than others what it is like to be everyone's enemy. That is why we have chosen openness and co-operation with the world community. Russia has opted for freedom, and no force can take it away from us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: "We don't need any more great upheavals. We need a great Russia." These words, spoken a century ago by Russian patriot and reformer Stolypin, have not lost their relevance. On the contrary, they are full of deep, immediate meaning for us. We want our people to raise children and work peacefully. We want them to be governed not by base social instincts or ideological delusions, but by just motives and thoughts. Today, we turn to your rich experience so that we can once and forever say no to all ideological delusions that demand human sacrifices and reject morality.

Borrowing the words of poetess Anna Akhmatova, I pledge to you as President that I will do everything to ensure that Russia never again lapses into the insanity of upheaval.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Broad new horizons have opened for Russian-Canadian co-operation. Half a century ago, our countries were allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. Today, when I visited the memorial to those who died in the First and Second World Wars and in other conflicts, I thought of the fact that Russia and Canada have never fought against one another. This is a great achievement. There is a firm conviction today that we are closer to world peace than ever before. Today, when I passed the peace monument being built, it struck me that you have chosen the most appropriate moment possible to build it, when this confidence in peace is at its peak.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Half a century ago, our countries were allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. Today, we have every reason to speak of a new alliance between us. I am convinced that the need for this alliance has long been felt by those prepared to become direct participants in diverse Russian-Canadian contacts.

• (1130)

Both sides have no shortage of plans for co-operation. It is time we gave them the green light. From this point onward, there are no limits to co-operation between Russia and Canada in world affairs. We can pool our efforts in many different areas in order to strengthen international security, to withstand potential aggressors through collective action, to ensure that all the nations of the world observe the rules of civilized behaviour, including in their behaviour toward their own citizens and national minorities, and to solve global problems.

We applaud your policies of constructive internationalism. We ourselves have already begun to co-operate in working toward the goals identified by the international community. Your country's longstanding commitment to the United Nations organization and to institutions of multilateral diplomacy in general is well known. As is the role played by such outstanding Canadians as Mr. Pearson in working out ways to use the United Nations apparatus in peacekeeping.

This area of United Nations activity and preventive diplomacy aimed at averting conflict could become an ideal domain for applying our joint efforts. The importance of such international mechanisms is regrettably increasing, even in Europe. We have no intention of declaring Russia or any of the states that made up the former union off limits to necessary measures taken by the international community, whether through the United Nations organization or the CSCE. We want peace and calm in our house, in each family. We therefore have a stake in ensuring peace and calm outside it.

The opportunities for co-operation between Russia and Canada in world affairs are greater now than ever before. We must not let them slip by at this of all times.

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout history merchants have preceded diplomats. Such was the case in Russia before 1917. The first treaties were trade treaties. And economic co-operation occupies centre stage in Russian-Canadian relations. Our people have goods to trade, and there are areas for co-operation. Russia is rich. All that is needed is an unbiased approach unhindered by preconceptions. Given such an approach, Russian-Canadian co-operation offers substantial benefits to both parties.

For three hours yesterday and an hour today, Prime Minister Mulroney and I took part in discussions. The Government of Canada proposed a very interesting idea for developing our relations, an idea that could serve as an example for other countries as well. We particularly appreciate this, knowing that Canada too is experiencing difficulties at present. I feel that the high degree of mutual trust which characterizes our personal relations with the Prime Minister allows us to feel confident that this co-operation, these new ideas will be realized.

Russia has set a firm course toward economic reform. We realize that every last market mechanism was eradicated over a period of more than 70 years. After three generations, we have lost the historical instincts we once had for business and private ownership. No one remembers what they mean. We introduced private ownership only half a year ago, including private ownership of land and ownership by foreign private investors.

Practically no one is left who remembers life before the revolution. We realize that the economy is being overhauled during a serious economic crisis, and consequently at a time when the civil peace is highly vulnerable. But it cannot be denied that substantial progress has been achieved in half a year. There have been real changes both in the economy itself and, more important, in people's consciousness.

The people are gradually rediscovering the creativity that was crushed by Communist ideas and ideologies.

Of course, we are currently going through the most painful period, especially this year. This is bitter medicine. Unpopular measures, including price increases, must be adopted in order to shift from a planned economy to a market economy. However difficult this may be, we will not retreat.

Russians are a patient, stubborn people. With gritted teeth, they will overcome these temporary difficulties. They trust their President. They trust their government. They trust their Parliament. And that is very important.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Every month, I find myself in various districts, regions and republics of Russia. There are 20 republics in Russia. And we have succeeded in signing a federative treaty. Blood is being spilled on Russia's doorstep, but inside Russia we have signed a treaty and preserved the civil peace without spilling a single drop of blood. Russia has remained united and indivisible throughout this period. That is very important to us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Russia's young government of reformers the President of the Russian Federation will support to the end. And it is practically impossible now to force him into retirement. I will not resign until my term expires in 1996. You will never catch me sick. I am extremely healthy. I will therefore support this government of reformers to the end.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: We took our first steps toward a market economy on January 1 of this year. The main one was the freeing of prices, and the government is prepared to take the reforms further. You know that before leaving on this official visit, I asked Parliament to confirm Mr. Gaidar, who is currently acting in my place, as Prime Minister of the Head of State of the Russian Federation. And he is only 36 years old. He is a bold, young reformer.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: One of the main principles for choosing people to serve in the government, as ministers or vice-president, besides considering their professional or business skills, is to select democrats and ensure that none of them is older than the President.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: We call for full co-operation with other countries. I am confident that a revival of the Russian economy will be beneficial not only to us, but to our partners as well. If you invite our specialists, talented young people, to come and study, after studying in Canada for a year, they will return to Russia to advocate Canadian experience, the Canadian market and the Canadian economy. And this co-operation will develop still further.

• (1140)

I believe that one of these people, who will number approximately 150 over five years, as the Prime Minister and I agreed today, may very well develop into a new and talented President of Russia to follow me.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Of course, I am sure that new president will be more talented and more intelligent. That is understandable. Such is history. Today, Russia attaches special importance to western investment and co-operation in the technical field. Today, we agreed on technical co-operation aimed at ensuring the safety of nuclear power plants. We have a program drawn up. The fact that it will be implemented through joint efforts is a complete guarantee that all nuclear power plants will be absolutely free of danger and under the control of the IAEA.

We are not asking for any special injections of money or materials. I want to be quite forthright about that. If Canada did find an opportunity of this kind then, of course, it would help us overcome our problems in this very painful period.

It is true that Russia does not yet offer all of the conditions necessary for accepting private capital from abroad. But before this visit, a series of laws were adopted and decrees promulgated that clear the way for private capital, mainly by making it possible to own property and land, thus facilitating the construction or privatization of factories, buildings, and so on. It is our firm intention to promote this process energetically and to complete it in the very near future.

To achieve this, there is no need to invent anything new. Our course, our norms and standards are those accepted throughout the world. I realize that many Canadian firms are not waiting for an ideal investment climate to develop in Russia. That is how one must act: without being afraid of taking a risk. I do not doubt that this risk is worth taking. Any western investor who fails to enter this unique Russian market this year or next should keep in mind that 1994 will be too late: there will be no room left in the market.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: There is no other way open to us, no alternative to normal economic development. When Russia is rich and flourishing, as I am certain that it will be, we will surely not forget those who were the first to take a risk, a warranted risk.

We have an area for bilateral co-operation that has always attracted much attention: the Arctic. We are much concerned about the situation in the far north of Russia and Canada. The spectrum of problems ranges from the status of aboriginal peoples to environment protection.

Of course, our problems differ in scale. The entire population of the Canadian Arctic is around 100,000. You have no major industrial centres above the Arctic Circle. But I think that I am not mistaken in saying that only together can we solve all of the problems involving the Arctic. Only by working together. Of this I am convinced.

The prosperity of the countries in this region, and above all of Canada and Russia, depend in large measure on conditions in the Arctic. Experience has shown that co-operation between us in this area cannot develop exclusively through dialogue between our capitals. We must therefore emphasize immediate links between the direct participants in co-operation, and above all between the people who actually live in these Arctic regions. They are more interested than anyone in seeing prosperity and the well-being that follows come to their extremely forbidding land.

• (1150)

There is another area of mutual interest in the Russian-Canadian dialogue that might be opened up for further avenues of bilateral co-operation. I wanted to begin my address by congratulating the people of Canada on the 125th birthday of the Canadian federation. From my heart and on behalf of the entire Russian people, I sincerely congratulate everyone in Canada on this anniversary.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Our states are federative in nature. This creates unique opportunities for making the ties between our states better reflect the needs and aspirations of our people. Russia is very interested in studying Canada's experience in managing relations within a federation. We will learn from you how to solve problems in a civilized way through negotiations.

And now a few words about the problems facing the Commonwealth of Independent States of the former union, which are causing many people around the world to worry. This unique intergovernmental organization is currently in the building stage. But it has already proved itself to be a working mechanism for finding the most acceptable form of mutual relations between the republics. At the same time, a process is under way in the Commonwealth whereby republics are both falling apart and coming together. However difficult it may be for us to ensure that this highly complex process remains governable, the seventh and most recent meeting of the heads of government of these countries can be considered the most productive meeting in terms of results.

Respected parliamentarians of Canada, you have considerable opportunities for positively influencing the development of Russian–Canadian co–operation. As I have said before, the advantages to be derived from co–operating with Russia may not all be immediately apparent. They must be explained, but this will not be difficult in the new atmosphere characterizing our relations. I urge you to make active use of your opportunities in Parliament and in the ridings when speaking with the Canadians who elected you to actively promote the dialogue between Russia and Canada, between our peoples.

There is every reason to speak of fundamental national interests shared by Russia and Canada and of human aspirations shared by the ordinary people in our countries. This is what has enabled us, after decades of isolation, to base Russian–Canadian relations on a solid legal foundation: the Treaty on Concord and Co–operation which will be signed today. The community of interests of which I speak cannot be built on thin air. As you know, much is being done in both countries to ensure that it becomes a constant theme of the domestic and foreign policies of our countries.

Speaking from this lofty rostrum, I would especially like to mention Canada's active contribution to the development of the dialogue between us. We are grateful for the solidarity which the people and political leaders of your country showed for a democratic Russia in August. I remember the telephone conversation I had at that time with Prime Minister Mulroney. It had enormous significance, and Russians will never forget it. Russians know about it. Russians remember it, and will continue to remember it for the rest of their history.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Yeltsin: Your solidarity has continued in the form of Canadian economic and humanitarian assistance to Russia. We value highly the heroism of individual citizens and organizations, including the Salvation Army's renewed activity in our country.

Today it is no less important or urgent that we learn the language of mutually advantageous co–operation and partnership in business.

We have a clear vision of what we are striving toward in our country, in the world and in our relations with Canada. And many would do well to study the development of our relations.

Our intentions are not secret. We are prepared for hard work, which is the very essence of any partnership. We have a long and difficult road ahead of us. I am convinced that our peoples must travel together if they are to attain the best results.

I want to wish Russians and Canadians a happy journey and success in developing peaceful areas of mutual co–operation. Thank you.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Guy Charbonneau (Speaker of the Senate): Mr. President, Mrs. Yeltsin, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prime Minister, *honorables collègues du Sénat et de la Chambre des communes*, distinguished guests:

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Charbonneau spoke in Russian.*]

We are honoured by your visit and very grateful that you have shared with us as parliamentary colleagues your international preoccupations and your determination to carry through the program of reform and restructuring upon which your country has launched itself.

Your presence in these precincts testifies to your faith in the solid basis of the friendly relations between our two countries and to our confidence in your courageous leadership.

We are all the more touched by your presence here today in that we know very well that you are required to be ubiquitous in order to respond to the exigencies of your post on the national and international levels.

As president of the young Russian federation, your leadership has been and remains preponderant to your people, as it does for the collectivity of nations.

Your remarks to us today confirm your indefatigable will to succeed in attaining your goals.

[*Translation*]

Mr. President, we are all aware of the balancing act you have to perform, caught as you are between attraction for the West and respect for the Russian soul.

Your great writers of the last century made us keenly aware of these differences between the two societies, both so rich in virtues and so laden with an uncounted heritage.

We remember Dostoyevsky, in particular, who in search of a fair balance between the pro-Western and pro-Slavic forces agreed to modernization for Russia if it respected the nation's traditions.

Like you, he worked for understanding of different cultures. In his tribute to Pushkin, he wrote, "Our vocation is European and universal. Is not being Russian, perfectly Russian, the same perhaps as being a brother to all men?"

[*English*]

In a historical continuity, Tolstoy and Chekov both called for the rejection of a completed past but on the condition that the characteristics of their ancestral customs be preserved. Then, as in our own century, it was the political system in place that was seen as bearing the blame for stagnation and frustrated hopes.

You, Mr. President, have had the courage to confront and repudiate the doctrinaires who were so mistaken about the nature of man.

Without renouncing for the people of your federation their rooted national traditions, you are bringing them into a universal current of liberty.

All the world remembers how you stood up (in every sense of the word) in front of the White House in Moscow, not quite a year ago, to defend liberty and democracy when they were threatened. We are convinced that the same democratic and courageous spirit will carry you forward in the future.

To borrow the language of a sport at which you excel, tennis, we want to wish you, in all your battles with adversity, a final score of game, set, and match.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker Charbonneau: Once more, Mr. President, we congratulate you on the eminent and challenging role to which you dedicate yourself in these critical years and we are grateful to you for sharing with us your main concerns and your intention to continue your work in space and time. We thank you and wish you good luck.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker Fraser: Mr. President, Madam Yeltsina, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker of the Senate, members of the Senate and the House of Commons, honoured and distinguished guests:

On behalf of all members of the House of Commons I take great pleasure in welcoming you today to this august Chamber.

[*Translation*]

The momentous changes which have reshaped the global political landscape over the last several years have left us facing new and daunting challenges. Perhaps no country is more acutely aware of this than the Russian Federation.

[*English*]

We are seeing today in Russia and the other new republics of the former Soviet Union one of the most remarkable transformations in history.

Communism is now a fading memory, and in its place have been planted the seeds of democracy. Among the new republics, Russia is taking the lead in sowing these seeds.

You have shown tremendous courage, Mr. President, in introducing bold economic reforms.

Russia possesses enormous economic potential, blessed as it is with immense natural and human resources; however, only a continued commitment to economic reform will ensure that these resources are effectively tapped.

We are a sensitive people, Mr. President, and we are aware that the transition to a market economy brings with it unavoidable hardship; the Russian people have displayed patience and courage in the face of economic adversity, and in so doing they have earned the respect and admiration of all Canadians.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker Fraser: We feel certain that, despite the many obstacles that remain, the historic spirit of the Russian people will ultimately prevail.

Canada will do all it can to help. As one of the G–7 countries we helped assemble the recent $24 billion assistance package to Russia which will be tied to an economic reform program devised by the International Monetary Fund.

• (1200)

On a bilateral level, Canada has pledged considerable assistance, and, as you mentioned during your last trip to Ottawa, Mr. President, we have fulfilled all our promises.

We have provided your country with substantial grain and other credits, as well as a wide variety of technical and humanitarian assistance.

We hope that trade and investment ties are also growing.

Clearly, we are in a special position with relation to Russia, a position which we understand, a position that brings a responsibility to us which we want to accept.

Both countries now have an unprecedented opportunity to build on what should be a natural friendship. The last 50 years have perhaps blinded people to the striking similarities and unique ties that exist between our countries.

You mentioned that being here from your country you could feel at home. Canada's vast expanse of land, our northern geography, our climate, our abundant natural resources, our multicultural tradition, even our hockey tradition—all these we share in common with Russia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker Fraser: We have taken steps to strengthen these ties.

Part of our technical assistance is aimed at upgrading Russian resource industries such as oil and gas.

As northern neighbours, both countries support the creation of an International Arctic Council which would deal with environmental and security concerns in the region.

Also on the environmental front, which you mentioned, sir, Canada recently pledged to help Russia ensure the safety of its nuclear reactors.

We need to cultivate these bilateral ties.

Perhaps the best way to do it is to encourage people–to–people contact.

[*Translation*]

In May, the House of Commons held a week–long seminar on the theme of "Canada's Federal System of Government", which attracted delegations from the newly emerging democracies of central and eastern Europe, including one from Russia.

We look forward to more such parliamentary co–operation in the future.

[*English*]

Finally, our countries share a common concern over security. The Cold War is over, and a new era in international politics has emerged.

Canada supports and encourages you, Mr. President, in your continued efforts to preserve regional and international security.

Your recent agreement with President Bush to slash strategic nuclear weapons represents an historic breakthrough, and we trust that relations with your neighbours in the Commonwealth of Independent States will show similar goodwill and co–operation.

Your leadership on this matter, Mr. President, is well known in this country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker Fraser: In closing, Mr. President, let me say on behalf of all who are here today what enormous respect we have for your achievements as President of the Russian Federation during a difficult period. Your courage has been mentioned.

Perhaps it is appropriate to remind ourselves of what Mr. Churchill said once when asked: "What is the greatest quality a person may have?" He said: "Courage, because it secures all others".

Sir, you are an example of that and we are very proud of you.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker Fraser: We value our growing friendship with your country, and look forward with great eagerness to increasing our ties in the future and helping you in whatever way we can.

[*English*]

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for being with us. You will be welcome again. To you and madam, we wish you good luck and Godspeed.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 22, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-306, an act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved that Bill C-306, an act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, be concurred in at the report stage, as amended.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Arseneault moved that Bill C-306, an act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Debate. The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the purpose of this bill is to substitute, in the English version, the name "Department of Forests" for the name "Department of Forestry".

I would like to quote recommendation No. 3 of the report entitled *Canada's Forests: The Federal Role*, a report tabled by the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries in November 1990. I will therefore read recommendation No. 3 on page 39: "The Committee recommends that in the context of its mission and to fully embrace a comprehensive vision of Canada's forest resources, the new Department of Forestry should be renamed the Federal Department of Forests or Forests Canada".

The explanation is on page 39, and the report goes on to say: "It should be noted that this change would only be applicable in the English language as the new department is now called *Forêts Canada* in the French language and Bill C-29 is entitled *Loi sur le ministère des Forêts*. In fact, the English and French names for the department will be closer in meaning as a result of this recommendation. For the purposes of consistency and so as not to anticipate any further decisions by the government in this respect, we will continue to use, throughout this report. After defining the mission of Forestry Canada, which consists in seeking appropriate processes and structures for promoting sustainable development, we must define the mandate the new Department of Forestry will need to fulfil that mission and the type of action that will be necessary."

[*English*]

It is quite obvious the report recommends there be a change and there are a number of reasons for that.

First, the federal government has embraced the concept of sustainable development and has talked about that throughout its forestry committee report.

With regard to the name itself I will give a brief explanation about that. In French the name is already Forest Canada and we want to make sure the translation is proper.

To give you some background on that and to my colleagues who are here today, we have support for this bill. Members from all parties have supported it. The minister responsible for forestry is supporting the bill. We hope after the bill passes that it will be Minister of Forest. The parliamentary secretary is supporting it.

The bill went to committee. At that time, the committee members reviewed the bill clause by clause. There were some amendments made proposed by the parliamentary secretary and myself in discussion. Those were accepted by the committee and the bill has been reported back to the House.

I do not want to prolong the debate here today. The idea here is to pass it at third reading, get it out of the House and go to the next step.

The only thing I would like to say is I would ask the parliamentary secretary who is going to make a few comments a little later to possibly explain the reasons behind the amendments.

[*Translation*]

Perhaps we will get an explanation of those reasons. I would also like to thank the minister for his support.

[*English*]

I would like to mention the members who were involved here, not by name, but to say the minister has supported the bill from the beginning, the parliamentary secretary and my colleagues from all parties in the House. I hope they continue to support that. I thank them personally.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to support passage of this bill, tabled by my colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur.

Of course, some will think that this is a minor change, but in fact, it has deep significance, because the Department of Forestry is a full-fledged department of government that has been established and Canadians have high expectations of it. It is true that there was some discrepancy between the meaning of the English and French names of the department. The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur talked about it to the minister, the committee, the Official Opposition and of course the New Democratic Party and I think that hon. members agreed to make the necessary changes.

The Department of Forestry is growing rapidly. We see the increasing role that forests play, both in Canada and internationally. The recent summit in Rio was living proof of what I am saying.

We agreed on this bill in a non-partisan way, in a spirit of consensus, but as the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur pointed out, there were some minor technical problems with some amendments. We wanted the change of name from "Department of Forestry" to "Department of Forests" to be gradual and not expensive for the department in changing its stationery and so on.

In answer to my colleague's question, the two proposed amendments can be summarized thus: first, as I mentioned, to ensure a transfer from "Department of Forestry" to "Department of Forests" in terms of identifiable costs within the department.

The purpose of the second amendment, is to ensure that wherever the words "Department of Forests" will be used, it will be done. These minor technical amendments in no way affect the non-partisan spirit and purpose of the bill. That is why, on behalf of the minister and my colleagues, we are pleased to support such a bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am going to make only a short remark to the House and our constituents because people looking in may not understand the importance of making a name change like this.

It is important for Canadians to know that my colleague from Restigouche, ever since he came to this House, has had a very tight focus on the area relating to the forests of our nation. He was the member of Parliament who had the definition of sustainable development put right into the interpretive section of Bill C-29, which went through the House.

By having the definition of sustainable development right in the body of the bill, the guidelines for all policy related to the forests of this country are crystal clear.

I think that his constituents and the people of Canada should realize that sometimes even though it may be perceived to be a minor amendment, in actual fact it can have quite a substantive and profound influence on policy development in this country.

I salute my colleague for his work in this particular sector of our economy. It is so important to all of us.

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 third time and passed.

• (1120)

Mr. Layton: Mr. Speaker, I believe there have been consultations among the parties of the House and there may be unanimous consent for the following motion:

[*Translation*]

That, notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, the petition for a private bill on the Montreal Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, tabled on Thursday, June 18, 1992 and reported by the Clerk of Petitions on Friday, June 19, 1992, be deemed to have been produced within the required time limit and received by the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

Mr. Layton: There may also be unanimous consent to deal expeditiously at this time with Bill S-12 at all stages.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we fully agree with this motion and we would like to proceed immediately, after a few remarks, with the passage of Bill S-12.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis) moved that Bill S-12, an act to amalgamate the Montreal Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to Committee of the whole.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we are asked to approve this historic legislation giving effect to the merger of the Montreal Board of Trade with la *Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain*. Both groups have been closely associated with the social, cultural and economic development of Montreal and its regions, including the province of Quebec and Canada as a whole, for over a century.

The decision to combine their strengths by respecting the traditions and heritages of both founding associations sends out a positive signal as to the attitude currently prevailing in Montreal's business community. In fact, the merger decision was unanimously approved by the members of both groups on March 23 of this year.

[*Translation*]

One aspect of this merger that should be pointed out is that under the official by-laws contained in the enabling legislation, this new structure will operate in Canada's two official languages. At this crucial time in our history, I think that is worth mentioning and worthy of our hearty commendation.

[*English*]

With the adoption of this legislation the officers, members and staff of both groups will then have in hand the legal means to give full effect to the merger decision. There will be a great deal of work but the results will be well worth it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to say a few words about Bill S-12. As a resident of Montreal, a Quebecer and a Canadian, I am extremely proud. This legislation is one of the instruments Montreal needs as it prepares to enter the 2lst century. It was of course necessary, after more than 100 years, to have a second Chamber. A great deal has changed after 100 years. Today, people are delighted to see that at last a merger is taking place. The process is an indication of how Montreal is getting ready and how Montreal feels. The two organizations are to be commended for taking this step, and I hope many others will follow suit, because we are all Montrealers, we are all Quebecers, we are all Canadians, and we all have to work together.

In keeping with this spirit of co-operation, the Chamber, as the hon. member just said, will continue to provide services in our country's two official languages, and will provide those services to business people in the Montreal area, whether they are English or Italian or belong to any other group. The important thing is that we are working together at this crucial moment in our country's history.

Therefore, on behalf of the Official Opposition and on behalf of my party, the Liberal Party, I want to congratulate these organizations and wish them the best of luck. Once the two Chambers have merged, there will be a powerful incentive for the business community, and in fact all Montrealers, not just those who are in business, but those who would like to get into business, to work together to get Montreal's economy going again.

The best of luck, and of course we will continue our support of the legislative process so that Bill S-12 will become law.

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a very brief intervention on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus in our support of the merger. It is probably one of the few times we have ever been on record as supporting any merger in the business community.

It is an excellent move and perhaps, one would say, long overdue. I am pleased it is happening, particularly this year of our 125th anniversary as a nation.

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 the House went into committee thereon, Mr. DeBlois in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill S-12, an act to amalgamate The Montreal Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal.

• (1130)

On Clause 2—*Definition*

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): I have a question which I think most people would want to ask. Why did this have to come before Parliament?

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): I believe, but without full knowledge, that an original charter has been granted to The Montreal Board of Trade. In order to allow it to join now with *la Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain*, which is a federal charter, there needs to be the passage of a law here.

It has been through the Senate in these last few days. I know it is causing great rejoicing in Montreal.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova) Mr. Chairman, I had a feeling that was the reason, but I thought Canadians would want to know why two very good institutions in Montreal were before the House in this piece of legislation. There are some old legal steps that have to be taken, and I thought it should be clarified.

Mr. Layton: Mr. Chairman, I will take advantage of my colleague's comment and question simply to add that this is a year when so much good is coming from the great old city of Montreal in its 350th anniversary.

There are all kinds of social and positive activities to reunite Montreal and the country. As all of us know, we are also celebrating the 125th anniversary of Canada. The symbolism in that the two business communities

have worked closely together and have now gone to full fusion is very appropriate.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I just want to wish Montreal the best of luck, and I am sure that everyone can see that in the future, Montreal will still be in Canada, and we all have an appreciation of what Montreal has given all Canadians in the past. I am sure that the merger of these two organizations will have a positive impact on Montreal and its residents.

Clauses 2 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Layton moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time?

Some hon. members: Now.

Mr. Layton moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you would find it in order and you would find approval to now suspend the House until twelve o'clock.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker I rise on a point of order. I need your advice on a problem I want to raise.

[*English*]

On June 9, 1992, there was unanimous consent given to a motion by the parliamentary secretary to the House leader of the government in *Hansard* on page 11622. Contained in that motion was an agreement by the House as to the time and date of the address of Mr. Yeltsin, President of Russia, to both the members of the Senate and House of Commons.

The motion also ordered that:

—all introductory and related speeches, be printed as an appendix to House of Commons *Debates* of that day and form part of the records of this House;

The terms and conditions of this motion have not been adhered to. I have a copy of *Hansard* dated June 19, 1992, the date of Mr. Yeltsin's address. It does not include the text or related speeches in an appendix. The only thing that appears is a corrigendum stating that the text of Mr. Yeltsin's speech along with all introductory related speeches will be published at a later date as an Appendix to the House of Commons *Debates*.

I do not know whether there has been an error in the production of the *Debates* of the House or whether *Hansard* cannot record the speech in the official record because of the fact that strangers, people other than MPs, were in the House at that time.

I recognize there are no provisions in the Standing Orders either for the invitation of guest speakers or for procedures regarding the actual delivery of the speech, but because of the significance and nature of such speeches, protocol should be strictly adhered to.

I note that on all previous occasions beginning in 1941 when heads of state or governments have addressed this House the speeches have been printed in *Hansard*. For example, the speech by Mr. Herzog, President of the State of Israel, to both Houses of Parliament on June 27, 1989 was printed as an Appendix in the Commons *Debates* of that day.

I will table the list of these dignitaries, their speeches and relevant page numbers in *Hansard*.

I believe we have two problems. First, an order of the House has not been adhered to. Second, for the first time a head of state or foreign dignitary has addressed

members of Parliament and senators in the House and the text of his address does not appear in the official record of the House of Commons as an Appendix.

• (1140)

I wonder if the Speaker could rectify this very serious problem.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, and because it was my motion my hon. friend is referring to, I believe you will find that the official record of the House is the *Hansard* which comes forth in a week to 10 days' time. The *Hansard* we have had distributed to us today is in effect a preliminary record.

I believe the explanatory note at the beginning of today's publication does indicate when the daily *Hansard* is published, Mr. Yeltsin's speech and the introductory and thank you speeches will be published with it.

If I am not mistaken that is a practice which has been followed in the past. It is not being departed from in this instance.

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker, on June 27, 1989, the House of Commons *Debates* show that the speech of Mr. Herzog, President of Israel, was included in the first edition of *Hansard*. I am surprised that President Yeltsin's is not.

My second point was whether this did not happen because there were strangers in the House.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I want to thank the hon. member for Calgary Northeast for calling the attention of the House to this situation. On checking, I am told that it is only due to technical reasons that the text of Mr. Yeltsin's address was not included in the draft edition of last Friday's *Debates*. It will indeed be included in a later edition to June 19, 1992.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Now, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to suspend the sitting until 12 noon. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

At 11.42 a.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-86

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I move pursuant to Standing Order 78(3):

> That in relation to Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill, and that 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the allotted day of the second reading stage consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary in order to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Knowing how important this issue is to members from Toronto, I find this motion strange coming from a Toronto member. We should be taking more time to go through all aspects of this debate.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, yes, it is true I come from the Toronto area, from Brampton, where this bill is urgently needed, urgently required. The regional and local governments have asked that it be passed expeditiously and that is what we are doing. We are getting it into committee so we can have witnesses and get this bill through as soon as possible so we can take the necessary action.

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): 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 agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 222*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Beatty
Belsher	Bernier
Bird	Bjornson
Blais	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Brightwell
Browes	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Charest	Cole
Collins	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Darling
de Cotret	Desjardins
Dick	Dobbie
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Greene	Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Horner
Horning	Hudon
James	Johnson
Joncas	Kempling
Koury	Landry
Larrivée	Layton
Lewis	Loiselle
Lopez	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reid	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Tardif
Tétreault	Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt	Van De Walle
Vankoughnet	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Winegard	Worthy—92

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blaikie	Boudria
Butland	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Dingwall
Dionne	Edmonston
Finestone	Fisher
Fontana	Foster
Fulton	Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)	Heap
Jordan	Kaplan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kindy
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
MacAulay	Maheu
Marchi	McCurdy
McGuire	Milliken
Mills	Mitchell
Nystrom	Pagtakhan
Peterson	Proud
Rideout	Riis
Rocheleau	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stewart	Stupich
Tobin	Walker—50

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed, from Friday, June 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Valcourt that Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope, and on the amendment of Mr. Allmand:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-86, an Act to amend the Immigration Act and other Acts In consequence thereof, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The Hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this House today in support of the amendments that my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, recently proposed to the Immigration Act.

These are changes which will ensure that Canada continues to prosper from the skills and talents new Canadians have always brought to this land and benefit from their unifying spirit of commitment to Canada.

I believe that immigration is the cornerstone of our national heritage. It has made an invaluable contribution to Canada's social and economic well-being and to our success in nation building.

Three core objectives lie at the heart of our immigration policy. The reunification of families and the protection of refugees are central elements.

Equally important is the concern that immigration contribute to our national prosperity by attracting those with the particular skills and talents Canada requires. Balancing these three objectives is what effective management of our immigration program is all about.

Canadians—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for a few moments, but I ask for the co-operation of both sides of the House so that those listening to us, and also the Chair, can follow the speeches attentively. I again recognize the hon. Minister of Transport.

Mr. Corbeil: Canadians are naturally drawn to an immigration system that balances our compassionate instincts as a people with our pragmatic requirements as a nation. However, much has changed in the 16 years since the Immigration Act was passed in 1976.

Global political and economic conditions are far from stable. Regional conflicts, environmental disasters, economic collapse have all spurred on unpredictable, large-scale movements of people. Some estimate that as many as 80 million people are on the move world-wide. This all adds up to ever increasing pressures and stresses on the immigration programs of virtually every industrialized nation.

How will the world community respond to the rising tide of migrants? How will Canada respond? Canada has not been standing still. A little over two years ago, the federal government consulted widely with a broad cross-section of Canadians. Our discussions then were about what would be required to meet the challenge. We asked ourselves a number of questions.

• (1250)

How many people does Canada need to meet its economic needs and its international obligations to refugees? Which individuals with which backgrounds, education and skills does Canada want to attract? What steps must be taken to ensure that the needs of new immigrants do not outstrip our ability to provide for them? What tools do we need to help immigrants integrate into our society?

The result of those consultations with different individuals was a five-year immigration plan. We are now in the second year of that plan, which has been approved by the great majority of Canadians. Today, Canada has the highest immigration rate per capita of any nation in the world. One in six Canadians was born outside Canada.

We now accept 250,000 immigrants and refugees each year, three times the number we accepted in 1984. The combined cost to deliver immigration programs across all federal government departments is about $900 million per year; almost a billion dollars.

At the same time, we have maintained our strong commitment to the world's refugee community. Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board is a model of fairness and operational effectiveness that other countries come to study.

The Canadian acceptance rate for those claiming refugee status is the highest in the world. It is more than double the next most generous nation and ten times that of a country like Sweden. Even so, this combined immigration and refugee effort is not enough to satisfy a world awash in a sea of change. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions more would like to come to Canada, far more than we can possibly accommodate.

We have gone a long way with our planning but it is obvious today that new management tools are required. Our current legislative framework or the "rules and regulations" governing the Immigration Act were developed in 1976, in a world very different from today. The system was not designed to withstand the pressures exerted on it by the realities of the 1990s. Those

pressures hamper the effectiveness of the program and leave people dissatisfied.

As waiting lists grow longer and the time to process legitimate applicants drags on, the temptation to abuse the system also grows. Our very openness and generosity make the system vulnerable to abuse. Abuse which erodes confidence in the system ultimately threatens the very integrity of the program. Without the tools to manage the program effectively in the 1990s, we run the risk of losing the support of the public and the economic and social benefits which immigration brings to Canada.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration has proposed a series of changes which will ensure a healthy balance among those traditional cornerstone groups of our immigration program.

While the program will continue to favour the family class and provide strong support for refugees fleeing persecution, we will also place a renewed emphasis on the independent and business class immigrant whose skills, talents and acumen are so necessary to our economic prosperity.

What the changes will do is allow us to control the categories and numbers of new immigrants more effectively. We will achieve more certainty in our planning. Greater certainty means fewer delays in processing, more predictable processing times and greater fairness for newcomers.

Specifically, we are proposing the introduction of three management streams for selecting immigrants. Our objective is to eliminate backlogs which drain our resources and reduce our flexibility to assist others.

Stream one would be open–ended, with no fixed limit on the number of applicants. The department would be committed to processing individuals according to specific time frames. Spouses and dependent children will benefit most from this change.

Streams two and three would have established ceilings for groups within each stream and have limited commitments to processing times. Once ceilings were reached, no more applications would be accepted.

We also intend to take steps which will accelerate the refugee status determination process. A single–stage hearing process will reduce processing times, cut administrative costs and allow the independent Immigration and Refugee Board to target its resources more effectively. This is a change recommended by Canada's Auditor General and supported by the chairman of the IRB.

Genuine refugees should be able to get on with their lives as quickly as possible. The sooner decisions are made on claimants' status, the sooner refugees can get off social assistance programs and become fully contributing members of their community.

The new procedures will allow convention refugees to be "landed" more quickly and take up employment sooner. The proposals would permit the spouse and dependent children of the applicant to be processed at the same time as the successful claimant.

The department hopes to cut the processing time for landed status to an average of six months.

The changes we are proposing will ensure that we have a fair, balanced and effective immigration system attuned to the realities of the 1990s, which continues to satisfy our compassionate instincts as a people and meets our pragmatic requirements as a nation.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the minister. In his speech nowhere did he deal with any of the major, specific issues in the bill. He is supporting the bill.

For example, I would like to ask him, in the bill authority is given to the government to impose a place of residence on an immigrant coming to this country as a condition in the immigration visa. We have always had incentives to encourage immigrants to go to certain parts of the country where their trades and professions were needed and that is acceptable.

I ask the minister, how can he support a clause in the bill which would impose on the immigrant that he or she must live in a certain city or district of Canada when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in article 6 says that a citizen or a permanent resident can live in any part of Canada, can work in any part of Canada, can move to any part of Canada?

I ask him that question and I hope that he can give us a good answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the amendments to our immigration legislation proposed by the Minister of Employment and Immigration is to change certain aspects which over the years have created problems and also to adjust the number of immigrants we receive now and whom we welcome with warmth and generosity, so as to meet Canada's economic and social concerns, in the 1990s.

I think it is entirely in order to respond to certain questions and comments that have been raised regularly by Canadians to the effect that we should try to direct immigrants towards locations where they are more likely to adjust to prevailing economic and social conditions and to meet specific needs.

I think the Minister of Employment and Immigration made an excellent suggestion in his draft amendment, because once again, the purpose of all these new measures is to adjust our immigration program to changing political, economic and social realities.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question of my hon. colleague.

The government is saying essentially that it is willing to entertain all sorts of challenges, that charter challenges are something which could very successfully be challenged. At the same time, just barely a few weeks ago we dealt with the question of a referendum where the government said: "Whoa, hands off. We are very reluctant to move in this direction with a referendum bill because we do not want to have a challenge under the charter."

Now either it is soliciting challenges or it is not. The government is not concerned about challenges under the charter as far as immigrants are concerned but it is concerned when it comes to citizens of this country who are not immigrants. Government cannot have it both ways.

Either government is fully aware this is going to lead to a number of charter challenges and is going to bog down the system even more, or the legal advisor of the government said this would not create charter challenges. Quite frankly, I would like to see the government table any of this legal advice or opinion where it says this type of activity or legislation on the part of the government would not engender charter challenges because I think the lawyers would be wrong.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, Canada has always been a welcoming nation. I said earlier that we must adapt our immigration laws to the new realities of the 1990s. When it has been explained to prospective immigrants that there will be certain limitations regarding their place of residence for a certain time, we are firmly convinced that once they are here, they will accept those conditions. In fact, these changes were proposed following wide-ranging consultations among various groups in this country and were welcomed by a large number of Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister and first I want to say to him and to the people of Canada that we are not opposed to improving, streamlining or making the Immigration Act of this country better than what it is. We have difficulty with the fact that a very complex bill is being jammed through the system so quickly. It is tough to comprehend all aspects of this.

My question is with respect to the part of the minister's speech where he said that we are going to be able to better control the movement of new immigrants. Under the proposed amendments to the new Constitution we are basically giving immigration to the provinces. That means there will be provincial immigration operations right across the country. The provinces will all be doing their own thing. What mechanism will we have as a national government to correct any abuses to the immigration system once we pass on this immigration responsibility to each of the provinces? Is there any part of this amendment or this act which covers that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, since as yet there has been no agreement on a new distribution of powers in a renewed Canada, these problems will be dealt with under our current immigration legislation, on the basis of the distribution of powers as it exist today. As soon as these powers are to be transferred in some way or

another to the provinces, we will deal with the problem at that time and make the appropriate arrangements.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): For a short question, the hon. member for Mount Royal.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, being aware of the fact that a short question is all that is allowed, let me ask the minister if there is a potential for a challenge under the charter with respect to mobility rights. If I do not necessarily accept to go or if I do accept to go and I do not like it, do I have the right to leave before the two years you are imposing? Yes or no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, we do not think there could be a challenge under the charter, since these conditions would be freely accepted and freely contracted by people who would agree to enter Canada under this new system.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the second reading of Bill C–86, which is the very extensive and elaborate immigration legislation, a fact our critic certainly pointed out quite articulately on Friday. The bill is 113 pages long and comprises some 128 sections. Simply from a process viewpoint, having nothing to say about substance, from a clearly procedural point it is highly offensive that we are approaching such a sensitive area in such a callous manner.

Additionally, we are moving from first reading to second reading without even taking a breath because this morning the government imposed closure. It gives parliamentarians little or no chance to even begin to digest the essence of Bill C–86. More important, it does not give enough time at the second reading stage for Canadians to become partners in the equation rather than dealing with them as abstract observers to the entire situation.

It is regrettable. The critic for the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal caucus stressed this position on Friday and articulated the concerns the Liberal Party has as well as some of the minor improvements that had been made within the body of Bill C–86.

When we discuss immigration we are discussing one of the most emotional areas of federal public policy; emotional because we are saying who can come and who cannot come into the country and the reasons for those individuals not being able to come or to stay.

There is nothing more difficult than for members of Parliament to go back to their constituencies where immigration is a very important item and to be the messengers of those negative decisions whether it be for a student who wants to come here to study, a visitor for a marriage or a funeral, a refugee who has no other option but to be deported, a Canadian who cannot have his brother or sister join his family here. It is a very emotional area and yet at the same time, for the last number of years, it has probably been one of the most mismanaged areas of federal public policy. A wide array of ministers for immigration have brought with them new priorities, new directions. This has caused a great deal of frustration, not only in the immigration constituency but for Canadians coast to coast to coast.

Nothing has highlighted that mismanagement more than the entire refugee determination process, a process that has lacked management. This government wants to come across as a government that wants to get tough with refugees and wants a system that is going to be respected. It has been the manager of this so–called new system.

Look at the refugee backlog. How many millions of dollars have been spent? Count the years that people have not been able to see their own families, people who get refused and then do not get deported at the end of that day. The system is clearly breaking down. The architect of this system is not some former government, the architect of this system, which is being changed again, is in fact this government.

• (1310)

We have to wonder sometimes whether the government has the best interests of the immigration dossier at heart or whether it is playing fast and loose with this dossier against the interests of Canadians across the country, all for political expediency.

If we cast our minds back a few summers ago, there was a clear example of utilizing that dossier in the very worst way. That famous summer, 157 migrants landed off the east coast of this country. Rather than dealing with

them in a rational, professional way of giving due process, this government, and this Prime Minister, called it "a national emergency" and then called an emergency sitting of Parliament to deal with 157 people.

In 1980, we—and I say we—government and Canadians, accepted 100,000 Vietnamese boat people just as one single movement, apart from all the other classes of immigration during those years. That is in the best interests of trying to educate a country, of trying to bring Canadians along to accepting these immigrants and the positive things they will be doing for our country. Yet, only a few years later, this same country, this government, said halt to 157 people because it is a national emergency.

What really happened was the government was very low in the polls, some Canadians were excited and traumatized by these 157 boat people, and the government took full advantage, exaggerated the situation, blew it out of proportion, and gave the word refugee a black eye in this country, a black eye they have still not recovered from and a black eye that is getting darker by the day.

It is easy for the government to bring in a bill and say that it wants to control the situation, it wants people to respect the laws. Who is saying anything different? We have told successive Tory ministers of immigration the very same thing and they promised an expedient, fair system that would not weigh upon the Canadian government or the Canadian taxpayers. We have been waiting almost seven years for that better mousetrap to begin to work.

It is particularly easy for this government to try to give the impression that it is acting tough, particularly during tough economic times. Why? During tough economic times, as we are going through right now, there is always the vulnerability among Canadians who are unemployed to look at immigration in a negative fashion, to say that rather than bringing in new immigrants, why do we not allow unemployed Canadians to get their jobs back first, and when times are better we will think about opening the doors a little wider.

That is why the timing of this bill is no coincidence. The government is trying to project a sense of professionalism and of concern, yet over the seven years it has had ample opportunity to act and it has not taken the opportunity of doing so. We have to be very careful not to give in to the myth that just because we are down in the economic cycle we should not invite new Canadians to join in the rebuilding of the economy and of the country. Most studies that have been done during good times and bad, particularly the latter, show consistently that net migrations of people to Canada, at the end of the day when all the factors are put into the equation, is a net creator of jobs. At the end of the day there is a net number of immigrants who become entrepreneurs, who establish businesses, who take risks and who give jobs to other people. They become consumers and therefore consumer spending and consumer demand goes up. Last, those people, quite frankly, also take jobs that perhaps you and I do not wish to do.

Therefore, in the fine line between myth and reality, when we talk about the most sensitive and emotional areas of public policy, namely immigration, we need to be very careful about the messages that we as a Parliament are sending out. Immigration to this country has played a very significant and over-all a very productive and positive force in building the country that we have built thus far.

What we also have to continue to strengthen is the view that we are not asking people to come to Canada because we feel we have to do that for various cultural communities, but we have to strengthen the idea that immigration is one of those building blocks that we need to continue to rely on if we are to enjoy the standard of life that we have come to know as Canadians. The Canadian population is relatively small and it is an aging population. The birth rate is dwindling. The economy needs people that sometimes our schools and academic institutions are too slow to produce. Therefore, immigration is not the be all and end all, but it is clearly one positive answer to the needs of a country and the future of a country.

While we have to be stern and disciplined in having our immigration laws respected, we must be very careful to create laws that are not based on perception or myths. Unfortunately, this government, when it has come to the whole public policy of immigration, I believe as one member of Parliament on this side, has preferred to base its rationale on perception and myth rather than promoting the reality of this situation and giving Canadians a law that responds to those realistic attributes of immigration.

As I mentioned, the bill is 113 pages long. Given my limited time, I cannot begin to deal with every facet of the legislation, but I am going to highlight three general directions that I think are some cause for concern.

The first one is that the Conservative government continues to be preoccupied with, quite frankly, it dominates much of their agenda, the fast-tracking and increasing the proportion of of immigrants with entrepreneurship and investment dollars. By that I do not mean that I or my party are against that category because in fact it was our party that created that immigration class within the Immigration Act. At the same time, the Liberal Party was prepared to put that class in a certain perspective. One of the first things that this government did in 1984, after assuming power, was double the number of immigrants with some cash.

There is nothing wrong with people who have made a buck. There is nothing wrong with people who create jobs and help the economic prosperity of a country. However, it is wrong if the message that goes out far and wide is that it is easier to come to this country if your pockets are deep than if your pockets are shallow. That clearly is a perception and a reality that has gone out from the first day that this government assumed power. There is a double standard at play that contradicts the history of immigration in this country.

• (1320)

The history of immigration for this country has been that for many people, the vast majority of people, including my own parents, who had come to this country, their pockets were very shallow. Their hearts, however, were very big and their willingness to build for themselves and their families and their country was unchallenged and unquestionable. In the process, those immigrants who are now Canadian citizens today not only give thanks to a country like Canada but they reciprocate that thanks and that loyalty by giving back to the country and by building a foundation that is unshakeable.

If the same laws were in place post-Second World War, many of those people would not have had the opportunity of coming to this country. Many of those people would not have been able to realize their dreams in that period. If that had been the case, Canada would not have been able to found itself on people who did not have the big dollars but, as I mentioned, had shallow pockets and big hearts.

Therefore we have to be very careful in creating that double standard because an instant doubling or tripling of wealthy immigrants has had ramifications. In posts abroad I have visited as a former immigration critic for my party, I have talked to managers of those immigration operations and they have had to pull people, their visa officers, off other desks such as visitor visa or family class in order to facilitate the doubling and the tripling of quotas imposed by this government.

Not only have we had a preoccupation with trying to search for immigrants who are wealthy, but that has also played in a negative way against the other streams of immigrants just as worthy if not more.

Therefore what I have been advocating and what I advocate again is not to do away with that class but to put a greater perspective on it and not allow that entrepreneurial wealthy immigrant class to impose negatively and to have smaller numbers in our other classes of immigration so that we can satisfy those individuals with money. The second problem is that there is little follow-up in this country to ensure that the wealthy immigrant who has promised to build a mousetrap factory in Downsview, Ontario actually does so. There is little to no follow-up in order to ensure that that mousetrap has been built.

We get tougher on immigrants who do not have proper documentation than on the person who got a visa to build that mousetrap and who has not built it. Those individuals are not asked to leave. That follow-up is not done.

Not only are immigrants buying themselves into this country but in the end of it they are getting it free of charge because they have not put up the investment they promised.

That is the first concern with the preoccupation to help those who are only defined by the dollar sign. We have to take the program back, put it in perspective, ensure the follow-up and let us not let it undermine the other classes of immigration.

A second concern I have with the general direction of Bill C-86 is the whole question of family class. The government purports in Bill C-86 to try to accelerate the family unification but that is only the immediate family class. It says nothing or does nothing essentially for the extended family. If you compare the results from 1984 to

the present you will find that the proportion of family class and extended family class base immigrants is much smaller than prior to 1984.

There is a very good reason for that. Previous Liberal administrations founded their policy on the cornerstone of family class immigration. There was good reason for it. We believe that it causes an immigrant to be a lot more at ease with himself or herself. You will have a more successful immigrant. You will have the family playing a role that sometimes the state is asked to play and you will have a more successful process of immigration.

The Chair mentioned that my time is limited. My third component is going to be the refugee component. This government really makes an art out of trying to pick on the most vulnerable in our society by returning to the safe third country concept and also by trying to make it more difficult to obtain refugee status.

I had wanted to say a lot more about this third element because what it is trying to do when it says streamline is minimize the number of applications in the refugee determination system. That is not the goal nor should it be the objective of the legislation. The goal of the legislation should be to have a good system in order to arbitrate who is and who is not a refugee and not to eliminate or streamline based on forbidding a number of people access. It is like saying we want to improve the hospitals by saying who we are going to admit as a person who needs help and who we are not going to admit.

I suggest that you cannot do that.

I would care to go on longer, if the House sees fit, or take any questions from members.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member with great interest and I agree with him that there are a tremendous amount of myths out there and not facts on immigration. I agree whole-heartedly with what he said about immigration creating employment and being very important for our country, coming from an area like Brampton which is probably one of the fastest growing areas of Canada today and largely because of immigration which is very positive for the area.

He is right that a lot of people have misconceptions of immigration.

The hon. member was a little critical of the management of our refugee system, which we have had difficulties with. I am the first one to admit it. This is to try and alleviate some of the problems that we have experienced over the years in the refugee process. It was not only our government, it was the previous government as well that had a tremendous backlog of refugees when it left office. It is not only the current administration. We have had these problems.

The hon. member will know that other countries are having the same problems. Refugees are on the move today like never before. What we are trying to do is assure ourselves, and I think Canadians want to be assured, that the people who are coming in to Canada are legitimate refugees. There are a tremendous number of what we call economic refugees who do not fit into the United Nations definition of a refugee. What we are trying to do is assure that those who come here are legitimate refugees.

I think the hon. member will agree—coming from Toronto he knows—that there have been some problems there with fraud, not only in the immigration end of things but from that it goes into welfare fraud. That has been a major concern to the municipalities which have asked for some of the parts of this particular bill, especially the identification of those who are coming in. Heretofore we had no way of keeping track of them.

I want to ask the hon. member one specific question. He is absolutely right that immigration creates employment, economic activity and so on, and yet he criticizes this government and he talks about entrepreneurial class and so on.

Would he give the figures from 1991 to the House on family class, on refugees and on entrepreneurial class? If he does not have them on hand I will make sure he gets them. Second, can he explain why the Liberal government in 1984 cut back immigration to 80,000 people, whereas our goal this year is 250,000 and last year 200,000 new immigrants came to Canada?

If it is so important, and the Conservatives have bungled it as he likes to portray, can he tell us why the Liberals cut back so dramatically?

Mr. Marchi: I thank my hon. friend from Brampton for a number of questions.

First, on the refugee situation the minister says that the government is interested in trying to keep the illegitimate refugees out of the country. Members from all sides agree with that.

• (1330)

When you have in a system a person who says he is a refugee, it should be taken as the most serious and sensitive statement that one can make under our Immigration Act because it basically says that his life or that of his family is in the balance because of his religious or political views. Every member on this side agrees that those refugees who are fraudulent and who are allowed to stay undermine the authenticity of the real, legitimate refugee who needs refuge. There is nothing that has stopped this government from keeping those individuals out.

The minister points out that there is this legislation now that is going to all of a sudden allow it to do something it could not have done up to now. Obviously the minister does not know the bill or if he does he is certainly not giving us the straight goods. This government under the Immigration Act and under Bills C–84 and Bill C–55 had all sorts of powers to do that.

The fact of the matter is that this government has imposed a refugee determination backlog system that we, since 1986, have said is not working. Instead, it continues to spend millions. It continues to appoint refugee board officials. It continues to deny people work permits. It continues to deny people seeing their own families. All for what? Even the people who were denied were not deported in the end.

This government, which wants to give a perception that it is Mr. Tough Guy with refugees, was not serving the refugee, the taxpayer or this country. We have told the government that.

It is still in that backlog clearance program that it said was only going to take a year and only cost $75 million. It has now taken three or four years and we are in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for York West. We should remember the fact that with the exception of our native peoples, we are all immigrants to this country. We have to treat this issue in a very sensitive way.

The member is a former critic on immigration and has been working with this issue for many years. My question has to do with the staffing. He knows, being a Toronto member, that probably 90 per cent of our work as members of Parliament today is taken up with immigration cases.

An hon. member: Is that all?

Mr. Mills: The member from Ontario asks if that is all. He agrees with us.

The problem that I have with this amendment procedure that we are debating in the House today is that the minister on Friday would not acknowledge that he needed more staff; in other words, that aspect of these amendments which is going to try to streamline and push the paper through so we can maybe go on looking after some of the other problems of the other 90 per cent of our constituents.

I do not see anything in this amendment or in the government's attitude which will help those public servants who are working on these problems to try to get the paperwork done so that people can get off social assistance and into the work force.

We have people who have been sitting around in Toronto, as the hon. member well knows, waiting for months and months trying to get their landed papers. The system is being shut down, I believe, because of lack of proper support staff in the department.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, the member for Broadview—Greenwood makes a very clear and very obvious statement that this government is not putting resources in its department to expedite the claimants, be they landed immigrants or refugees. They cannot even obtain their Canadian citizenship because there is such a barrage and a backlog on that front. At the same time, the government does not allow people to even work.

This minister from Brampton has the audacity to say that those people go on welfare. At least let them work while they are waiting for their status papers. This minister and this government do not give them work permits and then they get criticized for going on welfare. That is the double talk for which this minister and this government have become infamous.

Second, concerning the pressures across the globe, as the member knows, in places like Hong Kong, New Delhi and other various areas that are creating a lot of demand, the problem is that there are not enough Canadian visa officers. They do not have computer systems to try to make due with the situation at hand.

Therefore, if you come from Italy there is a six-month waiting process. If you try to come from Hong Kong or New Delhi or Manila, the waiting period is three, four, five and six years.

What the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood is trying to say is that there needs to be a consistency there and to try to have a response time that is both humane and fair to all individuals, wherever you come from. If you want to increase numbers and you want to do more, you need to put the resources in your program so that you can do what you want to do and not only say it.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, immigration is a complex issue and an important one for Canada.

The bill before us is a complex piece of legislation, more than 100 pages long. In many ways the basic idea behind the legislation is quite simple. Our immigration program should achieve clearly defined objectives efficiently, in a way that is cost effective and in a way that is fair and humane.

In order for it to do this in the 1990s, we need a new framework, one that allows us to set out clear rules, to enforce those rules effectively and to deliver the program with as little red tape and delay as possible.

I want to talk about the enforcement aspects of this legislation and about program delivery. It is important to keep in mind, especially when we are talking about enforcement, that this legislation—and I underline—does not change the objectives of our immigration program; objectives which have been fundamental to immigration in Canada for many years. The government remains firmly committed to the basic social, humanitarian and economic objectives set out in the current Immigration Act.

We remain committed to maintaining a reasonable balance between those objectives as set out in the five-year immigration plan in 1990 and confirmed by the minister last fall. We remain committed to a robust immigration program with the levels set at 250,000 immigrants for this year. These amendments do not change the fundamental objectives of our immigration program. What they will do is allow us to achieve those objectives in an environment very different from that of 1976 when the current Immigration Act was passed.

We need a modern management system, one that will allow us to set clear rules for the selection of immigrants and ensure that the selection process does not lead to bottle-necks and backlogs. That is only part of the story. We also need effective ways to re-enforce the rules fairly, firmly and in the best interests of Canadians.

There is not much point in having rules about whom you bring into a country if you cannot make sure that those rules have consequences. The truth is you cannot have an effective, balanced fair immigration program without an effective enforcement policy. You need enforcement to ensure that the program is meeting its objectives, to preserve the integrity of the ideals that underlie the program and to preserve the integrity of our borders.

Without effective enforcement you cannot have a fair program. You need to ensure the program is really helping those who most need Canada's protection.

Equally important, you put the very safety and security of Canadians at risk. Canada has the most open and generous immigration program in the world and we want to keep that way.

To do so we have to take firm action against those who would mistake our openness and generosity as signs of weakness. We have to face the fact that the world of the 1990s is a world of increasingly sophisticated, internationally organized criminals and terrorists. We have to be prepared to deal with what is now a multi-billion dollar migrant smuggling trade and those who would exploit the misery of people in the most desperate circumstances for their own personal gain.

• (1340)

This legislation includes important amendments to the Immigration Act that will provide new authority to meet the enforcement challenges of the 1990s, including measures that will help immigration officials provide Canadians and our way of life with much better protection.

For example, the medical inadmissibility provisions of the act are intended to protect the health and well-being of Canadians and ensure that people coming into Canada do not place an excessive demand on our medical and social service systems. The proposed amendments will clarify the definition of excessive demand in today's terms and ensure that the medical inadmissibility provisions are applied fairly and without discrimination.

The act currently provides authority to refuse admission to anyone who has been convicted of a crime. What about people who, while never convicted of a crime, are known to be part of a criminal or terrorist organization? These people pose a real danger. Their activities frequently have a global dimension but the current act does not prevent them from coming to Canada.

New measures will strengthen the definition of criminal inadmissibility and allow us to keep out people we know are active in such groups. They will give immigration officers the authority to refuse entry to anyone involved in serious criminal activities.

This legislation will also help those who try to enter Canada under false pretences or who otherwise try to break and circumvent the rules. The best way to stop such people is to intercept them before they get to our borders. That is why the government works closely with the airline industry, helping it to identify counterfeit travel documents and illegal migrants.

The proposed legislation will provide an additional incentive for airlines to work with the government by increasing the penalties for airlines that neglect their duty to determine undocumented passengers.

In some cases people arrive at our borders with travel documents which have a direct bearing on their admissibility to Canada, but at the present time they can simply refuse to show them to immigration officials. The customs officer, on the other hand, can search a Canadian citizen returning to Canada if he is suspected of concealing something as simple as an undeclared bottle of liquor. We think that an immigration officer should have similar authority to conduct a search and the legislation will provide that authority.

For example, someone who asks for protection as a refugee may claim to have no passport and the immigration officer cannot verify that claim even if the officer can clearly see a passport sticking out of the claimants pocket.

The legislation will also allow the use of fingerprints and photographs to establish an applicant's identity. The question of identity is obviously critical in many immigration cases and we need the most effective means available to deal with those cases firmly.

Under the new legislation immigration officers will have increased authority to identify and stop smugglers. This includes increased discretion to detain vehicles.

A number of recent reports by enforcement agencies as well as in the media have highlighted the dramatic increases in organized groups smuggling illegal migrants into Canada. A restructured system of fines will help deal with individuals involved in smuggling. Under the proposed legislation people caught smuggling will face penalties ranging from a $100,000 fine and five years in jail to a fine of $500,000 and ten years in jail.

For people who manage to enter Canada illegally or who have been determined not to have the right to remain in Canada, the legislation provides the tools necessary to ensure their prompt removal. We need to assure Canadians that people here illegally will not remain and that those who enter Canada legally will be held to their promise to respect Canada's laws.

The investigative capacity of immigration officials to identify, document and follow-up on infractions will be increased and made more effective.

There can be no question that examples of abuse undermine the integrity of our immigration system. Abuse also undermines the public's confidence in the value and effectiveness of the immigration program. The measures we have proposed to enforce the law and protect Canadian society will ensure that the immigration system, which has served Canada well for more than a century, continues to deserve the support and confidence of all Canadians.

Public confidence also depends on a program that operates and is seen to operate in a way that is fair, efficient and cost effective. Increasing numbers of people seeking to enter Canada have placed enormous pressures on the program and on the ability of officials to deliver efficient immigration services. As a result, the immigration program has become characterized, in some

cases unfairly, by long lines, excessive delays and costly backlogs.

In recent years a number of significant improvements have been made in services provided by immigration offices in Canada and overseas. Response times to requests for information have been shortened and procedures have been simplified. Continued efforts to streamline service delivery along with new administrative procedures will ensure that a high and consistent level of service is provided at all immigration offices.

The steps being taken to improve service include new centralized information centres to allow Canadian residents to find out more quickly what is happening to applications from their families and friends; clear information for applicants about how long it will likely take for a decision to be reached on their applications; increased use in mail-in and drop-off services at Canada Immigration Centres; new application kits for services in Canada which include more timely information, more easily understood forms and additional staff training, particularly on ways to provide clients and interested parties with up to date information about immigration procedure.

The government is also proposing to streamline administrative procedures involved in issuing or renewing documents for visitors, students and returning residents. In many cases existing procedures are either ineffective or involve unnecessary time and expense. These kinds of administrative and service delivery improvements are important but we must recognize that problems in service are in many cases symptoms of deeper problems in the framework of the immigration program itself. This legislation will address those problems.

For example, the new three-tier management system makes it possible to establish clear priorities for processing immigrant applications according to clearly defined objectives. Those dealt with through stream one, for example, spouses and dependent children, would be processed on demand and within a reasonable time; about six months.

Applicants in stream two will be processed on a first come, first serve basis. They will be provided with accurate information on how soon they will be processed.

Those processed in stream three will be selected for excellence. The new authority to turn away applications when levels are reached may be used to reduce backlogs.

The proposed legislation will also make a big difference in the treatment of people claiming refugee status. Those people who have often been subject to long delays, long separations from their families and long periods of economic uncertainty will be processed much more quickly.

We hope to reduce the review process from fourteen months to six months and we will ensure that refugees can be landed within six months. Close family members will be landed at the same time.

It is important to see how all of the basic components of this legislation fit; a better immigration management framework, a streamlined refugee determination system, effective enforcement and improved service. They all work together to achieve the basic goal of a more efficient, fair and cost-effective immigration program.

Developed countries around the world are struggling to come to terms with the realities of immigration in the 1990s. In many countries we have seen a most disturbing trend toward a closed door approach to immigration. It should be made very clear that this legislation is not informed by that attitude.

This government believes that a robust immigration program is good for Canada but we also believe that a robust immigration program is one in which there are clear rules, clearly enforced, designed to maintain the integrity of the program that is vital to Canada's future.

The legislation we have proposed provides the foundation we need today and in the future. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to something my friend from Athabasca said earlier in his speech. He mentioned that in some cases even though would-be immigrants had not been convicted of crimes, he would put them in a category of fairly unsavoury people.

• (1350)

I wanted him to elaborate on that because he is potentially treading on fairly dangerous ground once he begins talking about breaching the whole principle of innocent until proven guilty. How far do you carry that?

What constitutes an unsavoury character? Is it the colour of his skin, the kind of clothes he wears or how he wears his hair? Where do you draw the line?

I am sure the member did not want to leave the wrong impression. I say to him by way of feedback that the impression he left was a fairly frightening one. Early in his intervention he was talking somewhat off the cuff and he indicated, maybe unwittingly, that even when people are not convicted of a crime certain conditions ought to apply. I say to him that is a fairly frightening prospect. If that is the kind of ground rule he would envisage, I put it to him that suggestion undermines most of the rest of what he said about a robust policy and a open policy and that kind of thing.

Maybe unwittingly the member let us into his thoughts more than he intended. Before we judge him on that could he tell the House what he meant? Would he maybe give some examples of what types of individuals, though not convicted of crimes, he might seek to keep out of the country.

The second question flows from the first one. Is that kind of thinking to be applied by people already in the country? Do we have a certain broad-brush approach that would judge people even though the courts have not found them guilty of anything? Would we have a broad-brush approach that ostracizes those people? How far does he go with that? Does he advocate maybe deportation for those unsavoury characters? Where does he draw the line?

Mr. Shields: Mr. Speaker, I am always disturbed when someone tries to put a twist or a turn on something that is said very clearly and stated very clearly.

We in Canada today cannot, under the present immigration laws, bar from Canada known drug dealers who have formed cartels. We have no way of keeping them out under criminal activity. It is well known by Interpol and by the international enforcement agencies that they are drug dealers and that they belong to organized drug cartels. It is the same with organized crime in various countries. Interpol and the other agencies know that it is there. We all know the criminal activity that takes place and those who are higher up are insulated from it. It is known but it cannot be proven. Those are the activities that we in Canada are setting up so that we are giving immigration officers an effective way to determine inadmissibility based on those grounds.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Athabasca for a fairly clear setting out of certain matters. I would like him to enlarge on a couple of aspects relating to refugees.

At present in the refugee determination system for those who come to Canada to claim refugee status, they have the preliminary hearing in which most of them are found acceptable to continue on to the second stage hearing. The government has said that it has eliminated that hearing. It has put several elements, including one very controversial one, into the hands of the senior immigration officers at the port of entry.

If a person comes from a country considered not to be a refugee-producing country, he can be sent right back without a hearing under the new proposed act. If he came through a country that is considered to be a country with a fair refugee determination process, he can be sent back to that country under the new system.

My question to the hon. member is would he consider the United States a safe country to which to send back Guatemalan or Salvadoran refugee claimants who had come over land and through the United States to Canada to claim refugee status?

In face of the fact that the United States has generally accepted only 2 or 3 per cent of Guatemalans or Salvadorans claiming refugee status in the States, at least three-quarters of the ones who came to Canada, often more than three-quarters, were found by our refugee board to be genuine refugees. Would the member advocate that if this bill is passed, Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugee claimants coming to a Canadian port of entry through the United States should be sent back to the United States?

Mr. Shields: I want to thank my hon. friend for the question.

He refers to coming to Canada to claim refugee status. I hope he is not inferring that this is the only place that anyone can apply for refugee status. They can apply for refugee status at any Canadian embassy or consulate anywhere in the world. We have many of them and I think he knows that. People coming from Guatemala or San Salvador have other places they can apply rather than the border. The United States I would consider a safe country under the refugee determination system. It has proven that in the past. It has been a very generous country in the past. Whether Guatemalans or Salvadorans would be accepted or sent back to the United States would depend on the individual applying at the border.

I must remind my friend there are other places. You do not have to come to Canada and put your foot on the soil to apply for refugee status. We have been very generous in the past and we are going to continue to be generous in the future. We are not going to turn away genuine refugees who are seeking asylum in this country. We are not going to do that. We are not a people who will do that.

What we are trying to stop and what we are going to stop are the bogus claims that are made. The member is very well aware of the bogus claims that are made right across this country by people who claim refugee status. They are economic refugees but they are not refugees under the definition of the United Nations.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I have a small comment and a question. This is a huge bill, about 100 pages long. I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary could indicate to this House whether it would deal with the problem of consultants and con artists who exploit the immigrants or the refugees and whether it would deal as well with conflict of interest.

For instance, in Calgary we had an immigration manager who left a couple of months ago and six weeks later he was already advertising that he was a consultant and he was manager of Calgary's immigration.

Could the parliamentary secretary answer the question?

Mr. Shields: I am not sure that I understand the question, as it was rather garbled.

All I would say is the bill itself is a complex one and all of the issues that he has brought forward are being dealt with in the bill itself and are going to be discussed in committee very thoroughly. We want to get it into committee because of the very detailed work that has to be done over the summer. All of those questions will be answered at that time clearly.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the House on the subject of immigration. I am certain that other members will agree with me when I say it is the single most frequently raised issue in many constituencies.

• (1400)

Over the past four years I have heard horrible stories of an immigration system that lacks compassion, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of both Canadian citizens and those who aspire to obtain it.

It is with great disappointment that I read the proposed changes to Canada's immigration law because it is crystal clear to all of us on this side of the House that the government is abandoning any compassion our immigration process may have had.

Mr. Speaker: I regret I must interrupt the hon. member. It being two o'clock the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

PROGRAMS ON CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Mr. Marcel Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation decision to help Canadians learn more about their parliamentary system by producing a series of television programs on the subject.

I think it is very important for the public to understand the inner workings of Parliament if they are to understand and appreciate our democratic system, often referred to as an example in other countries. I urge educational institutions to make these programs available, which will show how important it is to have a decision-making centre where everyone is free to express the views of the population he or she represents.

[*English*]

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the University College of Cape Breton, in collaboration with the Cape Breton Interagency Committee on Family Violence and the Cape Breton Coalition for Sexual Assault Services has been successful in the first level of an application for federal support in the establishment of one of the three community-based research centres on family violence and violence against women.

The UCCB is particularly well equipped to carry out research that is responsive to community needs through its BA program in community studies and through its department of extension and community affairs.

The UCCB research team lead by Dr. Joyce Mannette, Professors Marshall and Claener, working with community groups, social service workers, police, health care workers and others are eager for the opportunity to build further on the excellent work they are already undertaking.

I recommend to the Minister of National Health and Welfare in very strong language that the Government of Canada now honour this request and honour it forthwith.

* * *

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, June 20, the touring flags of the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs, Proud to be Canadian tour, were united once again in a very moving ceremony at the Terry Fox memorial site in Thunder Bay.

The two flags once flown above the Peace Tower have moved one from the east coast, the other from the west coast, through hundreds of communities across Canada in a symbolic way of uniting our country.

Along with the symbolic Peace Tower flags, there have been over 3 million signatures collected on 600 signature flags. The signatures are those of the young people of our country showing their love for a united Canada from sea to sea.

I commend all of those who participated in the tour with special commendation to the 16,000 Kinsmen and Kinettes across Canada whose efforts show that we truly are proud to be Canadian.

* * *

NCC GREENBELT LANDS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, in the 1960s the federal government had the foresight to protect environmentally sensitive land in the nation's capital with the establishment of the greenbelt lands.

The NCC is the federal agency responsible for these lands. The greenbelt was established to control urban sprawl, provide beauty to the nation's capital, assist municipalities in local improvements such as the cycling paths, the Stoney Swamp, the Pinhey Forest and the Log Farm. They have all added to the enhancement and beauty of the nation's capital.

The people of Nepean are most concerned that the NCC is moving away from that premise.

Does this government plan on continuing the *status quo* with the Nepean greenbelt lands or does the government plan on putting these lands up for sale?

The majority of us in Nepean clearly do not want the greenbelt chipped away for residential or commercial development.

Can this government assure the people of Nepean, the nation's capital and all Canadians that the greenbelt lands remain as the wonderful breathing space it was created for in the first place?

We want and we deserve and answer.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the federal government will model its Student Loans Program on Quebec's program, which is more efficient, according to senior officials from Treasury Board. According to deputy secretary of state Mark Rochon, Quebec's program is probably the best in Canada.

The federal government has accumulated $960 million in accounts receivable since it started its Student Loans Program in 1964, while Quebec has lost less than $10 million since it started its own program in 1966. Quebec only expunged four-tenths of 1 per cent of bad loans, which works out to $9.1 million. After $2 billion in loans was cashed on April 30, 1989, Quebec recovered most of

the loans because it is very careful about expunging accounts receivable.

The Canadian program has a poor record, to say the least: $55 million in accounts receivable will be expunged this year because of failure to trace bad loans. In 1992–93, accounts receivable will total $1 billion.

* * *

[*English*]

QUEBEC

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, in the July edition of *l'Actualité* editor Jean Paré writes:

"It is time to face the facts. If after 30 years of agitation for independence, nine years of *péquiste* government, a referendum, and 10 years of threats, Quebecers still have not separated, it is because they do not want to."

"Very simply, Quebecers love Canada, with a secret, perhaps slightly embarrassed affection. Behind their speeches and periodic bouts of anger, they are Canadians in their hearts. If this country displeased them as much as has been made out, they would have left long ago."

These conclusions are based on a CROP poll which shows that when posed the hard question, the real question: "Do you want Quebec to remain a province within Canada or become an independent country," only 34 per cent of Quebecers opt for independence and 54 per cent choose Canada.

It is important that this House take note of these facts. They teach us that we are not wasting our time looking for the best constitutional offers we can find for Quebec and Canada as a whole.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the recent evidence of growth should give all Canadians confidence in the economy. Many forecasters will be revising their earlier pessimistic forecasts to put them in a range the Minister of Finance has consistently referred to.

Contrary to speculation by some analysts of a double-dip recession, the recovery has now proceeded for four consecutive quarters. The Minister of Finance has consistently forecast that a growth rate for 1992–93 would be in the area of 2 to 2.3 per cent.

We believe he is right.

* * *

ARMENIA AND NAGORNO-KARABAGH

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, the recent events in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh have taken a serious turn for the worse. Recently, more than 500 people have disappeared and several hundred civilians, including children, have been injured or killed, all resulting from violent attacks by Azerbaijan.

Azeri motorized battalions, reinforced by heavy artillery and armoured vehicles are reportedly positioned for a large-scale offensive against Armenia. Sources have also reported that Azerbaijan's weapons are being supplied by Turkey, a member state of NATO.

I ask the Prime Minister to communicate Canada's profound concern over Turkish intervention in this conflict, and ask him to urge President Yeltsin of Russia, who still has a significant number of troops in the area, to secure the region and prevent any further Azeri attacks against the people of Armenia or Nagorno-Karabagh.

* * *

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): As this week has been designated Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week, I would like to underline how important it is for all of us to focus our attention and give priority to the occupational health and safety issues which are vital to the protection and preservation of the health of working people across Canada.

With the renewal of Canada's drug strategy, a new emphasis in employee assistance programming recognizes the increasing need to be concerned with substance abuse in the workplace. Labour Canada and Health and Welfare will be working in partnership with such organizations as the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and the Alliance for a Drug Free Canada to improve the ability of both business and labour to respond to a variety

of health issues that may manifest themselves at the work site.

There is clearly much yet to be done and I support the joint efforts of employers, employees and government in achieving the health and safety objectives toward which we are all working.

* * *

CANADIAN COMPETITIVENESS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that despite a year of prosperity initiative propaganda our ranking in the world competitiveness report has dropped from fifth to 11th, behind such industrial powerhouses as Ireland and Finland. Again, our real problem is not the workforce but the people who manage it. Our workers are ranked eighth, our managers fifteenth.

• (1410)

Worse still, in R and D we are 17th. Meanwhile, the actions of the federal government amount to little more than fiddling while the R and D infrastructure burns.

The Science Council has gone. The Prime Minister's promise to double spending on R and D is gone. All we have had is a massive cross-country prosperity show. The Science Council described these consultations as mere proxies for leadership and condemned the lack of government action.

Yes, Mr. Prime Minister, you were right about our being in the junior B league of competitiveness. Clearly what we need is major league management. It is time to fire the coach.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, the first quarter 1992 results for the economy released by Statistics Canada confirm the recovery is continuing and at an improved pace over that of the second half of last year.

In fact, at a 1.7 per cent annualized rate the output increase in the first quarter was stronger than all analysts had been expecting. Exports were the key source of strength in the quarter with real exports increasing over 15 per cent, reflecting the success of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

It flows as well from the improving competitiveness of the economy instilled by government policies in the restructuring taking place in Canadian businesses.

The evidence of growth in its composition should buoy confidence in the economy. Most forecasters will revise their 1992 annual average growth rates back up to the 2 to 2.3 per cent range. Some no doubt will go higher. This will put them back in the range the Minister of Finance has consistently referred to since Statistics Canada revised 1991 growth after the budget.

The undue pessimism of some forecasters such as the Conference Board will now surely stand in even greater contrast. We are clearly on the right track. We must stay the course. Clearly the Minister of Finance and his predecessor have served Canada well.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, Rudy Wilczek, my constituent, and 25 of his co-workers at Revenue Canada's Pearson airport customs and excise office, postal division, will have a hard time celebrating Canada's 125th birthday on July 1. They will be waiting for the unemployment office to open on July 2 to join the growing list of unemployed people in Toronto.

As of July 1 the customs and excise branch will hand off responsibility for collecting duties on international mail to Canada Post. Canada Post has retained employment agencies and a few students to do the work formerly done by customs and excise officers. The employment agencies will cost more than the officers did.

Worse yet, Revenue Canada, which for months has promised to find jobs for these displaced workers in other divisions issued lay-off notices to them effective July 1. Every time this group of Canadians watches one of the government's expensive feel-good ads for Canada's 125th birthday, they, like many unemployed people in Toronto, cannot help but feel the painful irony of this government.

* * *

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of all members of the House the seventh annual Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week. It began yesterday and continues until this coming Saturday, June 27.

We are moving toward an economy which is becoming increasingly advanced technologically. Consequently, we have to pay more attention to safety and health in the work place. The education and retraining of workers in response to these rapid changes must always incorporate the highest levels of safety awareness.

Strong emphasis must be placed on learning in the modern world of work. Accordingly, this year's theme is "Planning: Your Investment in Health and Safety". Business and labour share a joint responsibility to ensure that all activities related to the work place are studied in a spirit of co-operation. In this way, avoidable accidents can be reduced significantly.

On the occasion of Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week, I ask my hon. friends to bring the challenges of this issue to their constituents' attention. In so doing, we may all one day be able to point with pride to the commitment which has made us the leading nation in the care and protection of all our workers.

* * *

[*Translation*]

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, in this 125th year of Confederation, it is important more than ever before to celebrate Canada Day, even in the current political climate. There are a number of reasons why we should be optimistic. As we all know, Canada is an exceptionally beautiful country, endowed with exceptional riches. We should never forget that Canada is a democratic society. In a world torn by hatred, persecution and fanaticism, Canadians have always been known for their tolerance. This tradition helped us build a country on half a continent that has become a symbol to all of peace, prosperity, comfort and freedom, so much so that last year we were ranked by the United Nations as the best place in the world in which to live.

In fact, if we look at the news, we realize that our problems are minimal, compared with those endured by most of humankind. By building on our traditions, we will be able to solve our problems and offer a better life to all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

VOYAGEURS '92

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, today's *Vancouver Sun* contains an article questioning the success of the Voyageurs '92 program. The article draws a damning picture of a last minute program lacking adequate support, organization and community interest. There was a lot of negative and a lot of bunk.

I will tell you about the positive. The Fraser Valley Broadcasters, the Metro Valley Newspaper Group and the *Times* joined together in a united community media effort to get the Voyageurs off the ground in my riding, and what a job they did.

We have two groups heading off to Pontiac, Gatineau and Labelle tomorrow and are they excited.

We have already seen two groups come to the Fraser Valley and they had a great time. The Sto:lo Nation and Tribal Council put on a cultural extravaganza including, dancing, food, a visit to a First Nations police training centre, a tour of the valley and Vancouver. The groups rode the gondola across Hell's Gate on free passes. The officers at CFB Chilliwack took the kids water skiing on Cultus Lake. There was a trip to Victoria, there was an all-night block party and a barbeque to close things off.

We have churches, veterans associations, schools and service clubs like the Hope Rotary and Lions all working together. This does not sound very negative to me. It sounds like the community got together to celebrate Canada and being Canadian.

A lasting impression was made that will do more for Canadian unity and personal development than all the negative media in the world.

Voyageurs '92, making great Canadian history yet again.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Throughout the worst recession since the Depression, the government has repeated incessantly that it was not to blame. It repeated that the recession was caused by the world situation and that other countries were also performing poorly.

However, in its 1992 report on competitiveness, the World Economic Forum showed that Canada's competitiveness has fallen from fifth to 11th place. The truth is that Canada's economy fell faster and deeper than in any other comparable country.

How can the Prime Minister deny his responsibility and deny the fact that Canada has the worst growth in goods and services of the industrialized world?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that we have experienced a weak world economy, I think everyone should be encouraged by the first quarter results that have just been revealed today which show there has been a growth of 1.7 per cent in the Gross Domestic Product which indicates that there have been four consecutive quarters of positive growth. I think all Canadians should be heartened by that development. At least we certainly take comfort over here, notwithstanding the fact that we would like to see that growth more robust than it actually is.

With respect to the world competitiveness report, I would remind the hon. member that the data on which this report made its finding is stale dated. It is basically based on last year's evidence when Canada's inflation rate was 6.2 per cent, which was the worst inflation rate in the industrialized world. That has improved to 1.3 per cent.

The hon. member should also take cognizance of the fact that the government has embarked upon a very aggressive competitiveness and prosperity initiative, some of which we are seeing in the growth figures today.

Mr. Tobin: An advertising campaign.

Mr. Mazankowski: We are seeing a 2.5 per cent improvement in productivity in the first quarter of this year.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada confirmed what 1.5 million Canadians have known for the last two years, that this has been the worst and the deepest recession since the Great Depression.

After winning the 1984 election, the Conservative government launched a budget.

• (1420)

In the government's first budget eight years ago, it said its plan was to foster higher investment, greater innovation and increased international competitiveness. Eight years after announcing that plan, Canada has gone into a free fall from fifth to 11th place in international competitiveness.

In the same budget, the Conservatives said: "It is an ongoing priority of this government to encourage much improved research and development performance in Canada".

How does the Prime Minister explain that eight years after this promise, Canada ranked last in research and development among industrialized nations?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is categorically and absolutely wrong when she suggests that this downturn and this recession has been the worst since the 1930s.

She should know, and I will tell her what statistics will reveal. The peak to trough decline in 1981 was something in the order of 5.3 to 5.5 per cent. The peak to trough decline in this recession is something in the order of 3.6 per cent. That is a remarkable difference.

In so far as her point with regard to competitiveness and productivity, I remind the hon. member to look at the data that has been released today. She will find that the recovery is led by merchandise trade, by export trade and by improvements in our productivity. That should be good news to all Canadians.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, his own document from Statistics Canada says: "This is the first time since the Great Depression that the economy has shrunk two years in a row".

It's report card time across this country and the World Economic Forum has issued a failing grade to the Government of Canada. We ranked last in balance of trade. Canada ranks last on export market diversification. We ranked last in research and development. We ranked second last in merchandising training. We ranked second last in manufacturing. We ranked third last in the industrialized world in competitiveness.

How can you claim that your competitive agenda is succeeding when all world indications show that Canada is failing the challenge of competitive economy?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe the rhetoric of the hon. member because she was in the House last week. She would know that merchandise trade has improved.

As a matter of fact, exports have increased by 15 per cent. That is one of the reasons why we have had a 1.7 per cent increase in Gross Domestic Product in the first quarter of this year. Merchandise trade exports are at a record all-time high for the last two or three months. That is because we have a free trade agreement and because most of that trade is being done with the United States.

It is because we have taken initiatives to improve and enhance productivity and enhance competitiveness. That is why we are producing such good results that will be translated into jobs and further economic opportunity.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, the latest leaked draft of the North American free trade agreement shows that Mexico will not capitulate as Canada shamefully has to U.S. energy demands. Mexico, unlike Canada, will not be forced to make up for U.S. shortages if there is a North American shortage.

Does this government not find it thoroughly embarrassing and thoroughly humiliating that Mexico has cut a better deal on energy than Canada?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is somewhat outdated in terms of what is likely to be in the energy package.

He is looking at or quoting Mexico's early draft. He will find that in terms of the negotiating text that we are now considering there are areas of disagreement. We have no final text. In that final text he will find that we are doing quite well in terms of resolving the energy differences between Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, under this text, which was apparently negotiated two weeks ago, if there are any energy shortages, Mexico will not be forced to divert scarce supplies to the United States, but Canada will.

If the government cannot negotiate a more favourable energy agreement, an agreement which is at least as favourable as Mexico is obtaining under this deal, if it cannot do that, will this government refuse to sign the North American free trade agreement?

An hon. member: Once again Peterson has his facts wrong.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): I will repeat what I said before, Mr. Speaker.

It is very clear that my hon. friend is looking at an early draft which was not a Canadian draft. I would also like to remind him that there is such a thing as the International Energy Agreement which a previous government signed on behalf of Canada.

An hon. member: Which happened to be Liberal.

Mr. Winegard: It happened to be a Liberal government. There is no question at all, we do not have a final text on energy. Our opportunities are to open up the Mexican market for Canadian goods, including energy.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The minister responding for the Minister for International Trade has just said: "Well we are all dealing with early drafts of the Mexican and NAFTA talks". Perhaps if members of this House and Canadians knew what this

government was negotiating instead of being told: "Well nc, after it is signed", we could have an intelligent debate on what is in the NAFTA agreement.

Based on the reports today, it seems clear that this government is intent on taking a bad deal, the Canada–U.S. trade deal, and making it worse in the NAFTA deal by reducing our ability to control Canada's petrochemical energy industry, giving the U.S. more access to our energy resources and reducing Canada's ability to effectively conserve and manage our own energy resources.

Mexicans have had the guts to stand up and say: "No, you will not touch our energy resources". Why does Canada back down and why is Canada giving away our energy resources when Mexico refuses to do so?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the North American free trade agreement will not tie Canada's energy resources closer to the United States. That is another misconception being promulgated by the New Democratic Party that never wanted a free trade agreement in the first place because it is afraid of trade.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The New Democratic Party is not afraid of trade. We want fair trade. The minister is afraid of giving a real answer and letting Canadians know exactly what is going on in these trade talks.

[*Translation*]

The minister knows the Canadian Constitution gives the provinces control over their natural resources. However, it seems the proposed trilateral agreement would include areas under provincial jurisdiction, including that of provincial power companies.

Before going any further, does the federal government intend to consult the provinces about their provincial power companies?

[*English*]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and discussions with the provinces all through the free trade agreement negotiations. The provinces have met with the Minister for International Trade from time to time and they have met with the negotiating team from time to time. There is no question at all that the provinces know exactly where we are going and trying to go in this negotiation.

As far as energy is concerned, I do not understand why the New Democratic Party does not want improved opportunities for Canadians, particularly those from the west, to sell exploration production techniques all to do with the petrochemical industry.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the Acting Prime Minister.

It is clear that in the draft that is available, through the news media not through this House of the NAFTA agreements, this government is signing an agreement which appears to extend into areas of provincial jurisdiction, namely to provincially-owned electrical utilities. There is no exemption cited in this chapter for provincial electrical utilities.

I again ask the Acting Prime Minister: Is it this government's intention to encroach on the constitutional right of provinces to control their own resources and utilities, yes or no? Will this government be clear that in fact provinces will have a say in any area that will affect their jurisdiction?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, that is why we have been consulting with the provinces right from the beginning, so that we will not do anything outside of the provincial jurisdiction. We want the provinces to be onside with us. We have made special attempts to have them onside with us. There is no question at all that we want an agreement that will be of benefit to all Canadians and of benefit to those provinces that have the resources.

* * *

• (1430)

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The minister will know that on the great northern peninsula of Newfoundland, and indeed including western Newfoundland, there has been a 67 per cent decline reaching 71,000 metric tons in cod landings over the last seven years and representing the longest and deepest

decline in gulf cod landings recorded since 1960 by the federal department of fisheries.

The cod industry in western Newfoundland is in crisis. I want to ask the minister of fisheries what action the Government of Canada is going to take to rebuild the gulf cod stocks and what action, both immediate term and long term, the Government of Canada is going to take to assist the fishermen and fish plant workers who are being dislocated, displaced economically, because of this crisis in the gulf cod stocks.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to manage the gulf fishery in accordance with the advice which we receive from CAFSAC and our Canadian scientists.

There has been a considerable decrease in the total allowable catch of the cod stocks in the gulf in the last several years, and in accordance with the scientific advice the total allowable catches have been reduced.

There is not any immediate crisis that I know of in that particular stock at the present time, with the exception that we have had to restrict mobile gear vessels because of the size of the cod that were being caught and because of some other activities which had to be discouraged.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, this member wants to assure the House that I want to work with the minister and with the government, but it is difficult to do that when the minister says there is not any crisis, when landings have gone from over 90 million pounds in 1982 down to 30-odd million pounds in 1991, and when there has been a 67 per cent decline in cod landings.

I want to quote to the minister from a report done for him by his department in December 1990, by William Steele of the program co-ordination and economics in the gulf region office. The report says in its conclusion, and I quote from the minister's own report: "The cod industry in western Newfoundland is in a crisis. The fixed gear fishery in western Newfoundland is at a point of no return if there is no strategy to rebuild the cod stocks in the near future".

That report is 24 months old and the rate of decline has continued over the last 24 months. What has the minister done since December 1990 to halt this crisis in decline in cod stocks? What is he doing now to rebuild those cod stocks and to assist the fishing families who are severely affected by this crisis; yes, a crisis in the cod fishery?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, there are no new figures being produced by the hon. member today.

Ms. Copps: There is no new fish either.

Mr. Crosbie: If I am allowed to answer I will answer. There is nothing new in the figures that have been announced by the hon. gentleman today. These total allowable catches were set some months ago based on the scientific advice we received from CAFSAC, from the Canadian scientists.

Because the hon. member rises in this House and shouts across the House does not make a situation a crisis. The cod stocks in the gulf are certainly cause for worry. Small cod were being caught in large numbers which had to be stopped, particularly by mobile gear vessels. The facts have been known for months and there is no sudden crisis today in the gulf.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, for some reason the minister is choosing today to downplay this problem. He knows that fishery in the gulf and the Atlantic fishery generally are in an absolute tailspin.

He has seen the numbers for 3PN and for 4R. They are even worse than the numbers for northern cod, as bad as they are. I say to him that no other industry in Canada is being so pulverized. This is the prairie drought of the 1930s.

People in his riding and mine are losing their homes. They are having their cars repossessed. They cannot buy the groceries. They need some money now. What is he going to do about it?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, we all know with reference to the northern cod stock that in the province of Newfoundland in particular there is a serious problem in connection with the fishery. We also know other stocks are under heavy pressure.

There is no sudden emergency that has just occurred with reference to other fisheries. There are difficulties in other fisheries as well. We have brought in programs, as we did last year, to meet those difficulties. I refer to the

ice compensation program and others that were brought in last year.

Never in the history of Canada since Newfoundland joined it have so many programs been brought in to deal with problems in the fishery. They will continue to be brought in if the problems continue. It certainly seems likely with reference to the northern cod stock.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, all the reports tell the minister the contrary. We tell him the contrary. The fishermen's catches tell him the contrary. If he wants to paint a picture and say it has never been so good, if he enjoys that thought, let him get his jollies from it.

Will the minister answer the question? Fishermen and plant workers in Lawn and St. Lawrence with whom I met over the weekend and people along the southwest coast and the northeast coast in Nova Scotia are all hurting. They are really hurting. They are all asking the same question, and I am going to put it to the minister now, much as they put it to me.

When is the minister going to make a move? They are not talking about a song and dance to say how rosy the picture is. When is he going to make a move, a substantive move? When will he do something for those people at least to keep the wolf from the door for them?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion the hon. gentlemen is not serving the people he represents very well when he tries to exaggerate like this and when he deliberately distorts what I have said.

Has anybody else in the House heard me say how rosy the fishery picture is? Did I say that today?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Crosbie: Did I say today that never in history has the fishery been as good?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Crosbie: This is the kind of exaggeration that does a disservice to this serious problem in Newfoundland which we are attempting to deal with and which will not be helped by purported hysteria by the hon. gentlemen opposite.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence.

A woman soldier at CFB Comox has been harassed by superior officers. She has been called a "sexretary", a "biker mama", and asked about her dating habits. She has been subjected to other comments that I cannot even repeat in the House of Commons.

Her allegations of sexual harassment were inadequately addressed through military channels and now she is taking her case to the Human Rights Commission, but she is still being harassed. Her job has been threatened.

What will the minister do now to protect her while the matter is being investigated?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of the situation. It is an extremely unfortunate one. While I cannot comment on the individual's situation because indeed she has both redress of grievances in the system as well as a case before the Human Rights Commission, directions have gone out to the base commander to deal with this issue.

I understand certain actions have been taken, but there will be a further investigation to make sure. No woman should have to work in an environment which is poisoned as a result of sexual harassment.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response, but since this woman went public the women's centre near the base has been inundated with further stories of harassment on military bases; in fact they are coming from all around the province now. One of these women herself is being threatened with a court martial.

The Robichaud human rights case ruled against DND several years ago and said it was a responsibility of DND to provide a work place free of sexual harassment.

What is the minister prepared to do now to stop this harassment and protect women members of the military?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise my hon. colleague that indeed there is a very good policy in place within the Department of National Defence dealing both with the military side and the civilian side.

Of course a policy is only as good as the way in which it is implemented. That is why the chief of the defence staff has taken this issue very seriously. We have incorporated into all of our training exercises for our base commanders just as recently as two weeks ago further information and education on how to provide harassment-free work places. This will be ongoing and every effort is being made to educate individuals about their rights as well as supervisors about their responsibilities to deal with the issue effectively.

* * *

• (1440)

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The government's constitutional plan seems far from certain. While the minister has refused to declare which of the many options he and the government prefer in order to overcome the current impasse, the clerk of the Privy Council is now embarking on a national tour of provincial capitals while the associate clerk is advocating a constitution based on the Belgian model, which would have serious repercussions for our national government role as well as linguistic rights.

I ask the minister quite simply: What is the government's constitutional blueprint and what is the government's action plan that will guide its deliberation in the next and important few days?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, we have made considerable progress on a Canada round of negotiations.

We have progress yet to make on four major issues. One is the Senate. A second relates to the amending formula. A third is to ensure that we have means to bring down barriers to trade in Canada. A fourth is to ensure there is agreement on a package relating to aboriginal Canadians.

At my instruction, the clerk of the Privy Council and other senior officials are meeting today in Halifax with senior officials of the Governments of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

They will meet in Calgary tomorrow with senior officials of the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and later I believe in Ontario with the Government of Ontario, not to negotiate but to determine where people are on each of those major points.

Then the Prime Minister and I, tomorrow night probably, will come to a view as to the next step we would recommend in this constitutional process. We very much hope that it will be possible for us to achieve agreement among governments.

That is our goal. That is what we are seeking to do. If we can get co-operation from enough governments across the country, as I hope we can, that is the way we will proceed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister.

I think Parliament has a right to know exactly what the federal government's plans are, and it expects the government to be clear about legislation that is very important to all Canadians.

Why will the minister not reveal the next stage in the federal government's plan? Will there be a First Ministers' Conference? Will Parliament be recalled to consider a new agreement or a referendum? Does this government really know when we can expect an end to this constitutional dilemma?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think a number of things are clear. First of all, sometime after mid-July, the Government of Quebec wants to start public hearings and consideration by the committee which is to examine what the Quebec

legislation refers to as Canada's offers. One way or another, the Government of Canada must prepare a Canadian position.

Actually, our government would prefer to have an agreement supported by the other governments in Canada. That is what we are seeking now. However, if it is impossible to get an agreement with the other provinces, then the Parliament of Canada will have to get ready to prepare proposals for consideration by the Government of Quebec.

For the time being, I can give no indication whether there will be another multilateral conference to seek an agreement by the various governments. If it is feasible, if there is a very real possibility an agreement can be reached, then of course the Government of Canada will convene another ministerial meeting to finalize such an agreement.

* * *

[*English*]

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

We learned this weekend that the federal government commissioned just one independent technical study before it committed $80 million in loan guarantees to the owners of the Westray coal mine.

We also learned that the energy department bureaucrat who conducted the review spent—and I want to underline spent—a meagre 18 hours reviewing safety and other issues at this mine.

Why was the Government of Canada content to spend only 18 hours reviewing the safety aspects before pouring $80 million into the Westray coal mine?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member already has the documentation. It is very clear that the CANMET report, which is the report to which he is referring, was a study of several other reports that had already been done and it was a report that concluded that the mine was technically feasible. It concluded that on the basis of at least three other large reports that were done by consultants.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the minister is contradicting his colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism somewhat. He said in the House on June 5, and I quote: "We did further studies of a technical type in order to make sure that our loan guarantee was reasonable".

We now know exactly the technical study which was done. It was an 18-hour review consisting of nine pages authorizing $80 million for the Westray coal mine.

Again I ask the question of the Deputy Prime Minister. Why was the Government of Canada content with only an 18-hour review, a nine-page summary of information with no further technical studies done to pour $80 million into the Westray coal mine? Why was there such gross negligence by the Government of Canada?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows, because he has had the documentation available to him for some time, that every party in the negotiation had its own interest. We had to be able to insure the bank loan.

We had the CANMET review. Eighteen months after the CANMET review we provided financial assistance for this project. ISTC undertook detailed economic and financial investigations of this project. The Bank of Nova Scotia undertook detailed technical, economic and financial investigations. The Government of Nova Scotia undertook to ensure that this project could be done, was technically feasible and could be done safely.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Many Canadians agree that Canada has too many military bases and that military bases must be closed.

The panel formed to provide guidance for the process has recommended that the decisions for closing bases be established on the basis of national security and not on considerations of regional development.

When future closures of military bases are made, will these closures be in line with the recommendations of this committee?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, the work which that committee did was excellent and the report has now gone to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs which has been hearing witnesses on it.

We will obviously await the recommendations of that committee. Our own department is reviewing the recommendations, as will other departments as it has implications for them as well.

Once this process is completed I hope we will have in place a good process by which we can evaluate the requirements for future bases. Until that process is in place, the minister has already indicated that there would be no base closures until that matter is finalized.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the President of the Treasury Board.

As the minister knows, the Minister of Public Works brought forward a submission to refurbish St. Andrew's lock and dam and the submission was put over for further review. The minister also knows that the most recent safety report on the bridge states that the best case scenario is that the bridge would have to be closed by the end of this calendar year if not sooner.

With the greatest respect, I would like to ask the minister, what further review is necessary, what timeframe has been assigned this review and when will this issue once again be reviewed by Treasury Board?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. I appreciate his concern.

We are reviewing the over-all program of public works. In the absence of the Minister of Public Works I would like to say that this particular department is monitoring very attentively the conditions of the structure and it is carrying out the emergency repairs as they are needed.

That being said, we are also aware that there will be ongoing discussions with the Government of Manitoba and they will discuss the future of this facility.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of energy and it concerns the Westray mine.

• (1450)

Given that of the thousands of pages of documents tabled in this House, the only ones referring to a report by and for the federal government relate to the so-called 18-hour report, and given that there were a number of requests filed through access to information for the release of materials on the federal role in the Westray mine, will the minister assure the House that any information released will automatically be tabled in the House or with the Clerk of the House if the House is not in session?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, once again there seems to be some implication that the CANMET report was not a significant report. The CANMET report surely was significant because it reviewed at least three major technical papers having to do with whether this mine was feasible or not.

In terms of tabling information we are, of course, prepared under the Access to Information Act to look at whatever is available.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker my supplementary question is for the same minister.

It is rather interesting that there is such heavy emphasis put on the CANMET report, when of the approximately 1,000 pages which were tabled, a mere nine concerned the CANMET report.

Given that Justice Richard, appointed by the Nova Scotia government to examine the Westray mine disaster, has indicated that he does not have jurisdiction to examine the federal government's role at Westray, will the minister explain what the process will be to allow for a full examination of the role of senior public servants opposed to the mine, the involvement of the Minister of

Public Works in pushing for the mine and of the involvement of the Prime Minister?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, both Judge Richard and the inquiry council have said that they are satisfied with the mandate of the inquiry. They have indicated they will inquire into the federal involvement in the Westray mine where they believe it is necessary. Of course, we will co-operate with the inquiry. We have always said we would co-operate with the inquiry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

This year, the Government of Canada will expunge $55 million in accounts receivable because of its failure to trace people who default on their loans under the Student Loans Program. We are talking about $55 million in taxpayers' money.

Will the minister establish a line of authority this year for the recovery of student loans, because today, the banks, the universities and a number of students could not care less about taxpayers' money?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that I have already started discussions with the provinces, students and other groups for the purpose of improving the process.

There are problems with the program. We are aware of the problems and we know the rate of loan defaults, but I have also started negotiations with financial institutions to develop a new financial structure for the program, in order to reduce payment defaults and make the program more efficient.

I can give all members of this House the assurance that this thorough review of the program is progressing very well and that by the end of the year we will be able to make an announcement in this respect.

[*English*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Last week the Solicitor General told us that occasionally he is required to be aware of the names of former CSIS informants on a need to know basis. However, he did not say anything about previous solicitors general or their political staff.

Will the minister tell this House whether the CSIS targeting committee was ever forced to permit the presence of political staff at its meetings between 1986 and 1990, thereby allowing the names of informants to be disclosed to these staff?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, naturally I am not in a position to say what happened under previous solicitors general. I have no reason to believe there has been any change in the process that would lead to the conclusion my hon. friend has made.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree today to assist us on this, to provide to the subcommittee on national security the rules governing informants and will he assure Canadians now that information about informants has not been used for any political purpose by his office or by the offices of members of cabinet?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. friend that if he wishes to enter into discussions with the Security Intelligence Review Committee on that particular matter, I am sure its members can apprise him of whatever information is available which it is possible to reveal.

* * *

MEDICARE

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Immediately after last week's meeting of the federal and provincial ministers on medicare, the minister publicly questioned the high cost of providing medicare to the elderly.

Could the minister please indicate to the House why he has singled out the elderly? Does he not understand that these people have paid for medicare all their working lives so they would not have to worry about some government in their future deciding they are too old to be taken care of?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, that is quite an extension to what I said last Thursday.

I will explain to my colleague that first, figures were provided by the province of Manitoba minister which showed that 50 per cent of the cost to the health care system is due to costs for people over 70 years of age. But I said, and he should know this, that there is no way the health care system which we have today, based on the five principles, will not apply to senior citizens. It means that any request for care by a senior citizen under the Canada Health Act will be provided. There is no reason to make any cuts.

We must consider the appropriateness of the ways and means we use money at all levels, particularly at this one. It does not mean that the ministers said there would be cuts. They said they will make an analysis of expenses to see the way to do it.

I repeat what I said, I confirm and I will always say that the five principles will apply, particularly to senior citizens.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister. The minister will know that when he introduces facts like 50 per cent of the cost goes to people over the age of 70, those people are sitting there listening to the minister speak and are very concerned about whether or not they are going to be under additional pressure.

The minister will also know that he has a responsibility to all Canadians under the Canada Health Act, despite pressures coming from the provinces, to defend medicare for everyone.

I would ask the minister to assure the House that he is not about to introduce any amendments to increase the so-called flexibility to the provinces.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, I never said that.

May I ask the member something? How does he think the senior citizens consider a member who, when the minister said something is not true, repeats time after time that the minister said that? What do we call that kind of member?

* * *

[*Translation*]

FRENCH-LANGUAGE COLLEGES IN ONTARIO

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. Last week, the Government of Ontario announced at the convention of the *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario* that the provincial government intended to help fund two French-language colleges in Ontario. When will the federal government also announce that it is taking part?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, negotiations not only with the Government of Ontario but also with other governments are going well. Agreements in principle have been negotiated. Funding, specifically the amounts to be allocated, is being discussed. The government will make an announcement on this in a reasonable time, further to the discussions that have taken place so far.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, there is great concern in the francophone community in Ontario about the fact that some 50 per cent of those who participate at the elementary and secondary level drop out at the post-secondary level. They are anxious to know when this government is going to make its announcement that it has committed itself, as has the Ontario government, to the quick initiation of these two colleges.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, negotiations have been ongoing for six to eight months with Ontario, as they have with other provinces. They are going very well and I think we have reached an agreement in principle on all the issues. The

Government of Ontario must recognize that the provincial governments, not just Ontario but B.C., Saskatchewan and Alberta, have to introduce legislation to make something like this happen. We are talking about the monetary side of the equation. Negotiations are proceeding. In due time we will make the announcement.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1500)

[*English*]

CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR

ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to lay on the table copies, in both official languages, of the annual report of the Correctional Investigator for the year 1990–91.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT ON EXPORT OF MILITARY GOODS FROM CANADA

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have two tablings today. Pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the second annual report on the export of military goods from Canada.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN COMPANIES OPERATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

SIXTH REPORT ON ADMINISTRATION OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF ETHICS

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table in the House the sixth report on the administration of the code of ethics for the employment practices of Canadian companies operating in South Africa and on compliance therewith.

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 96 petitions.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

ENVIRONMENT

FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Yvon Côté (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as vice-chairman of the Standing Committee on the Environment, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on the Environment on the thinning and depletion of the ozone layer.

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee studied the depletion of the ozone layer. In this report, it expresses its concerns about ozone depletion and its effect on health.

I also want to point out how pleased I am that all members and all parties co-operated in writing this report.

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

* * *

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

FOURTH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), may I present, in both official languages, the report on the fourth Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar as a delegate from the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Allow me to record our gratitude to the CPA branch of the Trinidad and Tobago group for their sponsorship of this worth-while seminar. The benefits that accrue from the exchange of views and information by parliamentari-

ans from across the Commonwealth demonstrates the value of maintaining Commonwealth relationships.

* * *

JUSTICE AND THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

10TH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.

In accordance with its order of reference of Tuesday, March 31, 1992, your committee has considered the draft regulations on gun control and has agreed to report it with 37 recommendations.

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

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STATISTICS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–356, an act to amend the Statistics Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, this bill attempts to establish a status for Statistics Canada which is more independent than the present position it has. This desire to achieve greater independence for the agency comes after attempts by the finance department to pressure Statistics Canada to make changes in withdrawals in a study which Statistics Canada presented earlier this past year. It is for this reason that I think the need arises to establish more clearly the independence from government pressure of Statistics Canada so it will be able to report directly, clearly, and honestly to the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I should advise the House that the hon. member for Essex—Windsor was out of time in the filing of material. However, with consent I would be very pleased to proceed. Do we have consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Langdon moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

PETITIONS

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present two petitions from many people in the riding of Beaver River, from Bonnyville, Ardmore, Medley, Grand Centre and Cold Lake.

These people recognize the Proud to be Canadian project that was undertaken by the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada. The flags travelled across the country and they, along with these petitions, were sent down to celebrate that Canada is a wonderful country.

The petitioners support the Proud to be Canadian project as an opportunity to nurture a positive, life–long relationship with our heritage and our flag, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

WATER DIVERSION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of the North Thompson Valley who point out their concern regarding a plan to divert water from the North Thompson River near Valemount into the California area. The petitioners call upon the Canadian government to prohibit any notion of this type of interbasin water transfer.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of veterans from Kamloops, British Columbia. They call on the government to maintain the current level of services provided to veterans through the Veterans Independence Program and to assure there is no increase in charges to veterans for board and lodging in institutions for long–term care.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on another matter, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to ensure that if a referendum is called regarding the Constitution that it be binding upon Parliament although they realize this is impossible technically but simply to reflect the views of the petitioners.

HOUSING

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on another topic, the petitioners from Kamloops call on the government to reconsider the decision not to proceed with more co-operative housing. They feel this provides adequate housing, accessible for people who normally have difficulty accessing decent housing.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from Simcoe Centre area, which humbly prays and calls upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government.

CHINESE HEAD TAX

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to present.

The first one which is quite detailed comes from a large number of Canadians of Chinese origin and concerns the Chinese head tax. The petitioners state that Chinese immigrants came to Canada in the early part of this century and had to pay a racist head tax. Some 81,000 Chinese immigrants paid approximately $23 million, a sum worth over $1 billion today. That was followed by the Chinese Immigration Exclusion Act, which was not repealed until 1947, and which prohibited virtually all Chinese immigration. Both these policies had a very negative impact on Canadians of Chinese ancestry, led to a bachelor society, severely hindered—

• (1510)

Mr. Speaker: I think the House is very aware of the matter the hon. member is raising but we are limited in remarks made at the presentation of a petition. I would ask the hon. member to proceed with the petition itself.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the petitioners ask for an all-party resolution to consider this matter. They call on the Government of Canada to provide symbolic financial redress of $10,000 for the head tax certificate, community financial redress and post-commemorative plaques regarding the Chinese Canadians who worked on the railways. They ask Parliament to pledge again to ensure such injustices will never happen again, including reform of the charter of rights, and in particular to respect section 33.

That was my first petition. I have several which I will combine into one although they are different.

Mr. Speaker: Do I have assurance they are on a different subject?

HOUSING

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the three petitions are on the subject of co-op housing. They are quite different petitions but I will combine the essence of them.

These petitioners are from throughout Vancouver and B.C. who are very concerned the federal government has discontinued the co-op housing program and are reducing the CMHC programs. They urge the federal government to reinstate co-operative housing.

RWANDA

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition from a number of residents of the cities of Toronto, Scarborough, Downsview, and North York.

The petitioners are concerned about the military dictatorship in Rwanda which has lasted for 30 years. The pass laws, the only ones in the world similar to South Africa's pass laws, refuse to let two million exiled Rwandans return.

They urge Parliament to urge the Canadian government to apply pressure on the Rwandan regime to immediately stop killing innocent Rwandans, to urge the Canadian government to stop economic aid and other forms of assistance to the current Rwandan regime, and to urge the Canadian government to support the European Community resolution on Rwanda issued on February 20, 1992.

CFB CORNWALLIS

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I too rise at this time to petition the House on behalf of my constituents and a few others from outside of

South West Nova who are in support of the establishment of the peacekeeping training program in Canada.

They call upon Parliament to maintain CFB Cornwallis as a multi-purpose training facility and to establish the proposed peacekeeping training program at CFB Cornwallis.

TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my first petition deals with cuts to education, training, retraining, research and development, with a special emphasis on the reductions of transfer payments and the 3 per cent tax on student loans.

These petitioners request that the government reverse its policies because they believe they are contrary to increased effectiveness and enhanced productivity.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my other petition deals with the goods and services tax on books and reading materials. These petitioners point out there has never been any such tax in our country. They believe it is contrary to the basic principles of a democratic society and they ask this tax be removed.

INCOME TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my other petition deals with fair taxation. The petitioners point out that certain people get tax credits with respect to child care facilities while others do not. They believe there are a number of tax measures that are discriminatory. They ask for a simpler and fairer tax system.

[*Translation*]

HERITAGE LANGUAGES PROGRAM

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present several petitions bearing 1,850 signatures.

The petitioners humbly declare that for nearly 20 years the federal government has had a policy of multiculturalism based on preserving and promoting heritage languages and that the federal government affirms that the preservation and promotion of heritage languages should be supported and encouraged.

For these reasons, they humbly ask the Parliament of Canada to restore the full financial support for the Heritage Languages Program of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, which the government reduced in its budget of February 1990.

[*English*]

PENSIONS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians from Vancouver and Burnaby, British Columbia; St. Lawrence and South River, Newfoundland and many areas in between which states:

"We your petitioners draw to the attention of the House the following: That hundreds of thousands of Canadian senior citizens live below the poverty line; that over 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty; that the 37 cent increase in Old Age Security pensions in April 1992 is inadequate to meet the needs of Canadian seniors; that it is desirable for all Canadians to provide senior citizens with the necessary support to live their lives as independently as possible; that the federal government has a primary responsibility to ensure the adequacy of seniors' pensions. Therefore, your petitioners call upon Parliament to urge that the government ensure that Canadian Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens."

* * *

OFFICIAL REPORT

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, after reviewing my remarks in the House as recorded in *Hansard* on June 12 of this year I note that the third sentence in paragraph 2 on page 11971 is incorrect and should be replaced by the following:

> It seems incredible to me that someone in Mrs. Bisset's case could not share on a credit-splitting basis the pension of her husband after 35 years of marriage, 28.5 years as the wife of a military officer and the other 6.5 while her husband served in the Public Service. A maximum of 35 years of contributions to the pension plan was paid up prior to the separation and divorce. As you know, when a wife is divorced from her husband she is disentitled to the benefits acquired under the marriage.

Thank you very much for the opportunity of correcting the record.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 315 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 315—**Mrs. Mitchell:**

What is the total estimated cost of the special production in conjunction with the Just For Laughs organization, of a humorous history of Canada announced in April, 1992 and how much of this cost will be borne directly or indirectly by the government, and through which departments or agencies?

Hon. Henry Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): The special production in conjunction with the Just for Laughs organization is privately funded.

According to information available, Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board and the Department of Communications' Cultural Initiatives Program have not been solicited to participate directly or indirectly in the funding of this project, defined as a humorous history of Canada, which was set up in collaboration with the organization Just for Laughs.

[*English*]

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

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

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave pursuant to Standing Order 52 to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of a debate on a matter of great urgency, namely the crisis in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador and other parts of Atlantic Canada.

S. O. 52

With the House of Commons about to recess for the summer in 24 hours, today presents the last opportunity for there to be a proper debate on the crisis in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador specifically, but also in Atlantic Canada.

I ask the Speaker to give consideration to this request so that an emergency debate may be held today.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I believe you realize this is on exactly the same issue. We believe this is an emergency situation with the collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery and the devastation, not just to the resource itself but to the people living in those areas, particularly Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and the need for some emergency action to protect the resource itself and also to deal with the problems of the people living there.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte some days ago, also the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, and subsequently 40 other members have indicated their wish that there be an emergency debate with respect to the situation resulting from the difficulties in the northern cod fishery.

• (1520)

I notice that the request is that these Canadians urgently require an indication of the kind of short-term and long-term strategies the government will employ, et cetera.

I have listened very carefully over several days to the questions and the answers. There is no question that the matter is of importance and concern to all members of the House.

After careful consideration, under the provisions of Standing Order 52, I am in a position to grant the request for an emergency debate today. However, the House is in a quandary as it adopted last June 9 an order to extend the hours of sitting until 10 p.m. In addition, earlier today the House agreed to a motion for time allocation on Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, which would require, if necessary, an interruption 15 minutes before the expiry of time provided for government business, namely 9.45 p.m.

While Standing Order 52 governing emergency debates states that such a debate be held at 8 p.m. until midnight, I have also gone back and looked at the McGrath report. In light of the spirit of the McGrath report, which sought to allow for emergency debates without infringing on the time of the House, I am prepared to set down for debate at 10 p.m. the matter raised by the hon. member and members.

This debate will conclude at no later than 12 midnight, as specified by the Standing Orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Valcourt that Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Allmand (p. 12472).

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, it disturbs me a great deal that this government is determined in pushing the most significant changes to immigration laws in almost 15 years without providing opposition parties sufficient time to review the legislation in detail and consult with various non-governmental organizations and other immigration experts.

Bill C-86 has more than 120 sections and is over 110 pages long. Since the emphasis of this legislation is on trying to improve the management of the system and has new enforcement measures, these provisions must be examined very closely because they may impact directly on immigration policy and can be far more significant than simple technical or administrative changes.

I am worried about this legislation for another reason. This bill is shifting the responsibility from Parliament to the regulatory process. It is of profound concern that this bill is transferring powers away from Parliament. It leaves the system wide open to abuse.

Canada deserves an immigration system that is understanding of the needs of Canadians and that treats immigrants and refugee claimants with dignity and respect. Anything less would be unacceptable.

Far too often the process has treated both immigrants and refugee claimants with disdain. My constituency office is swamped with files of cases showing how insensitive the immigration and refugee determination process has been.

The policies and practices of this department seem to run on the assumption that all refugee claims are bogus and that immigrants should consider themselves lucky to be admitted to this country. This type of attitude fails to recognize that Canada benefits from their arrival on our shores and that no matter where they come from and no matter what experience they bring to Canada they contribute greatly to our economy and form an important component of who we are as a nation.

As an illustration of how the process has treated people, I want to tell the members of this House about the Mirzad family. These people came to Canada with four children. They escaped from Afghanistan, a nation devastated by the Soviet invasion in 1979 and perpetually victimized by a civil war that has killed thousands upon thousands of innocent people.

They came to Canada hoping for a new life and to escape from the mindless violence that plagued their homeland. When they arrived in this country they applied for refugee status and entered the process. While waiting for immigration and refugee officials to decide their case, the Mirzad family proceeded with their lives. They even had a fifth child here in Canada.

When the decision of the first step of the refugee determination process was reached, officials claimed that the parents did not have credible basis to remain as refugees in Canada. At the same time, the same body that rejected the parents gave their young children at least part of the required status to remain here. In effect, this decision would create orphans in this country by allowing children to stay and sending their parents back to a life-threatening situation.

A couple of months ago I rose in this House asking the Prime Minister to look into this case. He stood in this Chamber and said he would investigate the matter.

I am sure that members of this House will be shocked to learn that the result of this commitment was a government appeal of the decision granting the children credible basis. His own people.

After the Prime Minister's intervention, the children, including one born here in Canada, may be forced to return to Afghanistan. This decision is completely incomprehensible.

What this bill will do is give more power to the people who make these kinds of decisions. We must remain a compassionate nation. We were at one time. We must reach out and understand that human rights of all people is something Canada must uphold.

[*Translation*]

With this bill, the first part of the refugee determination process will be eliminated. With this proposal, even the Mirzad children could have been deported from Canada.

Refugees can present their case without being biased by a system that does not take into account neither what is going on in their country of origin nor the problems associated with being a newcomer in Canada.

This legislation will empower immigration officers at Canadian ports of entry to turn down refugee claims. I am not convinced that this provision of the legislation will effectively entitle refugees to a lawyer and an interpreter and, more importantly, to a fair assessment.

We cannot and should not leave decisions affecting the life of these people in the hands of a single person. They have a right to be heard by Canada, while Canada has to carry out the international responsibilities it has under the refugee conventions.

Again, this legislation describes a safe third country system in which immigration officers would be allowed to send refugees back to the country through which they entered Canada. This provision ignores the reality of far too many refugees. Many countries may be safe to visit for someone born in Canada but be very risky for people from other countries.

How can we make sure that the list of safe countries reflects reality? Political and military changes happen all the time. We must be sure that government will recognize these changes as they happen.

The refugee determination process, as it stands, calls for only one member of the two-member determination board to accept the individual as a refugee. Under Bill C-86, a unanimous decision will be required. Again, access to our country is made more difficult for people who are legitimate refugees.

[*English*]

This bill will make it somewhat easier for family reunification but it is still less than what is recommended by the Official Opposition and various non-governmental organizations.

We must make sure that family reunification is swift and that it is sensitive to the various definitions of family. It should not be one only based on the North American notion, but one which recognizes that the definition of family is as varied as the quilt that makes up Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

Every one in this House remembers the incidents reported by the media where members of the determination board looked down on refugees. Unfortunately, this is an all too common occurrence, which forces us to question the integrity of such a system.

• (1530)

That is why I support the proposal to create a system for disciplining board members who do not understand the importance of what they do, the seriousness of the situation and the impact of their decisions.

Too often, we have heard that board members did not understand the situations experienced in many countries of origin. For that reason, they do not show compassion and sympathy for families who have had to live through trying situations and only want an opportunity to start over in peace and harmony in the best country in the world. The system must deal with the problems that we find too often now.

I want to talk about the case of a married couple living in my riding. The woman is Canadian and the man is from the Middle East. They have been married for two years, and it certainly was not a marriage of convenience. The woman is now two months pregnant. They are building a life and making a family in Canada.

Immigration officers want to force this father-to-be to leave Canada because his passport is no longer valid, having expired. The embassy of his home country does not want to renew it because he has not yet done his military service, which is compulsory in that country.

He does not want to return to the Middle East because he does not want to die there. His wife does not want to go to the Middle East because she wants her child to be born in Canada, where it can live in a peaceful society.

The members of that family want to live together, but our Canadian refugee system will force them to live apart for two to three years. This is another humanitarian reason that we could mention here, Mr. Minister. I hope that the proposed changes may improve such a situation.

It is surely not by fingerprinting and photographing refugee claimants, as the new bill proposes, that Canada will be perceived as a welcoming country. It is not by having the preconceived idea that refugees come here to cheat the government that those who decide on their fate will be more equitable. This part of the bill is particularly humiliating for those who come to Canada to flee political situations that are humanly unacceptable and to have a chance to work and live without fear.

Will their first contact be questioning by the host country? That is unacceptable. Why would we accept for others what we would find completely out of place for ourselves? It is a double standard.

I can only approve if the government wants to improve the immigration program, but deciding where newcomers must live and for how long before they are free to choose where to settle is surely contrary to human rights.

How can Canada define itself as an open and hospitable country when it fingerprints and photographs applicants for the record and tells them where to live for *x* number of years, which will probably be monitored very closely? That is a funny kind of welcome.

[*English*]

Many people have come out and said that the provision which would force immigrants to live in a specific region could violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It would in effect be creating two types of immigrants: one group that is free to move as it pleases and another that is restricted to a specific area.

I have serious doubts as to whether this provision will stand up to a charter challenge. Why not try to find out first? Several immigration lawyers have said quite publicly that they did not believe this provision was constitutional.

If we are to be sure of the integrity of the immigration and refugee process then we have to make sure the law is constitutional. Immigrants, as well as Canadian citizens, have to know that the immigration law will be applied consistently and equitably across this country for years to come.

I sincerely hope we will be able to examine this legislation very carefully in committee. It is imperative that the immigration and refugee system we create follows some very basic principles. It must be a fair, compassionate and responsive system that meets the needs of Canadians, respects and treats with dignity those people from around the world who wish to join us, and helps us contribute to a greater Canada.

[*Translation*]

Of course, some of the proposed changes will make the immigration procedure more efficient, but the obvious flaws, that is, the inhumane proposals, must be corrected right now to give refugees and immigrants the greatest chance in this country. If they need us, we also need them. Only together can this country grow; otherwise it will die a slow death.

[*English*]

Canada is a vast country. We must realize that in a world that is overcrowded, where human rights violations are an all too often occurrence and where people struggle to better their lot in life, Canada is a natural choice. We have so much to offer and we must be generous. This generosity not only benefits the people coming to our shores but benefits us.

We cannot submit to the tiny minority of Canadians who because of misinformation are hostile to immigrants. Together, native born or naturalized, we have a role in building this country. Canada's immigration process must recognize this fact.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I compliment my colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville. She referred to the family from Afghanistan in her speech. I believe the parents were given

a deportation notice and the children were allowed to stay.

This case is just one example of many that happen like this week in and week out. We know how tough it is when parents of young students in high school come into our constituency offices. They could be weeks away from getting their grades. The teacher is saying that they are good students. They are established in the community and their parents have received deportation notices. It is just a mess, the way families can be torn apart.

We have tried on Friday and today to be very constructive in this debate with the government. We have pointed out certain aspects of this bill that we support. However, I come back again to the fact that the best plan can go off the rails if there is not the proper staff to support the implementation of the plan.

The member talked about the right to decide who stays and who goes being put into the hands of officials. This can be a very dangerous transformation of powers. In a situation where public servants are stressed out because they are overworked and because of the volume of immigration cases coming at them, it is absolutely impossible to have all of them keep their cool all the time. Quite often rash decisions are being made.

Does the member think that one of the real problems in this legislation is that the Government of Canada is not giving the Public Service of Canada enough person-years to make sure that its best intentions in implementing this plan go forward properly? I happen to think that without the proper person-years this is going to be fiasco.

• (1540)

Mrs. Maheu: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood. He has touched on one element that is very important. When this commission was first founded a lot of money was put into it in the hope and with the assurance that it could complete the job. It has been a long time and it still has a backlog of a couple of a hundred thousand people. No wonder its people are tired.

The government's preoccupation is to get rid of our debt only at the cost of anything else. It does not matter to the government. It wants to try to lower the deficit, which none of us can complain an awful lot about, but it should not at the cost of human lives and human dignity, which is what is happening here.

It is easy to say that our public servants are tired and overworked with some of the cases I have read about. The Prime Minister of this country stood in the House and said that he personally would look at the case. Then his own government decided to appeal in the case of the kids. They had credible basis accorded to them in one hearing. The parents know about Afghanistan. Another problem is that there are people sitting on this commission who do not know what is going on in the Third World countries.

Our own Prime Minister stood up. The minute the talk is about children, he loves to get to his feet, but when he has to do something he does not do it.

Mr. Lewis: Cheap shot.

Mrs. Maheu: It may not be a cheap shot. The minister should take a look at the dossier.

Mr. Lewis: Cheap shot artist.

Mrs. Maheu: I have many other cases. Another case from Afghanistan is being given the same response.

Mr. Lewis: Cheap shot.

Mrs. Maheu: The minister keeps repeating "cheap shot". When five kids are at stake, I am glad I am in a position to give a cheap shot because none on that side of the House would. You are talking about a baby here, Mr. Minister. I am sorry, Madam Speaker. I say through you to the minister that we are talking about children. You know very well how I must feel, Madam Speaker, because we are both mothers.

I have a second case which is the same. People were tortured and left the country, and a couple of members who do not know anything about Afghanistan say: "We do not believe him. We do not believe he was tortured. The marks are not enough". Sometimes electric shocks do not leave enough marks. He does have other marks.

What I question is how this government has so many hard-hearted people on this commission. If the minister has ever granted for humanitarian reasons to let someone stay in this country, I wish he would share it with this House because in my riding there have been several cases that could have had and should have had the minister's intervention. I would like to know where he did get involved for humanitarian reasons.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, in her remarks the hon. member from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville referred to the case of the Afghan family where the parents were accepted and the children were refused, leaving us with a very inhumane situation where the parents were expected to go back to their country of origin and the children would stay here. It was very ridiculous.

As my hon. colleague from Toronto said, in our offices we get similar cases all the time. I had a similar case where a Lebanese family of three brothers: two were allowed to stay in Canada and one was deported to Lebanon. They were all involved in the same political movement in Lebanon. The mother was allowed to stay but one brother was sent back.

There is no appeal on the merits in the Immigration Act, nor is there any provision of it in the bill. There is an appeal on law but none on the merits. Since no board is perfect, the only recourse for these people who were rendered these terrible decisions by the board was to appeal to the minister under section 114(2) on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Since this particular minister has become minister he has virtually closed that door. Even the two previous Conservative ministers used to use that clause for humanitarian and compassionate reasons and admit cases such as the ones we were just discussing like the Afghan family or the Lebanese family.

I want to know from the hon. member who does a lot of immigration work in her office and from her experience in her constituency whether she would confirm to me that this clause has been virtually closed down, this access for justice on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

I wonder if it is like mine. It is almost impossible now even to get the minister's staff or anybody in his office to consider admitting horrible cases like this to Canada—horrible in their outcome—as sort of an appeal to overcome the harsh decision or the ridiculous decision of the board. What is her experience?

Mrs. Maheu: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce for giving me this chance.

I have had cases in which even the minister's staff has said it wished there were something it could do. There is a little bit of a point in the law that does not quite cover it. I am thinking of the young couple waiting for their baby and he has to go back to fight in a war.

There is room for a little bit of humanitarian consideration in this case and I wish the minister had stayed. I would have liked to have had him try and explain to us what he meant when he said he makes decisions on humanitarian grounds.

If he does would he please tell us where because we are not seeing it, not at our level anyway. I have one of the most multicultural ridings in the country.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to have an opportunity to address the House on the proposed amendments to the Immigration Act which have been introduced by my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

After a great deal of consideration and discussion by our caucus, a caucus which is representative of the entire country and not one particular area, it has been vetted with elected members, all of whom have experienced some of the problems which have been referred to in this House.

I am quite satisfied it will ensure that Canada's immigration system continues to contribute the unity and prosperity of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Several of the proposed amendments deal with security and enforcement issues of particular concern to me as minister responsible for CSIS and the RCMP.

[*English*]

Before addressing those provisions in the legislation I want to make a few comments as to the over-all thrust of the legislation. I think it is important we note that in this bill we are going to streamline the refugee determination system.

References have been made this afternoon to delays and hardships. I do not think it is in anyone's interest to delay the determination of whether a person is a true bona fide refugee fleeing from political persecution and persecutions in other countries. There is no question Canadians want to open their doors to legitimate bona fide refugees.

I do not think there is any question also that Canadians realize the strength of what immigrants have brought to this country and I will make some references to that at the end of my remarks.

We are a country which has grown in stature over the last 125 years and that is because of the strengths which refugees from various countries have brought to Canada. We intend that they continue to come and continue to provide our country with the asset of effort and determination that immigrants bring to a country.

At the same time, and I think this is important in this day and age, one of the over-all thrusts of this bill is to better protect Canadian society. There is no question from time to time individuals who would not have been selected for immigration try to test our laws, our regulations, our openness and our generosity as a country.

• (1550)

Quite frankly, Canadians are fed up with people trying to beat the system. This bill addresses that frustration in Canadian society. We want to provide an immigration program which is fair, balanced and effective.

It is fair to say that refugee determination is a world-wide problem. I visited the Trevi meeting of European security ministers two weeks ago in Lisbon, Portugal. The question of asylum was a major topic of discussion; what constituted appropriate asylum. There was the question of the Dublin convention. The question of visas and the abuses of visas is a very major political issue as most western countries are facing growing pressures from migrants seeking political and economic stability. Others were: the conflict and political instability in many countries; the economic disparity that exists; increasing availability of transportation that resulted in unpredictable flows of people toward western Europe, Australia, the United States and, naturally, Canada.

This unplanned and large-scale movement of people presents a challenge to Canada and to other industrialized countries. It is a multi-faceted issue that cannot be solved by any country on its own. We need international co-operation to address the root causes of this mass migration and also to address those who would tend to abuse the system.

Countries such as Canada have to take steps to maintain effective immigration policies which ensure that persons are treated fairly and equally but also to ensure that the country's interests are protected.

I believe there is a tradition in this country to respect the queue and Canadians understand that we have to have rules and regulations for immigrants. Canadians become annoyed at those who want to beat the system. We have a long-standing tradition of welcoming persons in need of protection but quite frankly, we are concerned about those who try to beat the system.

As well, there is no question of the rising costs of the immigration program. If that immigration program is skewed by illegal refugees, people who take advantage of our openness, people get annoyed at the whole immigration program. That is what we are trying to prevent with this bill. We are trying to prevent people from circumventing immigration controls, plain and simple. The integrity of our immigration program cannot be maintained unless we as a government address the problem which is represented by those who abuse the system.

I believe that the legislation addresses the concerns of Canadians and will ensure that persons who endeavour to abuse the immigration process are not successful. That is why, as Solicitor General with the responsibilities that I have, I am especially pleased to give my full support to the entire bill and especially to those legislative amendments that relate to the security and law enforcement aspects of the immigration program and therefore the responsibility of CSIS and the RCMP.

One of the things that the bill does is introduce legislative changes that strengthen the inadmissible provisions of the act so that we are not going to become as a country a safe haven for retired or active terrorists. Over the past several years there has been a growing concern within the national security establishment about persons with terrorist backgrounds who are seeking entry to Canada. Quite frankly, the legislation is going to close the door on those individuals. It is going to increase our capacity as a government to close that door.

As well, we are going to increase our capacity to exclude persons with criminal backgrounds or who are associated with criminal organizations. This will assist

the RCMP and other police forces in their battle with organized crime.

If we have reasonable grounds to believe that a person has committed a crime, that person would be barred from Canada.

While some civil libertarians may decry that fact, Canadians who obey the law, welcoming legitimate immigrants who just want to come here to make a new home for themselves, do not welcome people with known criminal records who want to find a new place to commit further crimes.

I am pleased as well to support the amendments to the security certificate provisions of the act. These are provisions that enhance the ability of the Solicitor General and the Minister of Employment and Immigration to exclude from Canada persons who pose a security risk.

These changes will give greater protection for sensitive information which we receive from allied governments that we use in support of certificate cases before the federal courts. The legislation will ensure that persons who are the subject of certificates cannot attempt to avoid the rule of Canada by making a claim to refugee status.

It also gives the government authority to exclude from Canada persons who are members of or associated with organizations or governments that have been involved in war crimes and human rights abuses.

We have to be able as a country to exclude individuals whose admission serves no public interest and whose very presence in Canada is offensive to the democratic values of Canadians so that we will take care of that type of individual.

I also would point out that Canadians are going to be pleased to see that under the proposed amendments criminals can no longer make a refugee claim in order to avoid extradition. We will take care of that particular abuse of our system and our openness as a country.

I am also supportive of the provisions which are aimed at curbing the activities of individuals who are more involved in migrant smuggling. There cannot be anything worse than people who set up a business to try to cheat people out of their money and land them on our shores without proper documentation. To take advantage of people like that in any country is not on. We will be able to stop that. The RCMP will play a major role in this part of the initiative.

I also want to endorse the legislative changes to the restructuring of the review and appeal mechanisms. These provisions are going to curtail the abuses in the system and defend the integrity of the program which is essential to our social and economic development.

I am firmly in support of the bill and what it does for our ability as a country to secure our borders against illegal refugees. One has to realize that this bill enhances immigration and takes on the people who would abuse the immigration system.

We have raised our levels in recent years to help us build this country and to help people who are in difficulty in other countries. I have always been in favour as an individual and as a member of Parliament of increased immigration in this country. There is no question were we to continue our current birth rates and the old immigration policies we would see our population diminish. That does not suit our purposes as a country that either looks forward or wants to welcome people who want to make a new lives for themselves.

• (1600)

I want to particularly mention policies which I believe are not shared by any of the three major parties in this House. I want to specifically refer to the policies of the Reform Party. I want to quote the Reform Party president. As I said, I am sure my colleagues in the Liberal and New Democratic parties and in my party do not support this type of comment. This is a comment from the president of the Reform Party of Simcoe North:

> "We're bringing in the riff-raff of the world," says Jill Patterson, president of the party's Simcoe North riding association. "Not all of them, I'm not saying they're all riff-raff, but a lot of them are."

That is the policy of the Reform Party of Canada. I reject it out of hand.

The best way I have found to reject it is to remind people of the backgrounds of the people who built this country. It is best said by a writer named Pete McGarvey. He used to be on the radio in Toronto. In the *Huronia Sunday* of May 3, 1992 he took her on on this riff-raff thing. His words are very appropriate:

—let's not forget the 'rabble' of Britain and Europe provided an immigrant labour force that built Canada in pioneer days, just as the 'rabble' of the Orient slaved and died to complete the Rocky Mountain portion of our national railway. It was the 'riff-raff' Irish who built the city streets of North America early in this century and the 'rabble' Italians who built the buildings.

An hon. member: My ancestors.

Mr. Lewis: You are right. My hon. colleague from Brantford says his ancestors. I say my ancestors because I am the first Lewis in my family born in this country. When we talk about immigration people forget there were a lot of poor English that came to this country, built it and participated in it. The same for the poor Irish and poor Italians. They all came here and made great futures for themselves and their children. They built this country.

We do not want to stop that. We want to enhance it. We want to build our immigration levels and build this country. At the same time, we are determined that people who want to cheat the system are not going to cheat our system and people who want to take advantage of Canada are not going to take advantage of Canada.

I agree with my hon. friends when they raise concerns. When this bill goes to committee there will be ample opportunity to take a look at it and to make sure that we have provisions in there that are fair but at the same time protect Canadian society, not against somebody who comes here and wants to make something of themselves but against people whose first step on coming into the country is to try to beat the system.

With this bill we will tighten that up and endeavour to have a country which is known as open to immigration but at the same time closed to cheating.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the Solicitor General is here. He might be able to explain a clause in the bill which I just cannot understand. It is with respect to detention.

At the present time an official of the department of immigration can put a prospective immigrant or refugee in detention, not because there is a charge of an offence against that refugee or immigrant, but because the official has reason to believe that the immigrant or refugee might not turn up for an inquiry that is planned in a few weeks' time. That is the immigration official's opinion, that the individual might not turn up for the inquiry or it is his or her belief that this individual could be a danger to the public.

I am saying there is no charge against these individuals. If they were charged they would be in a criminal court or a criminal institution. These are immigration detention centres.

Under the present law once the official decides that the immigrant should be put in the detention centre there is a review of that detention within 48 hours and then thereafter every seven days.

Since most of these immigrants and refugees cannot speak English or French a lot of them have great difficulty getting ready for the first review at 48 hours. The great majority of them do get ready for the seven day review and the vast majority are released on that seven day review because it is shown that they are not really going to flee the country or avoid the inquiry and they are not really a danger to the public.

In this bill the government is proposing to extend the seven-day review periods to 30-day review periods, more than four times the present time allowed for a review of one of these cases. I just cannot understand it. This means that the same practice or tradition we have now that the great majority of these people will stay in detention centres for at least 30 days in order to get a release.

I want to know from the minister, who is involved in law enforcement as the Solicitor General, why was it necessary to increase the seven-day review period and it was for every seven days in the present law? Why is it increased to four times that amount to 30 days and 30 days thereafter each time? It would seem to me that not only is that unfair and unjust to the immigrant who is put in detention but it is also going to greatly increase the cost of the system.

I have one of these detention centres in my constituency. It is going to have to triple or quadruple in size keeping all these people for 30-day periods and 30-day periods thereafter.

I ask the minister, since he is supporting the bill, what is the reason for increasing the detention review from seven days to 30 days over and over again?

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. friend's question. To answer, I should go back one step.

Obviously, if the people my hon. friend referred to came with all their documents in order, they would not go into the detention home. Immigrants come with documents in order. My hon. friend suggests that people without documents come in here *carte blanche* and if we cannot decide the case in seven days they should be walking the streets. Canadians do not want that. If a bona fide legitimate immigrant comes with the necessary documentation and presents that documentation, there will be no difficulties.

An hon. member: That is not the case.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of very serious questions to ask the minister concerning the difference between normal procedures where a person is going to be deprived of certain rights because we can document that the individual has been involved in certain activities.

This bill starts by saying that if a person is a member of an organization that is deemed to be a criminal organization, a terrorist organization or a subversive organization or associates with them the person can be removed without any indication that the person himself is involved in any of those activities or had any intention to be involved.

We have organizations in this country which have been deemed as having some kind of negative connotation, for example, Palestinian and Jewish organizations and organizations from the Innu Canadian community.

My understanding is CSIS will determine that a certain organization is involved in terrorist activity. The public will never be told. An individual will never be told. That individual becomes involved in an activity someone has deemed that organization is involved in. By being associated with that organization which the individual knows nothing about or involved in very open community affairs be they philanthropic, religious or otherwise of which the community is very much aware, that individual is liable to removal from Canada simply based on that association. Not only can they be removed because they associate with an organization nobody has publicly named, but they did so in an *ex parte* court hearing that neither they nor their lawyer had access to.

• (1610)

I am wondering if in the fervour of making sure legitimately, as I think all Canadians want, people who are involved personally and individually in activities that are criminal, terrorist, or subversive are removed, people, particularly in ethnic communities will be frightened to be involved in any community activity in case CSIS has deemed that organization is subversive.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I had a chance to discuss the matter briefly with the minister of immigration. He advises me we have simply added the clauses in the Geneva convention pertinent to this particular area to the provisions in our present legislation.

This is not always a nice business. People we are refusing admission to do not play by the same rules as you and I. They often do not have any rules, or they have rules you and I find abhorrent.

Mr. Karpoff: So we are going to adopt the rule.

Mr. Lewis: Now wait a minute. My hon. friend dismisses the fact there has to be a full court hearing where the individual in question is represented by counsel, and the lawyers for both sides have an opportunity to put their case before a Federal Court judge. There is also an appeal process. There is that protection plus the CSIS review, if my hon. friend wants to address it too. All of these provisions are in there to protect the legitimate immigrant who wants to get into this country.

We are simply saying these folks do not play by the same rules as you and I, which Canadians respect and want to protect the public. We are saying we have enough people who respect the rules who want to come to this country. We are going to exclude those who do not respect the rules.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, this government once again is introducing in Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act. It is a very controversial piece of legislation and I think very unjust in many respects. The government is already ramming it through second reading at the end of a session when there is not sufficient time to either debate it in full or have adequate consultation. Already groups, including immigration lawyers, churches, refugee support groups, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Cana-

dian Ethnocultural Council and others are protesting many aspects of this bill.

The bill changes the priorities for immigrants and refugees to settle in Canada. There are very different priorities in these three streams being proposed. Ironically this minister has reversed many of the changes that were made by the last Conservative minister of immigration, which supposedly were supposed to streamline procedures, get rid of the backlogs and prevent fraud. We know of course the last Immigration Act did none of these things.

Bill C-86 is not an improvement. It is restrictive, unjust and inhumane in many aspects. First of all it allows people to buy their way into Canada. That is one of the first priorities. It reflects therefore Conservative and Reform Party values and not the values of fairness and generosity toward immigrants, which have been a Canadian tradition.

Government priorities are reflected in three streams. Just to remind people, the first stream would give priority to and fast-track wealthy investors and families, as well as UN approved refugees.

The second stream would be first come first served. If there is a long waiting list, many people would have a very difficult time making it. That includes extended families, self-employed people who have contributed greatly to our economy and people with confirmed job offers.

The third and last stream would take only limited numbers and this I find very difficult to understand. It includes business entrepreneurs and independent immigrants who have a job confirmed. Why on earth would they be last? These people are surely going to make good settlers, be employed and contribute to Canada.

The priorities of course are geared to the Conservative philosophy. Let us bring in as many wealthy people as possible and leave others much lower down on the list.

In a world where populations are exploding, civil wars are rampant, human rights are being violated, children are starving, and families are being separated for years, surely we in Canada can afford to be more generous and fair in our immigration policy.

We should not approach immigration with corporate values that allow wealthy immigrants to buy their way into Canada as a first priority. As a multicultural country we should recognize multicultural values and customs. This means we should include grandparents in the primary family group. We should not be imposing the traditional North American concept of family.

The minister must also accept more refugees based on humanitarian appeals. I agree with my colleague for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville. The minister was not here when she spoke but I agree completely, he does not seem to be approving any people on humanitarian grounds through the appeal procedure. I have put through many well-documented appeals based on humanitarian grounds and I doubt he has even seen them, much less really considered them seriously.

It is very important we look at immigration in a much more fair way. Hopefully the minister will look at appeals with more compassion than he has to date.

We must not allow criminals of course to come into Canada or allow organized crime to infiltrate with false documents and so on. However, security measures should surely be implemented by CSIS, not by fingerprinting all refugee applicants as if all were criminals. Indeed, if we are going to do that we might as well do it to all Canadians. I wonder what they would say.

I want to quickly summarize some of the characteristics of this bill. First of all we are told this bill is based on excellence. There will be a new élitist system of quotas to enable the department to select immigrants according to its view of excellence.

The credible basis, which was the first stage of refugee claims process will be eliminated and we are in favour of that. We did not want it in the first place.

A senior immigration officer will be given authority at the border to decide whether or not a person is eligible for a full hearing. The officer can of course decide to refuse a hearing too. We might have some questions about that depending on the immigration officer.

I have already referred to the fingerprinting of refugee claimants, which will be required as if all applicants are criminals.

There is the item of family reunification. When a refugee claimant in Canada is accepted and able to apply for landing, the spouse and children will automatically begin to be processed for landing. We are in favour of speeding up the applications for families. However, as I

said earlier we think this should include grandparents and they should not be in a much lower category.

There is the safe third country rule. Refugee claimants who enter Canada through another country such as the U.S. may be removed for a refugee hearing there. We know many refugees from Latin and Central America in particular will be deported by the United States, yet the minister is going to encourage that by refusing them at the border.

Federal Court appeals will only be allowed on points of law and not on merits. This is too narrow a basis for appeal and many experts have said this.

There will be legislated changes to allow speedier removal of rejected refugee claimants, even though an appeal is pending and before appeals are processed. Immigration officials will have authority to search arrivals they may suspect of carrying forged or illegal documents

• (1620)

On the denial of the right to work, refugee claimants will not be allowed to work until they are accepted. This is another regressive move because people need to work and learn English or French to keep their self-respect while they are waiting and it helps them to adjust in Canada afterwards.

Detention will be reviewed after at least 30 days instead of every seven days. My colleagues were just speaking on that.

Finally, there will be better provisions for disciplining IRB commissioners. I hope this approves better appointments of refugee appeal board persons as well so that they will be based on qualifications rather than on political background.

We agree with some of the changes. We agree with the elimination of the credible basis and we want the processing to be speeded up. Long delays in the past of one to three years have not helped claimants who are left in limbo, many of them living in poverty and desperately hoping to stay in Canada while their children become Canadianized and then have been sent back. To be deported after two or three years is inhuman and yet we are told that in B.C. 77 per cent of refugee claimants have been refused during the first three months of 1992.

I have appealed many cases as have others in this House, particularly where children are involved. I have carefully documented children at risk. It very definitely contravenes and aggregates our commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. I am thinking of a number of Polish families in particular. The minister refused every one of them.

In not one case that I have referred has this minister made a positive response to appeal for humanitarian, compassionate consideration to families that are refugee claimants and could be given consideration to remain in Canada. I doubt, as I said earlier, that he even looks at these personally. If he does, he must have a very cold heart.

We want the processing of refugee claimants to be dealt with more quickly but we also want a more sincere and compassionate appeal process to allow for humanitarian considerations. We want refugee claimants to be allowed to work and to learn French or English and to save the costs of welfare while they are waiting for their cases to be heard.

We also approve the proposed measures to process families more expeditiously. Hopefully this will be under six months. The long delays in reuniting married couples and bringing in family members have caused undue hardship for many immigrants. I would like to say that it has been particularly long for people who have applied from Asian countries whom we are very familiar with in B.C.

I asked the minister to give special attention to the very long delays in India, China, the Pacific islands and Africa where immigration offices are very distant and it is very difficult for families and very costly.

We do not agree, however, with the government's concept of family and the restrictions which give priority to the nuclear family but deny entry to extended families, the basic family unit in many Asian and other countries.

New Democrats have pressed this government for years to include single adults as part of the primary family group. The former minister, I am glad to say, did approve this policy but then it was rescinded by the present one. Now we see in this bill that the nuclear family will have priority in the first stream while grand-

parents must wait until much later. Surely Canadians can afford to be more generous toward extended families.

Experience proves that relatives in immigrant families help each other. They often develop family businesses that contribute to our economy and to employment. Immigrant families work hard, often at jobs that Canadians refuse and their goal usually is to buy a home as quickly as possible. This, again, contributes to our economy as consumer goods are purchased and more homes are built.

Grandparents are an important part of the family in transmitting the original language and culture as well as helping to care for children. They are the link between the past and the future which makes us a multicultural country. The so-called security measures to be imposed by this bill have been severely criticized by groups across this country.

I could quote many immigration lawyers who referred to the fingerprinting policy for refugee claimants as being odious. "It reflects the standing paranoia of the government which over the years progressively restricted human rights of non-citizens in Canada, particularly those seeking protection as Geneva convention refugees", said Barbara Jackman, a Toronto lawyer.

They object also to the ability to appeal which is even more restricted under this bill and to the whole question of returning people to a so-called safe third country which I referred to earlier as well. The Canadian Ethnocultural Council also criticized exclusion of grandparents and feels that the bill reflects a bias against refugees.

These are the kinds of things, the points of view, that the government must listen to. There has not been time enough to get these views out and made known to the public.

I want to express another deep concern. While this government welcomes wealthy entrepreneurs and gives them top priority for very speedy processing in coming to Canada, it gives low priority to workers with skills and those with professional training and those who have job confirmations. I cannot understand this.

Unfortunately our country is not producing skilled tradespersons and for the future we are short of these people. We need experience and expertise in many fields. Why should these people be restricted to go only to certain areas of Canada? That also seems to me smacks of a slave camp psychology and certainly is not something we should accept. Mobility is a basic right in Canada.

Skilled workers should not be restricted to work in designated areas. The government does not value human resources. Perhaps it values material resources, money in particular, but not the human qualities of immigrants. It does not use the education and professional training of many people who have come to Canada as landed immigrants.

We must find a way, along with provinces, of accrediting professionals so that they can practice in their fields of expertise and so they contribute their knowledge to Canada.

Finally I want to appeal to this government to be more generous toward refugees on humanitarian grounds. Why did it send back well educated, skilled tradespeople from Poland who had been here from two to three years, who had proven they were excellent workers in Canada, who were political refugees at the time of their arrival and who had children who were going back to very risky situations? I referred earlier to the eight cases which I appealed to this minister and he turned down.

It was very unjust and very unfair and also very expensive to send these people back. The appeal process must not be so restricted in the future.

I would like to say also that at this time there is a man called Steven Ogun Wuyi, a Nigerian refugee, who is in sanctuary in a church in Vancouver. He is in sanctuary because he is threatened with deportation. He did not have adequate legal representation. He did not speak much English and his lawyer was not adequately prepared and he was refused an appeal by the minister afterwards.

This Nigerian refugee has been in Canada over two years. He was linked to a military coup in his homeland. As a southern Christian in Nigeria, where the government power groups are not Christian, surely he will face persecution and imprisonment if he is deported to Nigeria.

As I say, he is presently in sanctuary in a church in Vancouver and I ask the minister to grant him permanent asylum in Canada.

The director for immigration for B.C. and the Yukon has stated: "Canada's immigration laws had to be changed because of enormous changes sweeping the world and the need to attract skilled people. Unfortunately this bill does not target skilled persons".

• (1630)

She also said: "Mainly because of civil wars there are 80 million people on the move around the world and many of them want to come to Canada". This is certainly true.

We must look at world conditions when we develop immigration policy and we must be as generous and humanitarian as possible in sharing our wonderful country with newcomers.

Despite the Reform Party and members of the Tory party who spout rhetoric to the contrary, immigration contributes to the wealth of Canada with human resources, people who are rich in skills, experience, enthusiasm and a drive to settle and make a good life for their families. They bring cultures from many lands, as well as contribute many economic advantages.

This bill denies all these benefits and must have full debate with extensive amendments. Better still, it should be withdrawn.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member who was all over the place in her comments on the immigration proposal. She and many members here today, especially of that party, have talked about the investor program. She talked about the processing of categories of immigrants and she alleged priorities were being given in this bill to investors.

I would like her to explain to Canadians that in reality what we are proposing is that the streams of categories of immigrants recognize that in Canada family members will be reunited without limits, that refugees will be accepted without limits and that investors will be accepted in Canada without limits.

What is the hon. member trying to achieve here? All provincial governments are in favour of the investor program because it brings new Canadians with capital to regions of Canada in which they can create jobs, in which they create wealth for the Canadian people.

As principal applicants in 1981, investors represented less than 1 per cent of the movement of immigrants to Canada. Why make a big fuss about investors when they constitute less than 1 per cent of the number of immigrants?

She pictures these changes as trying to clamp down on refugees. Why would the United Nations high commissioner for refugees in Canada endorse these proposals if it meant less compassion and less attention to our Geneva Convention obligation of protecting refugees?

My last point is that in the last eight years we, this government, have increased the number of immigrants, the number of people we have welcomed to Canada from 88,000 in 1983 to 250,000. Surely that is not a sign of a government that does not care about the need for immigration for Canada.

Ms. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments.

The minister heard me, I hope, when I quoted—and I was quoting from reliable information—that the proposal in this bill, in his new policies, would have no limits on number and would fast-track wealthy investors, immediate family members and approved refugees.

It is not that we object to entrepreneurs. Of course there is a place for them. I would like to ask the minister why he is giving priority to fast-tracking wealthy investors and yet stream number three would limit the numbers on applicants who are business entrepreneurs and independent immigrants with skills that we need.

He is biasing it to the élite, to the moneyed élite, rather than to traditionally what has been a cross-section of people who would be coming to Canada. I do not know why wealthy investors should be fast-tracked any more than people who have a confirmed job or people who are business entrepreneurs. The family entrepreneurs are the strength of this country, the immigrants in particular.

He also talked about a clamp-down on refugees. I did not say that this bill was clamping down on refugees. Of course they are defined by the UN convention. What I was saying to the minister was that he personally was clamping down on the ability that he has as a minister to consider appeals on compassionate and humanitarian grounds.

I would like to know how many cases he has approved on that ground. Every one that I have put forward—and I have documented them very carefully and very sincerely—has been turned down and I am sure other members had the same experience.

I do not think he is being at all generous or compassionate to people who have been here several years. Many of them were in the backlog, and I mentioned the people from Poland in particular.

Turning to my final point, I think the minister mentioned that the number of 250,000. We agree with that. We support the government. We think we should be taking as many people in Canada as we can possibly take, but it should be a fair policy as I said earlier. It should not just favour wealthy entrepreneurs.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, to the member of the New Democratic Party on the same question of entrepreneurship, in my province I happen to know that the NDP will say one thing but will practise another.

In this particular area right now in the province of Ontario we are welcoming entrepreneurial immigration to this country. I agreed with a lot of the things the hon. member said in her speech about these cases where we would like to have a much more aggressive humanitarian spirit in the department.

I do not want to get into that, but I think of the thousands and thousands of jobs that have been created in the province of British Columbia by Japanese entrepreneurial investors and by Chinese entrepreneurial investors. They do not just come here and invest their money and it sort of sits there. They buy into housing projects and into ski lodges which creates jobs.

I know in the province of Ontario right now our premier—and I salute him for it—is travelling the world trying to pull in investment capital and entrepreneurial immigrants so we can reprime our manufacturing industry.

Why is the NDP putting a stigma on a wealthy entrepreneurial immigrant who wants to come to Canada for the express purpose of creating jobs of which we are in such dire need right now?

By the way, I might also say to the hon. member of the New Democratic Party that a lot of these successful, to use her expression, wealthy entrepreneurial people are craftsmen and skilled people in their own right. They may have started poor or started small, but they grew through their skill and their wealth. Why the NDP is against bringing in that kind of person or why it is not encouraging them is a mystery to me.

Ms. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. Liberal friend is not reading this bill or the explanation of this bill correctly.

In my speech I asked why stream one would fast-track and give unlimited numbers to wealthy investors, and yet at the same time stream three would place strict limits on the number of applicants who were business entrepreneurial and independent immigrants. Why should one have top priority, his friends obviously? We need entrepreneurs. I am not saying we do not need them, but why should they be given much higher priority and much quicker processing than those in stream three which will have strict number limitations and be processed much more slowly? It is a reverse of what I think was Liberal policy when they were government.

I am surprised that the hon. member who has been up on his feet so much today would not understand that. It is the priority in government that we are objecting to. It is not a stigma on any particular group. It is fairness we are talking about.

• (1640)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, before I begin my debate, I would like to respond to the member from the New Democratic Party. My point in bringing to the attention of the House and of the member the reason we encourage and promote entrepreneurial immigration to this country was not just because we were trying to give somebody preferential status. It has always been for me, and I think for most members of this House, a linkage to direct job creation almost instantaneously.

Sometimes we refer to wealthy people whom the NDP seems to think are always getting preferential treatment. These same people come here and invest literally hundreds of millions of dollars. In the process of doing so they like to see what they are investing in and where their money is going. In my judgment if it means that it can save some Canadian jobs or save some Canadian companies from going under or going bankrupt, if it responds that way, I think we should be sensitive to

making sure they are welcomed. At least that has always been the position of the party I am associated with.

I want to return to some of the minister's remarks last Friday when he started speaking. He referred to the fact that an immigration policy of a country is really a mirror of the country's value system. I believe that. I have always believed that Canada was a country that had and still has to this day an image of being a caring, approachable, compassionate country. When we travel abroad, very few people say negative things about our country. We are in an enviable position.

The legislation we are putting through the House today concerns me. Bill C–86 has some 113 pages. I can honestly say that I have not had the time in the last three or four days to read every line of it. As much as I am in support of streamlining and improving, pushing this bill through the House in a couple of days is really playing a little fast and loose. I am a bit concerned about it because part of the amendment gives departmental officials of the Public Service of Canada a lot more power to judge.

I asked the minister last Friday—and I have asked it of a couple of other government members in debate today—what happens when this legislation is implemented? What happens when all that judgment ability is passed on to the Public Service?

I am in no way, shape or form knocking the Public Service of Canada. We have a lot of great officials in the Department of Employment and Immigration. However a reality exists in the department, that these public servants are overworked whether it is on the international end, visas abroad, people coming here, or even departmentally. I had no idea of the amount of work of this particular sector of government when I became a member of Parliament. I can honestly say being a member from downtown Toronto—and I know all my colleagues in urban areas have the same experience—that the immigration issue takes 90 per cent of our time. We cannot walk down the street, we cannot go out to a ballpark or a hockey arena, we cannot go and buy a dozen oranges without someone approaching us about an immigration problem in the city of Toronto.

Invariably our constituents come to us with problems because they say that the department is backlogged or cannot seem to process their applications.

When I asked the minister the other day about adding some person-years I was not asking him to do so to put an added burden in terms of cost to the taxpayer or raising taxes or to make life easier *per se* for the public servants who are already in his department. If he is to have a shot at making these amendments work he is going to need proper staff.

The Minister of State for Finance said earlier that the volume has gone up and that is why the public servants cannot process. He is absolutely right. The volume has gone up. Yet the support staff to handle that volume is not there. Somehow we cannot seem to make the point.

What happens when people are caught in terms of waiting for two, three and four years and the system starts to break down is that they start to cheat and to abuse the system. What they will do is encourage friends abroad to forget the queue, to come over as visitors, to throw their passports in the toilets on the planes and once they get here to declare refugee status and they are covered off. A lot of these cases are as a result of the system breaking down because it does not have the proper support staff. I really believe that.

When the Solicitor General talked earlier he referred to the fact that the government side of the House was opposed to people who abuse the system. Everyone in this country is opposed to people who abuse the system. We on this side are as fed up with people who abuse the system as any member on the government side.

However, we can too quickly put people in the category of abusing the system and the next thing we know we have developed a very callous attitude. In the process of public servants taking a signal from the government that it is going to be much tougher in the name of fighting abuse, I am afraid there may be a lot of good people who get caught. The very mirror he referred to in his remarks, that our immigration policy was a mirror of our country, may get some marks on it in the process of them getting caught. I think that would be the beginning of a tarnish which could affect us in many

other areas. It could even effect us in the area of entrepreneurial or business class people coming here.

The reality right now is that Canada is the greatest country in the world and people do want to come here. But there are also some other countries that are beginning to clean up their act. We may end up, if we get a little tarnish on our immigration policy, losing some of these people to other countries. Within a very short period of time there is going to be, if you can imagine this, a competition for the best and the brightest people in the world. We have always had a policy of trying to attract the best and the brightest from all over the world, whether they are skilled people, entrepreneurial, business class, we have always been very generous that way.

• (1650)

I am afraid that we will send the wrong signal to the public servants, that we are cracking down on abuse and so we are going to back them if they make a quick judgment. If a public servant is overworked and on a Thursday or a Friday afternoon is bogged down and because he is frustrated and wants to get out, all of a sudden that deportation or that refusal stamp is a little too aggressive, then the system really begins to break down. That is just one note of caution I want to put into this.

It affects us as a community because we have a lot of problems in processing the unification of families. Not a weekend goes by in my riding when I am not approached by young married couples who say that they would like their mother and father to come and live with them. If you can believe it, some of them have waited two and three years. For those of us who have been here all our lives, I cannot imagine the frustration of waiting two and three years to be reunited with my mother or father. It is a very tough thing for these people.

I also think of the cases that are caught in between right now. I think of people who maybe came here before these amendments, are caught in the system and are on the long list. I think of many Bulgarians in my community who came here when there were problems in their country. While they are waiting for their applications to be processed things are much better in Bulgaria.

These people have made their way here, many of whom are skilled crafts people and they are caught in the process. There is nothing more emotional than to have the owner of a business come to you and say: "This Bulgarian gentleman is one of the best mechanics I have had in 20 years. When he came here there was a legitimate problem regarding his refugee status and yet now because things are much better in his country I am going to lose him. If I lose him I am going to lose a lot of my business which has been built on his skill and contribution".

These are the kinds of things that really concern me about the amendments to this legislation. My colleague from York West said earlier today that this is a highly emotional issue. It really is a highly emotional issue when your kids come home at night from school and say: "Mr. and Mrs. Shakala are going to be deported but their daughter can stay here and be a part of our welfare system, almost part of an orphanage".

I know that not for a second would this minister not have compassion for these cases if he was in our constituency office in downtown Toronto. It is a heck of a lot different in the province of New Brunswick and I know that for a fact. It is just not the same thing. These cases come at you day in and day out, and again I am not talking about people who abuse the system. The Solicitor General talked about the Reform Party referring to cleaning up the riff-raff in the immigration system. For me riff-raff are people who abuse the system and I am opposed to people who abuse the system.

If the Reform Party meant it is opposed to people who abuse the system then I agree with that particular woman the Solicitor General was quoting. The Solicitor General said he was opposed to people who abused the system and he said it about seven times in his speech.

I would like to know how he would define that kind of person. He would probably call them riff-raff too because they are the people who give the whole system a bad name. In many cases they put a stigma on the whole immigration system.

I want to go back to the fact we are a multicultural nation where no culture is less than or greater than another culture. It seems there are cycles in our country. As the Solicitor General said earlier, the English and the Irish came here at a certain period of time. Then a large wave of Italians came, for example, to Toronto and then there was a very strong wave of people from the Greek community. Now we have many people from east India

coming into our community as well as many people of Chinese origin.

This is what makes my city one of the most exciting cities in the world. All of us on all sides of the House welcome these people because we need their expertise, we need their skills. They give us a trading advantage when they go back to their countries, because they have the facility of language and they can open doors for us. I do not think there would be anyone in this House that would argue that point.

I want to make one point here. The one point I want to make is that our public servants in the department of immigration, with the best intentions, do not really implement the act because there is too much coming at them all at once.

I really do believe that if these amendments are going to have a shot at putting our Immigration Act back on track, which can also be an instrument of pulling this country together, then I beg the minister to make sure the necessary person-years are there so that those of us who are MPs in urban areas do not have to spend 90 per cent of our time looking after 5 per cent of our community.

If that is done, we will then be able to serve some of the other people in our community that are just as important to us and need our services just as badly as those people who are immigrating here.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I have a few comments and I would like to ask the hon. member a question.

The first point he made was about the lack of resources in the department. I think it is quite telling to Canadians to refer back to the year 1957 when we welcomed into Canada 282,000 people with fewer resources. At that time we had a less cumbersome and complicated system which was not as much judicialized. What we are attempting to do here is give the department the tools to manage effectively the influx of migration into Canada.

The hon. member referred to specific cases in his riding that call for humane and compassionate considerations. Sometimes people do not fit the refugee criteria, they do not fit a category of immigrants. They would have to go back. The minister does have the discretion to accept people on humane and compassionate grounds.

• (1700)

However my experience in the few months I have been in the department is that you get thousands and thousands and thousands of people who want their case considered on humane and compassionate grounds by the minister. That is just impossible.

In section 6(3) and 6(5) of the proposed act, and 114(2)—these are the agency considerations—he will find that I am proposing that we establish by regulation criteria that will allow us to determine and grant to officers in the department the power to make that determination on humane and compassionate grounds. It will not be a decision that is made out of thin air, there will be criteria that we will ask them to apply in order to exercise that discretion which I submit shows the real face of Canada to the world, which is a face the world has come to trust.

I would like his comments and his views on this transparency because the cases he referred to are examples in my own mind of situations where, if there were transparent criteria, an officer could exercise in favour of this Bulgarian he spoke about.

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, in 1990 I wrote a letter to the then minister responsible for immigration talking about an idea where members of Parliament could act as quasi-deputies of the minister of immigration. If I took the time to hear an hour or two or three of a constituent's case, subject to the departmental approval, I could write a letter to the department asking it to please allow this person to work or please take this person off a deportation notice.

The minister is missing the fact that by giving all of this power to the officials, by taking the political culture out of it, he has not relieved the burden of the member of Parliament. The workload will not be less for the official, it is just that he has more power. But now at least the constituent has access to a member of Parliament and so the member of Parliament can be lobbied by church groups, by the immigrant's employer: here is a person who is working, here is a person whose daughter is getting good marks in school, and on and on.

Right now, as a member of Parliament, I have no power to help these people. A lot of them are good people. I am as opposed to abuse as much as the minister, but there are many people who are good people and my hands are tied. The minister has just admitted something I have known for months, he is getting thousands and thousands of cases. I am almost embar-

rassed to call his office on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

If we could organize an amendment to this bill that would give a member of Parliament some responsibility, subject to the department's review, then I could give someone a recommendation that I believe he or she should enter the country on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. I should be able to judge humanitarian and compassionate grounds just as easily as anyone else. The minister, once he signs humanitarian and compassionate grounds, it is through. If members of Parliament could sign for humanitarian and compassionate grounds with a condition on it, in other words subject to the department reviewing my judgment, then at least we could provide some hope for those constituents who are coming at us day after day. Quite often I know when we really take the time to analyze them, 90 per cent are on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. The minister just said the volume of them right now is difficult to cope with. Rather than just handing that process over to officials, give it to the politicians, the elected people who are accountable to the community. Do you think I am going to sign on humanitarian and compassionate grounds if the guy is trying to scam or if he is a bogus operator? Do you think we are going to do that? Then we would be accountable to our community at large. But give the elected members of Parliament some responsibility so we can deal meaningfully when our constituents come to us with legitimate cases.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Madam Speaker, I did not want to rise on this because I got involved in a fight over a similar issue in 1987 with Bill C-55. In this case, however, I am very pleased to see that 14 of the 19 amendments I had recommended were included in this bill. These 14 amendments were not changed and I hope that will be acknowledged. The hon. member seems to use "immigrant" and "refugee" indiscriminately and I think that a distinction should be made between the two. I agree that it is the same bill, that it is one and the same thing. If there is a riding where there is a problem with immigration, it is mine. There are 350 cases pending at all times. I would have many questions, but I will ask this one about refugees, a subject that requires that we exercise judgment because there are humanitarian considerations involved.

First of all, most people who request refugee status have already been admitted either as a visitor or as a student. They have had a chance to appreciate our way of life. In spite of all that we may say about it, Canada is the best place to be in the world. We have our freedom, three meals a day and we truly live in a fascinating country. I have a great deal of difficulty agreeing with the meaning the hon. member is giving to humanitarian grounds. I would like to know if he would take the decision himself, if a foreign national wanted to come and visit Canada and swore that he or she would not remain in this country without requesting refugee status or trying to obtain, through his member of Parliament, immigrant status while remaining in the country. I would like some clarifications on that because, believe me, I am having a great deal of difficulty understanding.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): I think with these amendments there will probably be fewer people coming on a visitor's visa and trying to claim refugee status.

I am opposed to bogus refugees. I am now talking about the fact we have about 60,000 people in the city of Toronto who are in a state of limbo because the system is not functioning properly. I would like to see that particular group get expeditious service. If your officials in the department are not in a position to process these people quickly, then members of Parliament should be given conditional power to sign on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Then rather than sitting at home collecting social assistance cheques, these people could find work or continue to work and their kids could go to school until the department made a proper analysis.

It is the people who are in this state of limbo who are driving those of us who are members in urban ridings crazy.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on major amendments to the Immigration Act.

In his speech the Minister of Employment and Immigration made it clear that the proposed amendments will not satisfy those who want to slam the door and they will not satisfy those who want us to give away the store. These amendments will satisfy Canadians who understand there is a happy medium between these two extremes.

We are proposing these amendments because we believe it is possible to strike a balance between our needs as a country and Canada's humanitarian tradition.

For more than 125 years, immigration has played a major role in shaping the values that identify and unite Canadians. It has helped to strengthen our fundamental respect for diversity, our tolerance and our generosity and has also helped us to build a prosperous and competitive economy.

Immigration is the story of people who had a chance to start a new life in Canada and gave the entire country the benefit of their skills. It is the story of John Polanyi, the scientist who won the Nobel Prize for Canada, and of Lap-Chee-Tsui, whose discovery of the cystic fibrosis gene was a major step in fighting this disease.

It is also the story of Rey Pagtakhan and Otto Jelinek, of Phil Edmonston and Stanley Knowles, and of many other members of this House. However, the system Canada established to manage immigration and the integration of generations of newcomers is coming under increasing pressure, both nationally and internationally.

Countries like Canada must react to these population flows and the problems they create for our immigration programs. However, our ability to react effectively is restricted by the Immigration Act, which was drafted in the 1970s to manage the demands of a simpler time.

In the 1990s the challenge of immigration is more than the simple processing of applications of people who wish to immigrate to Canada. It is also about Canada's ability to attract people with the skills we need. As Canada adjusts to the economy of the future, based on science and advanced technology, the demand for increasingly skilled workers will grow. However, in some cases, there are no Canadians with the skills required to fill specialized jobs.

Immigration helps find some of these skilled workers. Conversely, such immigrants fill jobs that help our economy remain competitive and thus, either directly or indirectly, they create more jobs. However, the present system for selecting qualified workers is too slow and is unable to meet the demands of Canadian industry.

Furthermore, immigration should contribute to regional economic development. Here again, the current legislative framework does not provide the means to encourage immigrants to locate in regions where their skills are most in demand.

Changes are necessary to maintain and improve a Canadian program that has helped us to become aware of our identity and has contributed to our prosperity for generations.

In 1976, we adopted the current Immigration Act which introduced the program's three fundamental objectives: reunite families, protect refugees and promote Canada's economic development. These objectives remain primordial in the bill before the House today.

Our current legislation requires the federal government to set annual levels of immigration. We set those levels after consultations with the provinces. However, although the federal government is responsible for setting annual immigration levels, we lack the means to actually deliver on those targets.

The proposed changes will give us the means to control our immigration program more effectively. The new management system will help us adapt the program to Canada's needs.

These changes will introduce greater certainty to our planning. Greater certainty means fewer delays, it means more predictable processing times and greater fairness for applicants. More specifically, we will be able to avoid the buildup of backlogs which are costly and a constant source of frustration.

We have proposed three streams for selecting immigrants. Immigrants belonging to various categories will be selected and their applications processed according to clearly defined principles.

Applications made by claimants from the first stream, namely spouses and dependent children, would be processed as they are submitted and according to specific time standards. There would no fixed limit on the number of such applications approved each year.

Applications submitted by claimants from the second stream, which include parents and grandparents of Canadian residents, would be processed on a first come first served basis. There would be ceilings for applications from each group within this stream. The other applications would be eligible the following year.

Applicants from the third stream would be selected for excellence, accepting only the most highly qualified individuals. Again, only the allotted number of applicants specified in the annual plan would be accepted. Once the ceiling for the year would be reached, the other applications would no longer be accepted, again to stop costly backlogs from accumulating.

The third stream would include individuals from the independent or entrepreneurs categories or people qualified in designated occupations.

These changes will provide us with the modern management tools that we need to ensure that the immigration process better serves the interests of Canadians. However, we must also take into account the needs of the provinces and territories. Immigration can and must play an important role towards achieving their social and economic objectives. The proposed changes will help us to better take into account their concerns. In particular, the new measures proposed by the federal government reflect the present agreement between the federal government and the province of Quebec.

For the first time, the federal legislation on immigration will reflect the new sharing of responsibilities between the Governments of Canada and Quebec, pursuant to the 1991 Quebec–Canada Agreement on Immigration. The legislation recognizes the exclusive responsibility of the Quebec government regarding the selection of immigrants wishing to settle in that province. It also recognizes Quebec's responsibility to set up and manage the sponsorship commitments made by Canadian permanent residents for members of their family wishing to settle in Quebec.

By virtue of the agreement, the Government of Canada is committed to pursuing an immigration policy that allows the arrival in Quebec of a percentage of immigrants that is at least as high as the percentage of the Canadian population represented by that province, thus preserving its demographic weight within our country. Right now, measures of an exclusively administrative nature enable us to meet this commitment. This bill is therefore aimed at providing us with a safe legislative framework.

By specifying the percentage of immigrants that Quebec can have, as well as its role regarding the make-up of the flow of immigrants, this legislation recognizes the importance for Quebec to plan its own migration movements.

A press communiqué released earlier this week by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Immigration of Quebec said that regarding the reunification of families, the minister noted the will of the federal government to speed up the processing of immigration applications from spouses and children. This initiative follows repeated requests made by cultural communities in Quebec.

Finally, as regards the sharing of responsibilities in the field of immigration between Quebec and Ottawa, the Quebec minister noted that the federal bill reflects the provisions of the Quebec–Canada agreement on immigration and temporary entry of foreigners, that was reached in February 1991.

This bill is drafted in such a way that it applies equally to any agreement that the federal government might conclude with a province regarding the selection of immigrants.

Many regions of the country have trouble attracting immigrants, especially those who have skills that a particular area may greatly need. To rectify this situation, some skilled workers will be offered a sort of contract arrangement. They will be admitted provided that they settle for a specific period, two or three years, in a given region where their particular skills are in demand. It will be up to the communities concerned to create the right conditions to encourage the immigrants to stay there. Of

course, I am thinking of the lower St. Lawrence, Gaspé peninsula and north shore.

Our immigration program for investors brings to Canada business people who can contribute to regional economic development nationally and regionally.

Between January 1986 and December 1991, the program drew about 7,500 applicants, with total investments of approximately $1.5 billion. Furthermore, they created some 10,000 jobs in Canada.

• (1720)

To improve this program, we will establish national standards, with provincial input, for the kinds and levels of investment provided by the program.

Furthermore, we will take measures for more effective enforcement of the program rules so that Canada can get as much as possible from it.

The generosity and openness of the immigration program shows our understanding of the value of immigration and the role it has played and continues to play in developing this country.

We must ensure that this essential national program continues to promote Canada's prosperity and unity for generations to come.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I listened to the minister with a great deal of interest. I know that she has been particularly involved in the immigration and refugee considerations.

She has had a very attentive ear to many of the concerns that I have expressed. I have listened to other colleagues who have problems with humanitarian concerns. I, on the other hand, have found the minister very open and very understanding. There are constraints that she faces and I understand that. Notwithstanding that, every humanitarian case is a very difficult one. If I follow up on the observations of my colleague from Toronto, I do not think that any of us would find the task of making decisions on people's lives very easy. I certainly would not care to think about the sleepless nights that must be involved.

There is one area that I want to ask the minister about. I hope she can perhaps clear this up. As the minister well knows, 95 per cent of the people who come to this country are not trying to crash the gate. She knows from the process that has been in place that these are rightful seekers of justice at the door of this country. What about those who have been caught in the backlog for two, three and four years, who have established themselves here? They had reasonable and credible grounds when they first came here to be accepted as refugees.

Circumstances changed in their country. They could go back now, so we say, but they have established themselves with a life here, having children here. Does the minister not think at this point, when we did not bring in administerial review and a sort of general amnesty that these families who are established with a good job, who are working well, who have been here three or four years, who have children and new children born here, should automatically receive special consideration and humanitarian consideration?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, what we are trying to do with this bill before us today is to give ourselves the best tools and instruments to manage our immigration program effectively, and of course we also want to improve our refugee determination process.

With the changes we are making, we wanted to clarify the act and to have regulations so that we no longer depend on procedures which in the past unfortunately led to such large backlogs, to which our colleague refers.

It is important that this revision enable us to select effectively those who want to come to Canada. With the bill before us today, we also want to protect Canadian society from applicants who abuse the system and we especially want to simplify the process.

What will happen to the backlogs? It will be up to cabinet and the minister responsible for immigration to make the appropriate decisions. The important and urgent thing was to make these amendments so that we finally have what we need to manage the system properly, while maintaining this humanitarian tradition that Canada has always had and of course respecting refugees. Always remember that there is an immigration system but also very specific treatment for refugees, who are selected individually and can appeal.

I think that this whole process, which we are trying to make as humane as possible, makes Canada what it is, a welcoming country; it shows respect for those who respect our system.

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for the good speech that she made earlier. I would also like to emphasize three points that are often brought to my attention in my riding.

Many people in my region, whether they are officially recognized refugees or immigrants, want to settle and work but have difficulties doing so, for various reasons. Let me give you the example of a doctor.

A doctor must go back to school and start his studies all over again because the Quebec Medical Association—or even that of Canada, but I refer in particular here to Quebec's—does not allow a qualified doctor from another country to start practising immediately. I am convinced that we would help some regions—I use the example of a doctor, but of course there could be other occupations—by recommending to immigrants that they settle in those regions. In fact, the majority of regions do not have immigrants. Occasionally, I talk to my colleagues about immigrants and they do not even know to what I am referring. I will not repeat the little joke that I tell them, but since they do not even know about this issue, they cannot discuss it.

I think this will be a very good thing, because it will help the regions that need qualified people but cannot get them because Quebecers or Canadians do not want to go there. I am convinced that there is an endless number of immigrants that will be proud to come to Canada and to work in those regions to help the local population.

The second stream, which is of great interest to me, concerns spouses and children. I will talk briefly mostly about spouses.

I know of spouses that have had to wait two and even two and half years. When people get married, they want to live together and not be separated by continents and have to phone to hear from each other. I once told a minister that if he and I were in that situation, people would hear us say things that would not be very nice.

Again, I congratulate my colleague because I believe that this second stream is very important, especially as regards children and spouses.

I now want to say a word about job creation. This afternoon, when I was coming back from my riding, we got talking on the famous Constitution and on job creation. We need investors to create jobs. The investors program has already created 10,000 jobs. This is extraordinary. Several people from Hong Kong are now settling in my riding to create jobs. I congratulate the two ministers for having included this stream in their program.

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, I will simply say that it is perfectly in order to think about remote areas, and I can say that where I come from, there are not many immigrants. It would definitely be a big plus to be able to attract skilled immigrants, and the medicine field is an excellent one. Indeed, where we have problems attracting doctors, such as in remote areas, it would be great if, through an immigration policy, we could give provinces the responsibility of identifying the qualified resources to improve the quality of life.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for participating in the debate on this bill this afternoon, and I also want to thank her for the help that she provides to all the members that raise with her issues dealing with immigration.

I want to ask her why the government does not give refugee status claimants the possibility of an appeal on the merits of their case, following a negative decision from the refugee board. The minister knows that in Rabbi Plaut's report tabled in the mid-1980s, non-governmental organizations, churches and lawyers specializing in immigration issues all recommended such a right to appeal based on the merits of a case.

• (1730)

She must also know that not having a right to appeal leads to requests based on humanitarian considerations which end up on her desk or her colleague's. She also knows that such requests are rather futile. According to statistics compiled by non-governmental organizations, in Ontario and Quebec, only 23 out of 3,485 requests for humanitarian considerations were accepted in 1991. She knows why an appeal on merit is important. A claimant may present evidence that he was unable to corroborate

at the initial hearing. For several other reasons that I intend to explain in my speech shortly, an appeal is necessary. Why did the government not accept this right to appeal? Could the government consider such an amendment when this bill is studied?

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, I can reassure this House that even after the act is amended, everyone will still be able to demand fair and equitable treatment. Even under this new legislation, every case will be considered individually, in a humanitarian way. Of course we will be able to make the appropriate decisions based on personal circumstances.

As I was saying a little earlier, what we are trying to do with our amendments to the act is to maintain this balance between our humanitarian tradition in dealing with refugee claims and reliable and efficient management of our immigration system.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, we all ought to know that Canada is a country built by immigrants and which continues to depend heavily on immigrants for its growth. It is this fact which has created on Canadian soil a unique multicultural society.

My own riding, Mount Royal, is a microcosm of that Canadian dream that has drawn so many millions of people to this land, whose diversity is a source of cultural and economic wealth and is proof of our potential to make not only this century but the next one also, a century of Canada's greatness.

The matter of immigration is a matter we all ought to take to heart. It is a very sensitive matter and it is a very emotional issue.

As a Canadian of Jewish faith I certainly know about refugees and I certainly know a great deal about immigration. I know about there being no safe haven, about the fact that there is no open door and about boats being refused at our ports. I know about that, as do many other groups in our society who have come here as immigrants. We all just have to think back to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and their shores and the fears that were aroused with the Tamil arrivals and of the Sikhs.

There are groups, not only in my riding, but across this land that know about not having access or safe harbour with an open spirit at times. Times have changed, attitudes have changed and I would hope that Canada's great open spirit to that change will never close down.

Montreal is one of the great cultural mosaics in this country. The centre of that cultural mosaic is Côte-des Neiges, a Snowdon district, which is in my riding. The many cultures which coexist there side by side in this district has given it a degree of vibrancy, a sense of being alive and fascination and differences. We have learned not only to be tolerant, which I find not to be the kind of word I particularly like, but we have learned to have respect for each other. We live in that area of my riding in very close quarters under very difficult circumstances with a lot of emotional trauma that is accompanied by the impact of having to live as either a refugee with an unsettled case or as a new immigrant trying to find one's way, whether it be in the linguistic sense or the cultural sense, in a whole new milieu.

With this new mosaic that has built into this wonderful part of my riding, we have seen self-help groups arise. We have seen community service groups come into being. We have seen ethnic centres that are helping out and extending a hand. We have a wonderful place called Project Genesis that has done some wonderful work so there is better understanding about the cultural way of life, because it is a cultural way of life. It is different for each one of these groups that come here, whether it is landlord tenant relations, whether it is how you shop in the store, whether it is your transportation system, your education system, language at work, language at home, the mores of a society which are different from the mores of many of the societies from which these people come.

I can tell you that there are many aspects that go into the development of an immigration and refugee policy that must be taken into consideration. I guess that is one of the reasons I regret so sincerely that we have had closure called on this bill. This is one of the last bills on which this government should ever have considered closure.

This is a bill that touches the very fibre and heart and life cycle in this land. There are so many things that need to be discussed that are left out, never mind that which is included.

If we could perhaps have raised those issues it could have sensitized the committees when they went out to have some discussions. It is not only me and my riding. It is almost every single member of this House who spends hundreds and hundreds of hours with people who are stressed, who are concerned and upset. They do not understand why their children are behaving the way they behave. They do not understand our education system. They do not understand what the changes have done to their husbands from families that were patriarchal and

where the mother is now the breadwinner and they have turned to a matriarchal society.

We need to do things to help the immigration and the integration into our larger society, not only for the people coming in but for those of us who are on the receiving end.

To be fair, there are many things in this bill which are interesting proposals and I hope will help us accomplish our national goals of prosperity. Indeed, we should encourage different forms of immigration and particularly those who can afford to invest in this country, those who have a spirit of or demonstrate a sense of entrepreneurial capacity or talent.

We have essentially three streams put in here. The first stream says "wealthy investors". I am not 100 per cent keen about wealthy investors. I am keen about people who are prepared to invest. What does wealthy mean? If you have $150,000, is that wealthy? If you have $200,000, is that wealthy? If you have $2 million, is that wealthy? If you are going to live in a major city, does that make you less or more wealthy, depending on the money you have in your pocket? I think it is a very difficult decision to make as to what is a wealthy entrepreneur. I suppose if you start in the millions and lots of zeros beyond which I am normally not able to count, that would be the wealthy investor.

What about the entrepreneur? I think that is very important. What about the independent immigrant? The reason I raise these three streams, whether it is the wealthy investor, the family member or the accrued refugee in the first stream which are fast-tracked, or the limited access, which are the parents and the grandparents, the self-employed, and people with job offers, or the third stream of entrepreneurs, independent immigrants, who are going to be based on point systems, these will all be defined in regulation, but not in the act. That means they can be changed around at will. There will be no accountability for the House of Commons. I think in a bill of this nature we need a serious sense of responsibility.

• (1740)

There is another aspect of this bill that I do not know how one gets around. People do not recognize the importance of immigration to the well-being of this country, that all immigrants are a boon to Canada, that they are the taxpayers, they are the consumers, they become the producers, and they become the employers. We have a very important study in that regard, the 1992 study of the Economic Council of Canada. They outperform native-born Canadians in labour force participation. No greater a percentage end up on welfare than do native born. That is a myth that people like to circulate which is unfounded. Almost 28 per cent have some university training as compared to approximately 24 per cent among native-born Canadians.

Studies by other learned institutions, and I have a lot of studies in front of me, debunk a lot of the myths, studies from the Laurier Institute and as I said from the Economic Council. I might get around to quoting some of them. Right at this moment they all support the findings that it is vital and important that we increase the people of Canada, the numbers of people who fill this vast land, through immigration. We are certainly not doing it through our own repopulation systems right here in this land. Immigrants are a boon and they are a treasure.

Is that message getting out? I do not think so. We have been sending wrong messages. It is very important that we change the language of discourse, the language that makes us feel that they are not an important asset and a boon to our society.

The fact is that the message that immigration is a blessing, as I said, is not out there. If it were out there, the fact that racists in our country continue to suggest or imply or insinuate that immigration somehow harms us, or takes away jobs, or dilutes our national identity would not be current, if we were doing our job.

The fact is that thousands of signed petitions against turbans as an acceptable headdress or a head covering for the RCMP officers would never have come in and been deposited in this House if we understood the significance of dress as a cultural part of life for certain

streams of immigrants coming into this land. That does not make them any less or any better than any other Canadian.

The fact is that some suggest that racism is exacerbated by immigration to Canada of visible minorities, of people of colour. The fact is that some go so far as to suggest that only those immigrants who look and act "like Canadians", whatever that may mean, should be admitted because they will integrate more quickly into the mainstream of Canadian life and Canadian society.

That language is anathema to me. I find it would not be on the tongue, in the mouths or in the minds of people if we had done a proper job in the integration and in the instruction within our school system and within the larger society so that we could count those blessings for the blessings that they truly are.

Does the legislation dispel this myth in any way or any of the other myths about immigration? I do not believe so. Many pieces of legislation have come into this House with preambles that are absolutely overflowing with fanciful language that find no place in the law. This was a perfect time to put a preamble in that would indicate the strength and the importance of immigrants to the growth and the development of Canada.

Somehow or other there was such a rush to get this massive bill in here and through here we forgot some of the key phrases and the key thoughts that could have been there that would underscore the fact that the definition of Canada is unity in diversity. Whether it is the diversity of our geography, the diversity of our regions, the diversity of our people, the diversity of their colour or the diversity of their language, that is what has built this country. As we go across this land we can appreciate that and we can understand it. We should have written it into a preamble in this bill.

As we did not accompany this bill with any kind of an education campaign, I think we had better look to that as the next step so that we can debunk the myths that are out there.

One of the big concerns that I heard over the past weekend as I was home and saw large numbers, as all of us do, of constituents, is that they are very concerned about the lack of prior consultation. Many a group committed to Canada's present and future and committed to a fair and equitable immigration and refugee policy has expressed dismay at the lack of consultation which preceded the tabling of this important legislation. These groups are not opponents but are allies of Canada, Canadian immigration, and the minister. They know the immigration and refugee field well and they seek the best for our country. The minister would have been well advised to have consulted them.

Why did we hear there was no prior consultation? We have learned all too well in recent years how far a faulty process can go to derail even the best of proposals. I am not going to read chapter and verse in here about all the failures by this government since it came to power, the backlog, and all that business.

I have in front of me a number of press releases. I will read the B'Nai Brith Canada release which along with the Canadian Jewish Congress is well known for its interventions in the interest of a very good and healthy immigration and refugee bill.

I do not have to remind this House about the role of Rabbi Plaut in setting the stage for the first of the trilogy of bills that are in here. The B'Nai Brith says:

> That while the proposed changes to the Immigration Act introduced yesterday in Parliament address many issues in need of attention, the lack of prior consultation in drafting these changes and some of the proposed changes themselves are a cause of concern to B'Nai Brith Canada's Institute for International Affairs. The institute was deeply involved in the debate over changes to refugee legislation adopted by the first Mulroney government and has continued to express concerns over fairness and humanitarianism in the management of refugee change.
>
> As a community that has experienced the consequences of restrictive immigration and refugee policies, we are committed to the development of a fair and effective process in this area. B'Nai Brith has supported significantly increased immigration targets for Canada which is a country built by newcomers and which will grow primarily through immigration. While it is natural that Canada would act in its own interest in recruiting perspective immigrants we must never neglect our humanitarian obligations.

This is Frank Dimant, chief executive officer of the Institute speaking.

I would bring to your attention:

> The legislation does not deal with major concerns which have existed for some time regarding fair procedure. The appeals procedure is inadequate and the benefit of the doubt has been eliminated in requiring a unanimous decision by refugee board adjudicators hearing cases of individuals arriving without documents. Finally, refugee claimants should be able to work as soon as they make their claim rather than only once it is accepted. There are a few other points that are made here.

I often look at this saying you are supposed to arrive here as refugees with your documents. What are you supposed to do? Go back to the city hall and say please while I am running away to save my life and save my children could you please just go to your files and get out my birth certificate? Really there is some insanity that goes along with this whole thing.

With respect to the lack of consultation and the shortness of debate on this bill, the closure which I find totally unacceptable, I do not understand what the rush is. We have already got enough problems with this. I think we should do this, do it this time, and do it right.

The shift from legislation to regulation, I would like to move from process to the substance in a sense or to a substance process issue. The bill provides for far greater use of regulation by the minister and officials. Matters which were once in law are now going to be brought in through regulation.

I am sick and tired of this government bringing things in through regulation. There is a lack of respect for Parliament, the democratic process, and that must be corrected. The fact you have called closure is one example. The fact you like to do so many things by regulation. I will never understand why you want to do that.

One day you are not going to be the government and you are going to dump all this muck on the heads of this party. Who needs it. Thank you very much. Do your job. Put it in law. Never mind regulations that are going to drive ministers crazy.

An hon. member: You are not helping the Liberals.

Mrs. Finestone: I would suggest, as I said, the power of Parliament is being reduced. The system becomes more susceptible to abuse. At minimum these regulations should be submitted to Parliament for a review.

With respect to the obligation to settle in specific areas or in specific regions in terms of the substance of the bill, the legislation makes it easier for potential immigrants to gain admission to Canada if they agree—if you put it in regulations—to settle in a specific area where their particular skills may be needed.

• (1750)

Questions have already been raised in this House and around the country whether or not this is an infringement on mobility rights as set out in our charter. Did anyone check? Has anyone gone to see about court challenges?

I see the minister is coming in. I must have aroused his interest in some remark I made. Welcome.

I would really like to know from the minister if anyone checked about court challenges. I think it is very important to know whether the charter is going to stand up in this area.

The key to an immigrant's becoming a fully productive member of Canadian society is integration. I talked about integration.

Will adequate integration services be available to all those who settle in smaller centres? Will immigrants' integration be hampered by the absence of people of similar origin who may have been here for some years now?

Much of this is very important in the settling of people who are very, very uncomfortable when they first arrive here. Immigrants have been gravitating to Côté-des-Neiges in Snowdon because they see it as a place where they can establish themselves when they first arrive. There is a sense of tolerance and respect for differences in this community because people living close together here know they are all going through the same experience.

The last point I would like to make is this question of the excessive demands on health and social services.

When this bill refers to this excessive demand, are these code words for AIDS victims, for HIV-positive people? Are these provisions for more assuredly removing barriers for handicapped people, and people who seek to immigrate here who might cause us some extra weight on our social services? I do not know, but there are some serious problems there.

There are also serious problems in the refugee determination system. The government has given criminal images to refugees and wants to fingerprint them. It wants to do all kinds of things for refugees to find out if they are going to be abusers. I think the number of abusers we have had indicate we do not have to worry about it but if we did, we should have an appeal on merit.

I am sorry my time has come to a close. I would like to have addressed the question of a safe third country. A lot of work needs to be done when this bill goes to committee. I hope there will be an openness of spirit, and the legislative committee will not be like a kangaroo court. I hope we can make significant and important changes for these people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a very good speech, but she said two completely different things.

[*English*]

One was positive, the other was negative.

We have been handling refugee status since 1985. I have attended 800 to 900 different meetings and we have consulted 500 to 600 different organizations. It always comes to the same thing. They want this and they want that.

When Bill C-55 came into effect I was against it because the committee had not made enough recommendations. Right now she is saying we should have more consultations. I think we have already had enough. Now this bill is applying some of the Bill C-55 recommendations, such as having one level for refugee status.

When people come in now and ask for refugee status, we will know right away if they are acceptable or not. Having just the one level will shorten the period by about a year and a half for them to attempt to go to the second level. We will have no backlog. It will be done within five to six months. Before with the first level they would say you might be a refugee. It looks like you have a credible basis, but you have to go to the second level to prove it.

Right now there is only one level. It is going to go much faster. It will be fast, efficient and honest for the people coming in, and they will not have to wait. People are not going to have to wait two and a half or three years to get to the level. They will already have been passed and accepted or not. There will be a better screening test and the refugees will be honest to goodness refugees. People in my riding are complaining that some are using the back door because it takes too long. Before Bill C-55 we had six or seven levels and now we have two. We said we should have one level and now we have it. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I consulted with him enough in the last three years and have said to every minister of immigration there should be only one level. There has been enough consultation, let us start the ball rolling. We are using closure because we have to. It should have been done yesterday. It should have been done six months ago.

Believe it or not, I agree with a Liberal that people do not know how much of an asset to the country immigrants are. One member from Toronto said we should make decisions, so let us tell the people out there in Canada immigrants are an asset. They buy clothes, shoes and food. They even buy from one of my stores. We definitely should have this.

Mrs. Finestone: I thank my hon. colleague from the other side of the House. I often tell people for the most part every one of us are friends behind the curtains, but we have different ideological points of view sometimes. I think we can be respectful of that difference.

We have gone to many meetings together. We have shared similar concerns with respect to many of the dossiers. We had great admiration for your stance as chairman of that committee on employment and immigration. It was not easy for you to take the courageous stand you took and we acknowledge that.

I would like to remind you our competent critic, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, indicated as early as last year, on May 21st I believe, we should have eliminated the two-tier system. We certainly should not have done what we did. It did not prove to be effective anyway, as 95 per cent passed the first stage of the hearing.

I think you would agree with me no one in this world is perfect. As refugees come across the border, who is to say the immigration person they see is not wrong? I think you would agree there is a potential margin of error. I would not even use the word "abuse" although that could be, depending on your point of view. We are dealing with a human life. We cannot afford a margin of error when we are dealing with a human life.

There has to be a method of review. There has to be the right to fair or due process. So when officers at the port of entry reject a refugee applicant, there has to be the right of due process. I think that was the nature of your question.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I want to say to my colleague from Mount Royal I share her view on the emotional trauma people go through. We cannot seem to get through to the government today the emotional trauma people experience when they are caught in the system and not getting the proper service.

I want to cite a very specific case. I have a gentleman in my riding whose name is Mohammed Ali. Mohammed was given his convention refugee status in November of 1990. He was told by employees at the Immigration and Refugee Board it would take approximately two years to get his landed immigrant papers. After a few months they asked for his fingerprints. They wanted to check to make sure he did not have a criminal record. Mohammed sent his fingerprints to the department and knew there was certification there had been no criminal record because it was an FBI clearance. He then went ahead and made arrangements to marry a person this summer from Sweden. The wedding was organized, but the papers would not come through. They discovered two months ago the department lost the fingerprints. We got another set of fingerprints taken but now because the department is so busy, they cannot be processed in time and he has had to call off the wedding. These are the kinds of things that really cause emotional trauma. If the minister had proper person-years to address these situations a lot of this frustration would be alleviated.

• (1800)

I want to ask the member if she can tell me why she thinks the minister refuses to give this department enough person-years to do this job properly.

Mrs. Finestone: Madam Speaker, I would love to be able to understand why this minister does a number of the things he does. I cannot answer that question.

I can tell you that I went to Hong Kong and pretended to be a refugee and an immigrant applying through the procedures in the Hong Kong office after having visited the Vietnamese camps there. I do not know how the staff in Hong Kong stand the stress. They are overworked and stressed. People are coming in with serious problems that create emotional tension. There is a building that has nothing but files in it. There are not enough people. I understand that New Delhi is worse. It takes anywhere from two to three years to even find the file. As members of Parliament we know how frustrating the whole thing is.

I would presume that the Minister of Employment and Immigration would love to have more staff. I would presume he has made an application to Treasury Board and I would presume that either the Minister of Finance or Treasury Board have been tight. If they are so tight, why do we have a $160 billion budget, a deficit and we are still short-staffed? I do not know the answer. I wish I could help but I am sorry, I do not have a crystal ball. I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to take part in the debate on Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

I was somewhat surprised to learn how many pages were in this bill. When this is sent to the legislative committee it is going to have its work cut out.

I would also like to tell the people that are listening, as other members have said, because of closure we cannot make changes in it. There will be no changes made in this bill here in this House during second reading. The only changes that will be made will be made in committee and brought back to the House at report stage. Therefore, we do a disservice when we insinuate that because there has been a limitation to the amount of hours we will take in this House of Commons to debate this, it is against democracy and all those things that go along with that. That is not telling people the truth about how things work in the House of Commons here in Ottawa.

The member opposite also alluded to the fact that there have been no consultations. There have been continuous consultations on immigration matters. This is now the second bill we brought into this House since we came to power in 1984.

Canada has the most open and generous immigration and refugee program in the world. Unfortunately, over the past 10 years our generosity has been perceived as a weakness instead of a virtue. In short, I would say our generosity has been abused. This has been a sore point for many Canadians. When we extend our hand to others

in friendship we are not anxious to have our hospitality spurned. Yet there are many who are quick to abuse us.

The tools of the multibillion dollar migrant smuggling trade are sophisticated and include colour photocopiers, high-tech printing techniques and new computer technologies. They challenge the ingenuity of Canadian immigration officials and law enforcement staff around the world.

This is the ultimate irony. People want to come to Canada because our society is open and tolerant. People can achieve anything to which they turn their hands. We have created such a society because of our parliamentary system and our belief in the rule of law. Law is paramount in Canada and all people are equal before the law. Yet to benefit from the society which our laws have helped create, many are quick to break those very laws.

I find this unacceptable. The residents of my riding of Fraser Valley East and indeed all Canadians find this outrageous. As generous as Canadians may be as a people, we will not be abused. Canada will defend the integrity of its society and the integrity of its laws.

Back in 1984, when I first entered politics, I included in my personal platform a pledge to do what I could to help restore control of our borders. I know that immigration has a positive effect on our economy, our standard of living and our quality of life. But an open door policy, a policy that is open to abuse does a disservice to all Canadians and immigrants alike.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration has risen to the challenge of the 1990s and has introduced amendments to the Immigration Act that meet these challenges. Among the proposed changes is a series of important measures that will help those at the immigration desk and in the field to give better protection to all Canadians and our way of life. That issue is a matter of effectiveness. All of the best policies are not worth very much if those who are to administer the policies are not given the tools to carry out their jobs.

Consider that customs officers can search a suspected smuggler for something as innocuous as perfume, a lighter or a watch. Yet we have all heard of the limits imposed on customs officers when they are confronted with an individual who claims refugee status and cannot be searched even when a passport is visible on their person. The limits are astounding. These changes are coming none too soon.

There are also the stories of smugglers collecting passports during a flight so that they can be destroyed and refugee status can be claimed. What about those who file duplicate refugee claims under different names? The time has come to end such absurd abuses.

Really what we had in the Immigration Act up until now were limitations so that our officers were not able to carry out their duties as we would wish them to. They need to have that enshrined in law so that they can carry out the various things that people expect them to be able to do.

This legislation includes provisions that extend more discretion to officers to seize documents, to detain vehicles, to search individuals and to use fingerprints and photos to establish an identity. I do not apologize for giving this role to our officers because if we are going to have control of our borders, and we know that we want to have immigrants come to our country, we want the people that are willing to obey our laws. As well, we also want to make sure that they are the people that we desire to come here, that they are bona fide and are legitimate refugees.

Action is needed and action is forthcoming in this legislation. New provisions for document searches and a restructured system of fines are proposed to deal with these document couriers and others who would abuse our generosity and our hospitality. These migrant smugglers can be likened to the slavers of old. They prey upon the desperate and the downtrodden and they deal in people. Now they will be caught and they will pay. In fact those caught smuggling could face fines ranging from $100,000 and five years in jail up to $500,000 and 10 years in jail.

There are measures to allow removal of illegal entrants in an expedient manner. We are addressing the problems and we are taking the necessary action.

Are we putting up barriers to immigration and refugees? I say, hardly. The numbers of people we accept exceed 200,000 annually. What are some of the things that we have in this bill before us, Bill C-86?

We know that the Immigration Act requires the government to announce each year the number of immigrants to be admitted during the following calendar year. This announcement follows consultation with the various interested parties, including the provinces. However, the current act does not provide the authority to manage the admission of immigrants in such a way as to

achieve the levels in the plan and to realize other policy objectives.

What is being proposed in this legislation is that there will be three new management streams. The first one would not be subject to fixed annual limits. What does this stream involve? This stream is of particular benefit to spouses and dependent children, in other words the immediate family members of people living in Canada, including adopted children.

• (1810)

One asks if the family reunification plan is alive and well. You bet your boots it is. It is alive and well and we encourage it. There are no limitations on that.

I want the people who are here and looking forward to having their family members join them to know that there is no cause for them to be alarmed about what is in this legislation. It will if anything help them be. It will help do away with some of the clutter that is clogging up the system.

People found to be convention refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Board and business persons applying under a revised immigrant investor program can contribute significantly to Canada's economic development.

Are refugees going to be welcome in Canada? Yes, they will be. Are there limitations? Are there numbers being put upon these refugees who land here and are claiming refugee status? No, there will not be limits placed upon them.

The second stream, what does it take in? It will deal on a first come, first served basis. What are some of the characteristics of what will be in the second stream? They will be the parents and grandparents of Canadian residents. They will be government assisted and privately sponsored refugees. They will be applicants who have arranged employment or are self-employed and apply to come to Canada as live-in caregivers, and people allowed into Canada under special programs that may be set up for public policy reasons.

What takes place in the third stream? This will be selected on the basis of excellence because they are the best in their category, for example the most highly skilled workers demanded by Canadian employers in a field for which Canadians are not available.

Those in stream three are subject to limits established in the annual plan. These are people who are applying to come as independent immigrants, people who are qualified in certain designated occupations, and people who are qualified entrepreneurs with business experience who can contribute to Canada's economic development.

When we look at the over-all scene of what is taking place in this bill, it is clear that Canada is open for people to immigrate to our country. We are encouraging people, but by the same token we are going to make sure we have adequate controls on the system.

What we are doing is ensuring that our system is effective. Fairness has been maintained. We will not sacrifice our commitment to fairness, but make no mistake about it, we will not be abused. We cannot afford to sacrifice effectiveness in the name of fairness.

This legislation contains, as I have outlined, a balanced approach that considers and safeguards the principles of fairness and effectiveness. Too often we hear about rights and about freedoms. What we do not hear enough about, what we can never hear enough about, is the responsibility that must necessarily accompany rights and freedoms.

Freedoms and rights come at a cost. That cost is responsibility back to the society which extends the rights and freedoms. There is nothing worse than when we have freedom without responsibility, because then we have irrational behaviour and sometimes we have illegal behaviour.

In Fraser Valley East the community is comprised in large part by descendants of immigrants. We have all come to the Fraser Valley to build a better life for ourselves. We have worked hard and we have created a wonderful community, a community which welcomes immigrants with open arms. We do not welcome abusers who pervert our system and break the laws. We welcome those who will meet their commitments to our society and those who will become responsible citizens in our country.

Our generosity is great. Our tolerance is great, but we will not be abused. This is the message I have heard from my constituents. This is the message I have endorsed and relayed to the minister on more than one occasion. I am happy to see that the minister is taking action, and I encourage all members of this House to support this legislation.

Before I sit down I would like to reiterate that if there are things which are flawed in this legislation there is a means of correcting those flaws. That can come from any side of the House. We do not want something to go forward that will cause problems in the future.

We want something that will help make sure people are treated fairly and we also want to make sure that it is not letting people jump the queue, so to speak, to get in other than at the times they have been selected to come to Canada. We know that during the closing of this debate at second reading, which will be later on this evening, there will be a legislative committee struck to work over the summertime so that some time in the early fall this bill will be brought back to the House. Hopefully there will not be too many amendments but if amendments are necessary, I sincerely trust that the committee will endorse these amendments and bring them back to the House so we can deal with them to make sure the legislation is correct in every way possible that we know how. We are only human. We are not perfect but nonetheless I am committed to make sure we do the best job we know how.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague who said, I believe that Canada was one of the most advanced in the world when it comes to admitting immigrants. I would not say that Canada is the most progressive, but I agree with him when he says that we have an enviable reputation over several countries for having admitted so many immigrants.

As an immigrant myself, I can tell you that, so far, I have found Canada to be a very welcoming country indeed, but I am concerned about this bill, because I get the feeling that government is trying to further limit access to Canada for immigrants. Let me give you two examples and then ask my colleague to comment.

The first thing I noticed was this: there are presently hundreds of thousands of claims in the system and I suggest that the power to cancel them retroactively is an abusive power which could be challenged under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Second, I know from my experience as a member of the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee that government demanded maximum mobility on the part of Canadian workers to move from one place to the other, to work where they want them to, precisely to ensure Canada remains as competitive as possible.

What we see in this bill is the exact opposite of what we were advocating, what we promoted before the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee. Government can prevent immigrants from going where they want. It can force them to stay in the same place—say Moose Jaw, La Prairie, the Saguenay or Chambly—for a number of years. It can force them to stay there for a given length of time. On the other hand, I wonder how it will manage to enforce such regulations.

Why is this government which is so anxious to avoid challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as we have seen with the referendums legislation, prompting such challenges by acting the way I just described in these two examples?

[*English*]

Mr. Belsher: I want to thank the member opposite for his intervention and for his questions.

What we are trying to do here is work with the provinces. The provinces want to end up having some say as to what will happen with regard to people who come into Canada and they want to see if they can have some influence on that.

• (1820)

I see nothing wrong with that. I think it is perfectly legitimate. We already have an agreement worked out with the province of Quebec. I know British Columbia has actively pursued working out an agreement with the federal government with regard to immigration.

Various provinces have desks around the world to seek out people who want to come to their province and to help set up businesses in their province and they will do everything they can to assist them.

The member opposite asks whether it is wrong to force people to go to a place. I do not think there is anything wrong in asking people to come and make a commitment that they will stay for *x* number of years in a particular area. If people want to come to Canada and seek this as

their home, I see nothing wrong with asking them to make that sort of commitment ahead of time.

He talks about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The charter says everyone will be treated fairly under the law. If a person is going to say he would like to come to this country and he will stay in a particular place, and then after he gets here he goes and claims the charter is against him, that person is being dishonest with us. We do not want people who are dishonest with us, when they do not put down on paper what they say they will do when they come to our country. Everyone wants to hide behind the charter as to what they will do.

We want to try to discourage that. Such is the case that people get on an airplane with papers and suddenly when they get off the airplane they no longer have papers. What happened? Did they disappear into thin air? We have to have the ability to take corrective action.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Madam Speaker, I would like to invite members of the House and people who read *Hansard* or who are watching this debate on television to really question the speech that was delivered by the member for Fraser Valley East. I want to point out that the member started off by saying that Canada has the most open and generous system in the world but then alleged that the system is too generous and people are taking advantage of it. He introduced no evidence whatsoever to support the claim that people are taking advantage of our system.

He also said that Canada must defend the integrity of its society. Again, the assumption is that the integrity of our society is in danger. There is no support for such a sweeping statement.

He then said when he was elected he pledged to restore the control of our borders, again suggesting that somehow Canada has lost control of its borders. Again, he introduced no evidence to that effect and I certainly would challenge him on that point.

The member was engaging in a pretty familiar technique which is to set up a straw man and then knock it down. I would really like to tell him that I feel he was engaging in a pretty cynical exercise which is called fear mongering or scare mongering among Canadians that somehow the gates of the country are open and the hordes are about to descend upon us.

The Canadian council for refugees in a press release dealing with the government's legislation said that it is disturbed by the language and orientation of the government's statements. The emphasis on control and abuse, not justified by any available statistics, will undermine public sympathy for refugees. That is the kind of cynical exercise that this member and this government are engaged in.

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, I take great exception to what the hon. member opposite has been saying. Where I come from there have been refugees who have been sponsored into our area and they have been well received and well looked after. They have been a tremendous asset to Fraser Valley East.

We also make no apologies for wanting to have control of our borders as to whom we invite to come to our country and that is what this bill is talking about. I make no apologies for that. That is what is taking place in this bill before us here today.

We have a situation now in which our officers are not able to carry out their jobs adequately. There are instances of that. I do not have them chapter and verse here. He knows it.

That is what this bill is addressing. I encourage members to let this bill go forward to committee so that it can be scrutinized in a very thorough manner.

I think is only right. There will not be a single amendment made to this bill here in the House during second reading. It will all be done in the committee room and there will be weeks and months of work at the committee level. That is what is necessary and I endorse it on that basis.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this very important legislation from the point of view of my own constituents. Surrey is the fastest growing riding in Canada and is now nearly the largest one. We have had an increase of 10,000 households since the last election and many of these people who are moving into the riding are new Canadians or recent immigrants who come from diverse backgrounds: eastern Europe, Central America, Latin America, the Philippines, India, China and the British Isles.

The community has been blessed by this diversity, particularly with the Indo-Canadian community. It has contributed greatly to our economic strength, being involved in small business, labour organizations, gardening and agriculture. It has added greatly to a social milieu within the community, particularly its concepts of family and community responsibility. It holds very strongly to assisting not only its own families and extended families but other people in that community. It has added greatly to the richness of the culture, the language, the music and the food.

I also have had many of these people and their friends and relatives approach me about the problems of immigration. This bill does nothing to address their concerns and the concerns of the average Canadian. This bill does a couple of things that are diametrically opposed to what most people say they want to see in terms of immigration.

First of all, it makes fast-tracks for the wealthy. The person who is in a position to invest a lot of money in Canada is given priority and as some people say he is allowed to buy Canadian immigration status and a Canadian citizenship.

It is fixed. It is proposing to speed up the process for spouses and children but I will tell you that it was done administratively a year ago and it is now taking less than six months for most countries to unite spouses and children with relatives in Canada. Therefore it is not going to do anything for that because it has already been fixed administratively. It only needed the will of the government.

It is changing the fundamental concept of what the family is. Particularly, it is down playing the idea of extended families. In many of our communities the family is more than the mother and father and minor children. A family is parents and grandparents. A family is adult children who are not married. This bill now puts them into a lower category in which it is going to take a long time to be processed.

It puts an emphasis on recruitment of skilled workers at a time when people tell me this government should be putting more money into training within Canada to ensure that we have the skills we need in our work force. Let us not rely upon immigration as a method of recruiting skilled workers when we should be building up the strength within our own community.

• (1830)

In this whole business of immigration, there is concern that the policies reflected in this bill do not reflect the values of Canadian society.

Another thing that is not addressed in this legislation is the real problem in administration of immigration throughout the world.

Recently I had the opportunity to travel to India and to see the numerous problems facing immigrants and people applying for visitor visas in the immigration office in New Delhi.

First of all, it was obvious the office was dramatically understaffed. The immigration case-load had grown from 6,900 in 1986 to 12,300 in 1991 with no increase in staff. This resulted in tremendous pressure on that office.

Of the cases coming to the office in New Delhi, 75 per cent come from the Punjab. It is difficult and even dangerous for many of the Sikhs to travel from the Punjab down to New Delhi.

The government is talking about opening a second immigration office in Bombay. I have been urging this government to open up an immigration visitor visa office where it is needed. That is in the Punjab.

Within the New Delhi office there is a problem with interpreters who understand the Sikh religion and customs. One must remember that the bulk of the people applying for immigration from India are Sikhs and from the Punjab.

There are approximately 80 locally hired staff in that New Delhi office. In other business establishments in New Delhi obviously there are Sikhs working, but in our Canadian immigration office which is dealing with 70 or 75 per cent Sikhs or Punjabi-speaking people, there is no one who is Sikh.

I went with one of my staff members who is fluent in Hindi, Punjabi and English. We sat in on an interview and the interpreter misinterpreted the interview. These same people are advising Canadians on what is Sikh religion and custom as it pertains to immigration. For example: "Is this a valid marriage? No, it is outside the custom". The people who are giving that advice do not know what the religion and custom is and they will give our officers incorrect advice. I have suggested they hire some Canadian-born Sikhs to work in the office. They hire local.

There are physical problems at the embassy. People line up from three o'clock in the morning and stay all day hoping to get a chance to get a ticket to see an immigration officer. There are no washrooms available, no water available, no shelter. That kind of a situation in a Canadian embassy would not be tolerated in any other part of the world where 300 people line up starting at three o'clock in the morning and we do not even make washrooms or water available. The temperature gets up to 40 degrees.

In the administrative process of handling immigration there are things we repeatedly make people come back and forth from the Punjab to New Delhi for. For example, we refuse to have medicals done in the Punjab. Why do we not designate four doctors who are authorized to do medicals in each of the major cities? If they submit medicals that are not appropriate, we strike them from the list. It is very easy. Some people have had to come back not only two but three times to get medicals because they last only six months and their name has not come up for immigration.

There is also another problem that this legislation has not dealt with that is as much a problem and that is the issuing of visas for visitors. Visitors visas are issued arbitrarily by the officer, with no right to appeal. The officer says: "I decide that you are not a bona fide visitor". They do so on whim and I will give you a couple of cases and our response.

I know a young man who is the president of a travel agency for all of southern India. He has been to Canada three times. He has been here with his wife and his daughter. He has always returned home. His sister is a very prominent Canadian. He applied for a visitor's visa to visit his sister for two weeks. He wanted to bring his daughter, an eight year old. His wife was going to stay behind because of her job. Immigration said he could not bring his daughter because he might abandon her in Canada. He was told he had to come the six hundred kilometres from Kerala to Delhi.

Another woman applied to bring her two children to visit her parents in Canada. Her husband was going to stay behind. She had a job to go back to. They had land in India. She was told she could not come to Canada unless she left her two infant children behind. In other words, the Canadian government said that it would hold the children hostage to guarantee the woman's return. That is the kind of decision that is being made on visitors' visas.

When my assistant was getting married, her grandmother and grandfather applied. The immigration officer gave her grandfather a five-year multiple entry visa and denied her grandmother for absolutely no reason. It was an arbitrary decision.

The community is relying on priests in Jutha to help them within their religion. Immigration arbitrarily says this man is a farmer because in their custom and religion the guy does more than just be a priest and therefore they will not allow him to come.

We have made very strong recommendations that people who have visited Canada, the United States, North America and have returned to India should be granted visitors' visas without the need of going all the way to Delhi for an immigration interview.

The general interpretation of the legislation is that the onus is on the person who must prove beyond any doubt he or she will be going back home. The fact that the immigration officer says you are going to abandon your husband, your children and your farm and stay in Canada, that is nonsense. We need a reasonable interpretation that the person is a reasonable visitor.

Parents and grandparents should automatically be given five-year visas. A grandparent coming from England can come and go when he or she wants. Why do we not give a five-year visa and simply let them come and visit their children and grandchildren when they wish to and go back home when they wish to. Let us give special consideration to issuing visitors visas for priests in Jutha.

My concern is that a lot of the problems in the issuing of visitors visas from New Delhi are based on the arbitrariness of immigration officers.

Mr. Mills: Who are overworked.

Mr. Karpoff: Now we have in this bill that a lot of the same types of arbitrary decision-making powers are going to be given to officers as they deal with other areas within the immigration and refugee process. They are going to be able to arbitrarily make decisions.

I want to talk about two or three other points of administration before I start talking about some of the refugee problems. We have another tremendous administration problem in immigration in Canada.

• (1840)

People in my riding who have applied for immigration, who have been here and are now eligible to become Canadian immigrants, because of the delays in processing their applications sit there for 18 months or longer from the time they have completed their qualifications to become a Canadian citizens until they actually get Canadian citizenship. They have met all the requirements. They simply need the opportunity to go before an immigration judge, satisfy the judge that they meet the requirements, and go before the citizenship court.

There are delays now, long delays of a year, 18 months and more. We are taking a person and depriving him of job opportunities. You cannot work for the province of British Columbia unless you are a Canadian citizen. You have other losses that you are suffering. This legislation does not deal with any of the real issues that most Canadians and immigrants are concerned about. It does not deal with the real issues. It deals with the straw man model that there is a real problem with fraud in the refugee section and there is a real problem in fraud in the immigration section. There are people who are coming here who are unqualified, who do not want to work or are going to end up on welfare. That is not true.

There is another thing that really disturbs me about this piece of legislation and that is the government's approach to it. This is a significant change in immigration legislation. It is fraught with problems that are ill–thought through. What does the government do? It waits until three or four days before Parliament rises. It introduces the bill in the House. It forces it through the House on closure so we have basically two days to debate it, discuss it or look at the implications.

It is a huge bill. This is not a one–paragraph bill. It is 110 pages and some of them are very complex. They are difficult to understand. Now what is the government proposing? During the middle of the summer it proposes to rush this through a committee.

People out there in the community are in the process of getting ready for summer holidays. They are going to be away. Ethnic organizations, religious organizations, immigrant organizations are winding down for the summer. Their staffs are going on holidays. They are not going to be able to get together in two weeks, prepare detailed briefs in response to all of these technical questions and interpretations of law and legislation, get it presented to this government and have it properly considered over the summer.

What is the hurry? If the government really feels it is right, why did it not bring this legislation in two years ago when there was lots of time? We would have had two or three years. Why is it waiting until the dying days of its mandate?

Some people in my community over the weekend suggested to me it was a another sceptical ploy to try to see if it could get before Parliament as an election issue rather than take a serious look at the needs of Canada in terms of immigration to look at our history. Under this piece of legislation my father would have never been admitted to Canada. Maybe some of you on that side feel that is quite acceptable. I will bet most of your parents and grandparents would not have been admitted to Canada either.

The people who have built this country, the people who have made this country strong, the people who have enriched this country are the ones who are no longer going to be admitted. That is a shame. It is more shameful when there is an obvious attempt by the government side to push this through the House now, to push it through committee during the summer when organizations will not have the time and resources to properly bring before the committee their concerns about the bill and then bring it back either late in August, as we are now even hearing rumours, or early in September and dump it through the House. I do not think that is acceptable.

I want to close by saying one additional thing and it has been mentioned before. Canada needs immigrants. We have a growing elderly population and the percentage is growing significantly. We need to have younger people to develop the strengths within our community.

We also need to ensure that the diversity of Canada which is its rich heritage is continued. An open and liberal immigration policy is what is needed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of the hon. member opposite.

When the hon. member mentions that it takes at least six months for a spouse to enter this country, has he talked to the immigration critic?

Moreover, he mentioned that we should have additional manpower in New Delhi and he quoted a case in point. If we increased our staff in New Delhi, creating additional expenses, what would his reaction be?

I went to New Delhi and I was able to see all the people lining up. If we agreed to increase our staff, what would happen to the many hundreds of people waiting in line? Would that speed up the process? To do so, we need sound criteria and I think we can do it with what we already have.

The member also mentioned that it could take one or one year and a half to get an immigration visa. I do not want to enumerate all the changes that will affect family members and multicultural communities. When they will all come into effect, an immigration visa will be granted faster to a refugee's close family members, whether they are already in Canada or not, and whether they are in the applicant's country of origin or not.

Has the member carefully reviewed all the changes that will be made? A moment ago, he said that we should have done it two years ago. I must say that I am puzzled by that. The law was already in place two years ago, we are simply improving on it. Believe me, we have been working very hard for the past two years to improve this piece of legislation. This bill is a very good one.

[*English*]

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, I consulted with immigration people in New Delhi and they said to me that they need a minimum of six full-time additional immigration officers. What would be the effect? It would cut down on the line-up so maybe people would not be waiting around for 11 or 12 hours.

Maybe they would not deal with visitor visa applications so arbitrarily. Maybe they would sit there and listen to the person for five or ten minutes and actually find out why they wanted to come and get the correct information instead of arbitrarily dismissing them. Maybe they would not make arbitrary decisions that say, for example, this is not a legal marriage or a proper marriage because the woman is older than the man.

In some parts of India that is not considered custom but in the Punjab it is done all the time. Maybe if they had more time, they would make better judgments. They would be more humane judgments.

That is what is necessary in order to increase it. You talk about the six months.

Mr. Jourdenais: You are lucky if you get it in six months.

Mr. Karpoff: After much yelling and hollering for the last three years and documenting cases, one year ago last summer, unbeknownst to this government, the officers in New Delhi took it upon themselves, with the sanction of the senior bureaucracy in Ottawa, to change the procedure.

• (1850)

They simply said it is unacceptable that a spouse who has been waiting three years, four years—I have one who has been waiting six years—to come. They said they are going to process them in six months.

Other than in a case where there is a problem with the documentation, they have lived up to that and they are processing spouses within six months. In fact, they are doing it within three months and four months by simply changing their policy.

This legislation only now sanctions what the people through their own initiative in the Delhi office were able to do simply by changing their procedure. They simply said: "We are going to do it. We are not going to put them to the bottom of the pile and let them sit there for three or four years".

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Surrey North on his remarks. I think he really communicated the emotional frustration we all experience very well.

I want to hear his views on an idea that I put to the minister earlier today when I was asking him specifically about giving members of Parliament some authority to have conditional approvals on some of the applications that are before the system, that are delayed because of the lack of person-years in the department due to their inability to catch up.

The minister in this legislation seems to be very quick in giving all of this authority to unelected officials, but he does not seem to want any authority given to members of Parliament. Quite frankly, we are much more accountable to our constituents.

In other words, we are certainly going to be put in a harsh light if we put someone through the system on a conditional approval if it were the kind of person who was scamming the system or to quote the Solicitor General, who I think called them riff-raff.

My concern is that the minister seems to be so rigid in his way. He does not want to recognize that we as members of Parliament could be part of this solution. I just wonder what his remarks would be on that. We do sign passports and why not immigration cases?

Mr. Karpoff: It is a novel I idea but my first reaction to it is I did not get elected to Parliament to become an immigration officer.

Mr. Mills: But we are.

Mr. Karpoff: No, we are not. We sign passports saying this is the person's picture and we know them. I really think that would end up being a sham because in my riding I would spend all of my time reviewing refugee cases in detail. As it is now, my staff spend too much time.

The government mucks up, the government has improper procedures, the government does not have a system in place. I do not think the proper solution is for us then to take it over.

One of the things you get into is this whole arbitrariness, particularly with refugees. One of the things in this bill that bothers me is the provisions for removal of immigrants or landed people and how the government is proposing to broaden the arbitrary ability to remove people. I read this section and I wonder if this is really Canada. It says: "Provisions would be introduced to protect the disclosure of information obtained in confidence from foreign governments or intelligence agencies. The court would examine information *in camera* in the absence of the person to be removed, or his or her counsel".

Are you suggesting the MP become the person that hears that information *in camera* without the benefit of the person's counsel?

Mr. Mills: On humanitarian grounds.

Mr. Karpoff: This is on the same kind of arbitrariness. The government is setting in place procedures that are undemocratic, arbitrary, and not even open to the person to know what is going on.

The government in a case such as that can have CSIS quietly designate the organization as subversive and not say anything to the public. A person then goes to a social event sponsored by the organization and is removed from Canada after a hearing that is held *in camera* in his or his counsel's absence.

As an individual member of Parliament I certainly do not want to get involved in any of that kind of nonsense whatsoever. It is bad legislation. Let the government make proper legislation. Let the government deal with it in a normal administrative manner, but do it properly and humanely and with justice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The first five hours of debate are now expired.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 74, I may remind hon. members that the maximum length of speeches is now 10 minutes, without questions and comments.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on second reading of Bill C-86, an Act to amend the Immigration Act.

When a main thoroughfare becomes so congested that rush hour becomes practically synonymous with traffic jams, constant slowdowns and drivers who never know when they are going to get home, city planners start reviewing their traffic plans. The expressways, intermediate roads and access roads they design will help deal with the problem. After that, traffic flows at a far more logical rate and the overall impact is more satisfactory. People spend less time on the road and the number of accidents decreases.

In recent years, the number of immigrants to Canada has increased regularly. This year, 250,000 immigrants and refugees will be admitted to Canada. They come to our country, attracted by the opportunities available to those who live in a country as rich as ours. And why not, when the United Nations ranks Canada first in the world for its quality of life? They also come to this country because economic and social conditions in their country of origin are such that they want to seek a better life for themselves. In any case, the number of people who are leaving their countries for political, economic or social reasons is constantly increasing, and this creates many

new challenges for Canada and other industrialized countries.

We currently have an Immigration Act that was designed to manage the demands of simpler times. For instance, in 1980, approximately 1,500 people applied for refugee status. Last year, more than 30,000 people asked for our assistance: from 1,500 to 30,000 people per year in twelve years. This means that the situation has changed drastically and we can no longer take the same approach to the problem. Compare Germany, which expects 400,000 people to claim refuges status in that country this year.

However, we did not wait until the problem took on crisis proportions. Two years ago, the federal government introduced a five-year plan for immigration, setting the numbers and categories of immigrants we will admit annually until 1995. There is an element of response in this plan. However, today the time has come to update the instruments we intend to use to implement the action plan and that is the purpose of the amendments to the existing legislation.

The federal proposals include a new traffic plan that will help us accelerate the arrival of newcomers and fully integrate them in Canadian society, as quickly and as fairly as possible. We would do well to remember why Canada opens its doors to newcomers. There are three reasons for this. More often, it is to reunite the family of a Canadian resident. In other cases, the doors open to offer protection and asylum to refugees.

• (1900)

Last but not least, we regularly open our doors to independent immigrants and entrepreneurs whose presence here will strengthen our labour market or add to our expertise, technology or investment capital.

The amendments proposed by the federal government will divide our immigrant selection process into three streams or channels. Each stream would have a mix of candidates meeting our three main objectives, but the three streams would differ widely in terms of procedures and priorities.

Applications from qualified individuals in stream one would be processed as they were received, with no set limit on the total number approved in any year. These applicants would be processed in very precise time frames, such as within six months for spouses and dependent children.

This stream would include spouses, fiancés and dependent children of persons already living in Canada, all those recognized as convention refugees by our Immigration and Refugee Board and immigrant investors who are willing and able to invest in our economic development upon their arrival.

Stream two could also reflect our threefold interest in families, refugees and independent immigrants. This second stream would include parents and grandparents of Canadian residents, refugees sponsored by a government or a private organization and anyone benefiting from a special government program arising from a particular international problem, as well as applicants with reserved employment, working independently or admissible as domestic workers.

Applications from these people would be processed in order of receipt and, for the first time, the total number of applications in each category would be subject to limits set in the annual immigration plan. Processing time limits would be set for each application, according to the number of persons already in the system and the total provided in the annual plan. Once the limit for a category was reached, applications would be deferred until the following year.

Finally, stream three would include persons selected on the basis of excellence. There would be no refugees in this stream, since there is no connection between excellence and the need for protection.

Distant family members who are not in the other two streams will be classed with independent immigrants, sometimes in specially designated professions, and qualified entrepreneurs.

Only the best in each category, independent or entrepreneur, the most qualified or those whose qualifications were most in demand with Canadian employers would be selected. There would be precise limits for each category. In this stream as well, once an application was refused, the applicant's file would be closed. He or she would have to apply again.

In summary, these streams would speed the processing of immigrants. Stream one, the express lane, would enable us to process applicants rapidly within precise time limits. The new control measures for stream two, the intermediate lane, would help improve the flow of

immigrants, but the processing times would not be as precisely guaranteed as for stream one.

The third stream would give us something that we greatly need, as we all know. We need a selection method based on success, but which in itself would take nothing away from generosity, a way of channeling excellence into the mainstream of Canadian society.

From the beginning, we wanted to be sure that with the changes made to the Immigration Act, the program would continue to serve the best interests of all of Canada and all Canadians. We are convinced that these amendments will help us achieve our objective, which is to have a fair, balanced, efficient program.

For all these reasons, I am pleased to support the bill and I will vote for it because it is what Canadians want.

[*English*]

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-86 which profoundly amends the present Immigration Act.

Let me begin by quoting from Sir Wilfrid Laurier's eulogy to the first and greatest Canadian Prime Minister: "The life of Sir John A. Macdonald—is the history of Canada".

The history of Canada at that time was one shaped by a vision of unity, of a binding from sea to sea. The cords that were to bind the country were the people, people of every race, colour and creed, of every language and culture, toiling to make a better life for themselves and those they loved.

Macdonald himself emigrated from Scotland. Laurier, the first Canadian-born Prime Minister, opened Canada to the immigration movement. He filled the land with hard-working souls who built the railways, ploughed the prairies, and mined the hard, unforgiving rock. Trees were felled. Towns were built. Boats of every size and shape plied the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific, bringing fish to port or goods to market.

The vision: the country came before region, unity before language and culture.

These two great men, one an immigrant, another Canadian born, began through the process of immigration a legacy of nation building that has set Canada apart in the world. Ours is a country that now is a shining example of compassion to immigrants and refugees.

Last Tuesday, June 16, the minister's office released a communiqué on Bill C-86. The opening paragraph read:

> Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Employment and Immigration, today announced a series of important changes to the Immigration Act which will ensure that the country's immigration system continues to contribute to the unity and prosperity of Canada.

Yet the message of the Minister of Employment and Immigration had a distinctly unpleasant after-taste. When he speaks not from prepared text his language really reveals and echoes the intent of his government. The message comes through loud and clear to the people on the other end of this legislation, refugees and immigrants and those who volunteer on their behalf, that what is in their bank account is of greatest importance when they reach Canadian soil.

In his press conference the minister remarked on bogus refugees and welfare cheats, on immigration scams and asylum shopping. He said:

> We are going to give ourselves the powers to stop welfare abuse.

I felt that in many ways the minister perpetuated myths that the government should be trying to refute, myths that our immigrants and refugees are a strain on the system, that they are a commodity to be managed, that they are to be accepted or rejected as mere commodities.

The minister perpetuates the myth that immigrants are a drain on the public purse, suggesting our welfare system is abused. Studies show that to the contrary costs associated with the arrival of foreigners are short-term and that a much lesser number of them go on welfare compared to Canadian-born citizens. Also, immigrants take jobs that have been shunned by Canadians or for which there are not enough qualified people in Canada.

The Employment and Immigration Advisory Council reported Canadians need to be educated on the benefits of immigration. Yet the government has never supported such an education campaign. For its good advice the advisory council was axed by this government. The minister himself repeats the cheating immigrant myth,

telling the media at his press conference about a refugee collecting multiple welfare cheques.

• (1910)

Why has the minister not highlighted the achievements of Canadian immigrants instead?

These people include: Wilder Penfield, founder of the Montreal Institute of Neurology, an American turned Canadian and one of the foremost brain specialists of our times; Timothy Eaton from Ireland and Sir Donald Smith of Scotland, who headed two of the largest chains of department stores in Canada and who were players in our history; Tommy Douglas, also Scottish, who broke the ground for some of this country's most loved social programs including medicare; and more recently we think of Dr. John Polanyi, a Canadian chemist and Nobel prize winner who was born in Berlin and immigrated to Canada in 1934.

Canadian arts and culture have flourished under the attention of immigrants like Ofra Harnoy, a world renowned cellist from Israel; Rohinton Mistry of India, winner of the 1991 Governor General's award for fiction; and Austin Clark, a novelist from Barbados.

Broadcasting owes much to Adrienne Clarkson who immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong. Rosemary Brown, advocate for women's rights, was the first black woman elected to political office in Canada. She came to this country from Jamaica.

Recognition for excellence in sports goes to Sharif Kahn of Pakistan, many times world squash champion.

For success in business, who could forget Thomas Bata, a Czechoslovakian who built the largest shoe manufacturing company in Canada.

For a legal luminary, do not forget Justice Bertha Wilson, born in Scotland, who was the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

As an immigrant from the Philippines and now a member of this Parliament, I take pride in the precedent set by these immigrants whose hearts and talents have long belonged to Canada. I can only aspire to the heights they as immigrants and Canadians have reached.

At that press conference soon after tabling the bill, the minister with his 113-page bill on the table before him was writing himself a blank cheque to be the one to manage the immigration system. In effect he is writing Parliament out of the process with regulations that bypass the legislative process. He is removing the rights of refugees to appeal Immigration and Refugee Board decisions to a court of law.

Precedents are abundant to show that a court of law has not always agreed with the decisions of the refugee board. Has this government forgotten that the courts are the fortress of law and justice, that democracy becomes meaningless if natural justice is denied? Have the minister and this government failed to remember that courts of appeal prove to the world the vitality of democracy by which we live? Truth does not have to be afraid of appeal, particularly in a court of law where men and women dedicate themselves to the noble pursuit of justice and understanding.

Arbitrary decisions on visitors visas in the past have also infringed on the rights of both Canadians and of their visiting family members.

Recently I intervened on behalf of a Mrs. Kaur from India, the sister of a man who died in my constituency. She travelled long and arduously from her home in the Indian countryside to the Canadian Embassy in New Delhi, applied and was denied. I intervened on her behalf, and after a prolonged agony a minister's permit was given. How many more Sarjit Kaurs are refused visitors visas every day?

Recently a constituent invited a relative from Ukraine. The visitor was refused admittance for similar reasons. Ukrainians until now had been prisoners in their own country, until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Is it not ironic that again they are prisoners this time because of Canadian immigration policy?

I would like to conclude by saying that this country was built by immigrants. It is a country that was not built overnight, yet overnight the government is trying to drastically change the whole immigration process. Some changes are good, but some changes are bad. We and the people who care about immigrants and the continued growth and prosperity of this country should be given time to study this bill.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too, am very pleased to stand here to speak to Bill C-86. The motion put forward by the immigration minister refers to the second reading and reference to a legislative com-

mittee in the Departmental envelope of Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof and on the amendment by my colleague, the hon member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, seconded by the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys:

> That the motion before us be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:
>
> That Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

It is saying the bill should not be passed this evening but it should be given an extension allowing us the opportunity to scrutinize it.

The complex and extensive bill was tabled less than a week ago. There has not been enough time to carefully scrutinize it or to have broad consultation. It is disappointing the government has not allowed a full and open discussion about this most serious bill which would involve all parties concerned.

The government is attempting to regain votes lost to its extreme right-wing adversary, the Reform Party, by catering to the perception that the system is being abused and manipulated by a significant percentage of refugees and immigrants. Available studies prove that the opposite is true and that in fact, immigrants contribute far more to this country than they take away.

The language of the bill is disturbing in that it concentrates on issues of control and abuse and not on the interests of helping genuine refugees while at the same time streamlining the process.

We know that 95 per cent of those who come to Canada are approved for recognition as refugees in the first stage of the present system.

We need time to study this bill in order to offer constructive criticism. Instead, the government would rather blindly push the legislation through to suit its own political agenda. This fact has added significance when one considers that this legislation constitutes the most extensive revisions to the Immigration Act since 1978. There are obviously many flaws and we must have time to deal with the issues properly.

When we are dealing with refugees we are dealing with life and death situations. As the opposition critic for human rights, I know from experience that those who are sincere refugees—and the vast majority are—come to Canada to escape severe oppression and in many cases death.

Let us for a moment try to understand the people we are supposed to be helping through our system of refugee determination. According to article 1 of the 1951 United Nations convention relating to the status of refugees, a refugee is "a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or a political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

In 1969, Canada signed the United Nations convention relating to the status of refugees and in 1989 Canada received the UN High Commissioner for Refugees highest award for humanitarian assistance. That speaks tremendously well of Canada.

In 1986, the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations published a report entitled *Independence and Internationalism*. It concluded that Canada's refugee policies were consistent with the country's larger foreign policy objectives, namely humanitarianism, humanitarian assistance to disadvantaged peoples and our interest in a stable and just international order.

There are few countries in the world which have sufficient resources and the capability to provide temporary or permanent asylum to refugees. Canada figures prominently on that short list.

• (1920)

I submit that our enviable record has slipped. It has slipped at a time when the world needs us most. Environmental disasters, chronic famine and regional conflicts are factors contributing to the creation of new classes of refugees and give rise to even more confusion about what should constitute a precise definition of a refugee.

Recently, global trends have placed unprecedented pressure on Canada's refugee determination process. In 1981, 3,450 refugee claims were made to Canada. The 1980s saw a remarkable increase in claims. In 1987, there were 25,000 people claiming refugee status and by 1989

that number had increased dramatically to 95,000. We saw an incredible backlog as a result.

In order to deal with this the government introduced legislation in an attempt to streamline the process. The changes prove over time to be slow, open to abuse and grossly unfair to many of the refugees who get caught in this trap. Today, we look at the government's attempt at improving the process.

Many of the provisions proposed in this legislation deal with management of the system and with enforcement. Whether or not they can actually be considered an over-all improvement to Canada's immigration system is yet to be determined.

As has been the case with other bills passed recently by this government, Bill C-86 grants to the minister and cabinet a greater use of regulation and removes several matters from the law.

The measures included to speed up family reunification of young children, husbands and wives are indeed very welcome.

Our immigration critic, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, recommended some time ago, on May 21, 1992, that those granted refugee status should be allowed to sponsor their families as soon as they are recognized as refugees.

One-third of refugees have spouses &/or children and many have been separated for over five years as they get caught in the extremely slow process. It makes sense to allow immediate reunification of refugees with their families since approximately 95 per cent of refugees are eventually granted landed status.

The bill also resurrects a safe third country provision which was opposed a few years ago in former Bill C-55. This allows an immigration officer to return a refugee applicant to certain countries which the applicant passed through on the way to Canada.

According to the Canadian Council for Refugees much decision-making has been taken away from the quasi-independent immigration adjudicators and given to senior immigration officers. The CCR continues that decisions that will be made without the claimant having a right to counsel. Genuine refugees because of that may be sent away at the border having no recourse at all.

Changes as well are proposed to the process of the refugee panel. In the present process only one member of a two member panel need approve the applicant for recognition as a refugee. Under this bill the approval of two members out of two will be required in certain cases.

Under the legislation the minister will be allowed to choose among applicants for immigration those he or she considers to be the best for one reason or another. This would replace the system of first come first served for a system of pick and choose. The cynical side of me can only guess which immigrants from which countries will get preferred treatment, especially if we were to believe the majority of the proposed changes are politically motivated.

Other changes include that the general stay for visitors visas has been extended from three to six months, but nothing has been done to correct the abuse in rejecting legitimate applications for visitors visas. The bill introduces more stringent provisions against potential terrorists and criminals involved in organized crime. It is not clear how freedom fighters, for example, would be distinguished from terrorists. I think it is critical that this distinction be made quite clear.

The bill also shifts a substantial burden from the government to transportation carriers for enforcement of the law. There could be serious implications here for cost accountability and control. It is interesting that the government is expressing such a desire to control immigration and the influx of refugees on the one hand and on the other hand to relinquish some control to transportation carriers. It just does not seem to make sense to me. One good provision is the inclusion of a system of discipline for members of the Immigration Refugee Board who misbehave or are negligent. There were several cases where board members were rude and ridiculed refugee applicants. I think most of us were quite shocked by that.

While it is good to clearly define what is acceptable behaviour, I am left wondering whether it is a politically motivated inclusion or whether it has been included in the interests of humanitarian concern for people who have already suffered enough.

There are a number of areas that have not been dealt with by this bill. There is no provision for an appeal on the merits of a case from decisions rejecting refugees at the border or at the refugee board. There is an appeal on questions of law to the federal court, but even this is

restricted. No board is perfect and an appeal system is essential where human rights are involved.

While the bill will clarify and improve the enforcement provisions of the act, nothing is being done to clarify and improve the use of section 14, which provides for admission of refugees on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

I prepared a 20–minute speech and unfortunately now have to cut it down to 10 minutes. There are a lot of other things I wanted to speak about, but obviously I do not have the time. Members on this side of the House and I believe the bill needs more study in consultation with immigration refugee experts. There needs to be genuine improvement, which will incorporate efficiency and compassion, not just attract some of the voters who have fled to the Reform Party.

This bill has serious implications for Canadians. To close debate and ram through bad legislation is a disservice to Canadians and a betrayal of the people of this world who are not fortunate enough to enjoy the same freedoms we do.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak for 10 minutes on this bill.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Employment and Immigration. This is not a bad bill at all. This is a good bill that I think is welcomed by our constituents and Canadians from coast to coast.

It will help Canadian residents be reunited with close family relatives from abroad. It will commit Canada to providing shelter to legitimate refugees and it will promote the development of a strong and viable economy in all regions of this country.

The government is proposing a series of changes to the way we have been doing things since the last immigration act was passed in 1976. They are sensible, pragmatic and important changes that will ensure immigration continues to serve the best interests of all Canadians. Some measures will streamline the way we identify and receive refugees, while others will place more emphasis on attracting to Canada those with particular skills and talents we require. Others will reduce the abuse of these programs and clear up the inefficiencies to make the system fair to all.

The changes are needed because the context for our immigration program is very different than it was in 1976. Political and economic conditions around the world are less stable today. Natural disasters, regional conflicts and economic collapse have sparked large–scale and unpredictable movements of people. Some experts suggest as many as 80 million people are on the move at any one time.

In 1983, for instance, about 95,000 people sought asylum in OECD countries; in 1991 that number had jumped by 800 per cent to 700,000. Most of those asylum seekers would not qualify as refugees according to United Nations definitions.

There has been a blurring of the distinction between refugees and economic migrants.

At present, the number of individuals wanting to enter Canada is enormous. The demand is impossible to predict and moreover the classification of newcomers is far from straightforward. In this environment we need the tools to help us manage the ever–increasing demand on our immigration program and help us make the most straightforward determination and the best selection possible in the best interests of Canada.

Embedding efficiency and control in our system is particularly important right now, given the future all industrial nations face as we learn to deal with this mass movement of people. It is not a question of closing the doors as some have suggested. It is a question of managing our programs in the most effective way possible with the resources at hand in order to best serve the interests of this country.

• (1930)

One of the problems with the 1976 act was this. The federal government was given the responsibility of establishing the over–all level of immigration in a given year but it was not provided with the authority to actually achieve those levels. To effectively manage the immigration program, the Government of Canada requires that authority. It is given that authority in Bill C–86.

To make sure Canada's immigration program benefits all Canadians, we must be sure that our system is under control. Many of my constituents in Niagara Falls, through surveys they have returned to my office, through their letters, when speaking to me in the street, believe that we are in danger of losing control of the system. In

that fear I believe they are right. That is why new enforcement measures are needed.

There are individuals on our doorstep who are very adept at circumventing immigration procedures and our laws. We see this in increasing numbers and we also see the sophistication of fraudulent documents, new techniques for avoiding legal entry, and methods of smuggling illegal immigrants into Canada. It is time for some new and appropriate tools to fight these and other forms of abuse which attack the integrity of our immigration program.

Within our borders things have changed too since the current Immigration Act first went into effect. The needs of provinces and regions for residents with specific skills and experience are an even greater priority now during a time of economic difficulty and increased urbanization than it was in 1976.

As well we have a much more pointed sense of where inequities in our system exist. For example, why does it take so long to process the applications of legitimate immigrants from around the world? It is one of the difficult things that all of us as members of Parliament face when we get constituents who say they have somebody in the old country who has filled out all the proper forms, they qualify, they have the medicals, they have everything in place and then they are told they may have to wait three years. That is a system that works in nobody's interest and it is one which should change.

These proposed changes will go a long way to reducing those kinds of frustrations for individuals immigrating to Canada. It will at the same time deter cheating at the time of entry and ensure that the balance among the three primary goals of our immigration system best serve Canadians.

The changes we propose will make that system fairer and more straightforward for everyone and that is why I support it. That is why I think all members of the House should support this legislation.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I am going to begin my speech on Bill C–86, the immigration bill, by picking up where my hon. colleague left off. As a member on the government side, he said that this immigration bill is a bill which is going to provide a sense of fairness to the immigration procedure and process. I do not buy that. I do not buy that at all.

If you look at the bill carefully you can easily pick out five or six areas where it does not provide this fairness. I ask for my friends on the government side to bear with me and listen. Perhaps they will see why I consider the bill unfair.

First, we are talking about the requirement that we have developed where the wealthy get into this country no matter what their competency is, no matter what the need is. As long as they have money they jump to the head of the line.

It is like a new head tax except it is much more expensive nowadays. I guess the government is keeping a line on inflation and has decided if you have enough money you can come into the country. It is made even worse with this bill because they are given even higher priority. Actually we are making this injustice even worse than it was before.

The second objection I have concerns the speeding up of the reuniting of families. I understand this has already been done administratively. It is not necessary to have a bill.

We talk about reuniting families and allowing the working family to exist and allowing immigrants to work. However, by the time the paperwork is finished and the citizenship granted, what good does it do a family if they cannot earn any money because they are not Canadian citizens until about one year or 18 months after the paperwork has been done?

What happens to those people who are waiting for their paperwork to be processed? Some of the people in some provinces have to go on welfare. Some of the people in some provinces have to work illegally. They do not pay any taxes. The government is shooting itself in the foot because it does not allow these people to work. It takes so long to give them their citizenship that actually these people are withholding money the government legitimately should have through taxes. This bill does not even address that fundamental problem.

Third, we should look at the fundamental rights of immigrants when you come to this country. We are all immigrants to this country I suppose except for the First Nations. Perhaps I am one of the most recent immigrants. I am an immigrant from the United States.

When I talk about fundamental rights I know what that means when you are an immigrant and you come to

that border and you are given an interview with someone who has more information on you than you know about.

I recall vividly when I went before the immigration authority seeking to become a Canadian citizen after renouncing my American citizenship, after being in the U.S. army for three years, after being honourably discharged, having spent my time in Panama. On the other side of the desk the immigration authority asked me if I had ever been in trouble. Had I ever been in trouble? I wish I had a dime for every time I had been in trouble. I would be a rich man today. I grew up during the turbulent 1960s.

I was in charge of a boycott in my college which saw the president resign. Spiro Agnew, who was the governor of Maryland, jailed me overnight along with others because we were suspected of inciting to riot because we were boycotting classes. We were working with groups affiliated with Martin Luther King. I guess I was some kind of terrorist because I had been arrested for marching in demonstrations.

I knew from information that the immigration authority who was interviewing me had, that I had a chance to respond, to explain, and to give examples. He understood. I was allowed to come into Canada and I guess we are all suffering for that right now.

Here I was, relatively well educated, someone white coming into a country which wanted to have I suppose immigrants such as myself. I had done all the paperwork. Then at that one moment of fundamental right, and we call that *audi alteram partem* which means being able to speak on the other side and being able to confront your accuser.

We do not have that in this bill. Immigrants will not know what they have got on them. They can say you are a member of some suspicious organization, some terrorist organization. What is the difference between a terrorist and a patriot? The one who wins.

Talk to me about the Stern gang in Israel. Talk to me about the PLO, the Contras, talk to me about anyone who is fighting for principle. If you are fighting for principle it takes many different forms, many different ways, and it just takes one high-level bureaucrat to decide you do not fit into his or her way of trying to change society. It does not matter if that is the way it is in your country. Therefore, you are to be excluded without ever knowing what the accusations were.

That is what is so dishonourable. That is what is so unjust. That is what is so obscene about this bill. You will not have a chance as an immigrant to confront your accuser.

• (1940)

I have another problem with this bill about requiring immigrants to stay in one place. I do not think it can be enforced. On the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee we looked at mobility across the country. We needed mobility, people working where they were needed. We wanted to promote that.

We have a bill right now saying: "Look, you are black. Why not go to Moose Jaw? We think we could have you in Moose Jaw for two, three or four years". "You are brown. Let us see. What colour do we want to paint the northern part of this country?" "Maybe in the eastern part we will make it a little darker hue". This is tantamount to disaster. This will not work. We cannot force people to go into areas where they do not quite naturally belong and where they do not want to be. They are going to go where their families are, and to do otherwise is cruel and unusual punishment.

There are a number of things about Bill C–86, the immigration bill, which I disagree with. It is a contempt of Parliament mainly because much of what is in it is going to be decided by regulation. The government through regulation and orders of cabinet will be able to reward with favours people it wishes to favour and restrict people who it wishes to restrict without having a debate in Parliament.

I think that is wrong. It is even a contempt of the Supreme Court and the Singh judgment of 1985 wherein the Supreme Court said that the government was wrong, that it had to give them a fair hearing, and that it could not exclude people from entering this country without listening to the basic reasons which brought them here.

In conclusion, I would like to say there is a cherry on this cake, this gift to the Reform Party, this pre-electoral cake. The cherry on top of this putrid cake is the ability to cancel retroactively applications which are already working through the system.

There are 300,000 applications in the system. This is what the government is talking about when it talks about streamlining. That is its definition of streamlining: retroactively cancelling applications.

I do not know how this fits into the lexicon on the government side when it talks about fairness, equity and streamlining. It seems to me this is a bid to reduce immigration. This is a bid to make it so difficult that people will not try as hard as they have in the past to come to our country.

Perhaps our country has not been the best as far as receiving immigrants, but it has been damn good. If we compare the United States where perhaps 7 per cent to 10 per cent of applicants are admitted to Canada where we have close to 60 per cent admitted, I think it is something to be proud of. Bill C-86 is not something to be proud of. I am very much ashamed that we have a government on the other side which dares to present it.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I am not an authority on immigration but I would say to my hon. colleague, the last speaker, that this bill is not something to be ashamed of. I think, frankly from what I have seen of this bill, that it is something to be very proud of.

It is not surprising that the recent recognition of Canada by the United Nations as the best place to live in all the world has been previously heralded by the immigration and refugee pressures which have been upon this country from virtually every nation around the globe. Canada, as we all know, is in tremendous demand as a place in which to build new lives.

Immigration is not just a one-way consideration, however, because Canada needs new citizens just as surely as so many new Canadians want to come here.

For example, I am told present economic and demographic statistics show a minimum immigration requirement annually of 1 per cent of our population or more than 250,000 new immigrants each year just to keep our economic viability in balance on a population basis.

Contrary to what the hon. member has just said about immigration not increasing, immigration in 1991 was at the level of 220,000 immigrants. In 1992 and onward it is estimated and projected at 250,000 as a constant. The chances are that as conditions dictate, those figures may increase in the future.

Immigrants want Canada and Canada needs immigrants. Thus our immigration policies and management of them are a critical part of our nation's master plan for the future, both economically and socially. This Bill C-86 not only contains important measures to make our immigration program work to an improved potential but it is comprehensive, constructive and responsible. It addresses four main themes. They are the immigration management system, which comprises several areas of attention, selecting and processing immigrants, special programs, provincial and regional interests, geographic and occupational mobility and the Immigrant Investor Program.

The second major structure is that of protecting society, of intercepting illegal immigrants, border controls, new search provisions to enable apprehension at the border and certification of legitimate immigrants at border points and the enforcement of our immigration policies in Canada to prevent abuse to our welfare programs, abuse of the refugee system by criminals and to provide for necessary removals and deportations as they may occur.

The third structural pinnacle of the bill is the refugee status determination system where access and international co-operation are featured, streamlining the system so that the Immigration and Refugee Board operates more efficiently in the service to all involved so that there is timely action with respect to faster landing, clearances to employment, to removals and deportations where required and to an appeal process through the Federal Court of Canada.

Last, the fourth major pinnacle of the structure is that of improved services, procedures which are simplified, response time which is faster, better information systems, issuing and renewing of documents, returning resident permits and perhaps, very significantly also, the transparency of the program, the fact that the rules and the procedures are open and visible to all.

Immigrants are very well served by their new status as permanent Canadian residents, but the increasing numbers of people seeking to enter Canada have put enormous pressures on a system which is not adequately designed to handle them. As a result, the process that immigrants must go through is marred by less than

satisfactory service. The road to landed status for an immigrant or a refugee can be filled with line-ups and delays, with uncertainty as to when important events will take place, with forms that are complicated and with rules and procedures that are both hard to understand and unclear as to their purpose.

Unsatisfactory service is both troubling and troublesome as a symptom of certain problems within our immigration program. To deal directly with those causes this Bill C-86 has been introduced. As I said, it contains some very comprehensive elements to bring improvement to our entire immigration system.

The most important of these changes is a plan to subdivide the flow of immigration and refugee requests into three main streams, distinct in priority and procedure. It is worth dwelling on those three streams for clarification.

The first stream is the one which is to be demand driven, where applications will be handled on demand, where there will be no limits. These will include immediate dependent family, spouses and children, refugees and investors and their families. That portion of the immigration flow, based on 1991 figures, I have estimated to be in the order of 24 per cent.

The second stream is what has been termed the first-come first-served stream where there will be limits on the total immigration allowable count and where time standards will be set. These will include parents and grandparents of immigrants and their families and selected refugees from abroad. That category will comprise an estimated 35 per cent of the total immigration flow.

Last, the third stream will be immigrants who are selected for excellence. There will also be a limit on the number of those immigrants annually and there will be a schedule and a timetable. Those will consist of entrepreneurs, not just investors bringing dollars, but entrepreneurs, people will skills, people who have demonstrated their ability to run a business and to create wealth. It will include those with special skills and it will include assisted relatives of families.

• (1950)

In speeding up the process of the immigration flow, earlier this afternoon a reference was made to delays at the immigration office in Delhi. It was suggested that it was only the immigration officers at that one post who were responsible for bringing about improvements in the processing of spouses and dependent children.

It is true that the immigration officials at our posts throughout the world are very efficient, innovative and have much ingenuity. For the record, I think it is important to note that the improvements at Delhi and at other posts are the direct result of the five-year immigration plan improvements which were introduced in this House in November 1990. The commitments contained in that plan and in that introduction are contained in this bill.

The qualified applicants in stream one as I have said will be processed on demand with no fixed limit to the total number of applications. Those in stream two would be processed on a first come, first serve basis with the total number in each category subject to limits set out in Canada's annual immigration plan. Finally, stream three would include individuals who are selected for excellence, as I have said earlier, entrepreneurs, those with special skills and assisted relatives.

Only the best in this last stream, the most highly skilled or those with skills that the Canadian employers need, will pass through in numbers also corresponding to the limits of the annual plan.

The proposed management streams would greatly improve the treatment of all potential newcomers. If spouses, dependent children, refugees and immigrant investors are placed in stream one they will receive immediate attention. As for those in stream two, the new authority to turn away applications when levels are reached will eliminate backlogs which presently drain our resources and which presently limit our flexibility to handle emergency situations. Finally, no backlogs will be allowed at all in the build-up in stream three, backlogs which presently drain our resources and reduce our flexibility to help others.

In closing, I would just like to say the Immigration Act in 1976 committed Canada to an ongoing immigration program with high principles and a series of clear goals. Those goals which are as vital today as they were then are to help Canadian residents to reunite with close family relatives from abroad. They commit Canada to provide shelter to refugees fleeing persecutions and they promote the development of a strong and viable economy in all regions of Canada.

The proposed changes in Bill C-86 will go a long way to reduce frustrations for those immigrating to Canada, to deter cheating at the time of entry and to ensure that the balance among the three primary goals of our immigration policy best serve the interests of all of Canada.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the government will proceed very carefully with this legislation. It is my hope that the government will go out and speak to the special interest groups, church organizations, non-governmental organizations and those in fact who would be affected before this legislation is passed into law.

Just a few days ago I had the pleasure of speaking with a representative of the local organization in my riding, the Bootleggers. They are inviting a team from Moscow to come and play here in Ottawa. The team's name is the Moscow Swans. In fact, the Governor General wrote a very nice letter welcoming the team to Canada.

The team arrived in New York only to be told that they could not enter Canada unless each one of those players pays a $50 fee for his or her visa. This is not very healthy, simply put.

The tourism industry in my view will be the largest industry in Canada over the next few years because of the beautiful land that we have, because of the country that we have. To that extent, to put a charge on each individual who wants to come to Canada to visit will not enhance tourism. It will be a deterrent. That is exactly what happened in this situation in which the people who invited the team to come to Canada in order to celebrate Canada 125 were quite upset and rightly so. There is nothing in the legislation that would give the minister the right or the provision whereby visa charges can be waived.

Having said this, while it does apply to visitors it also applies to immigrants. An applicant for permanent residence would have to pay $350 regardless of whether he or she is approved. How much of that is fair? I think each applicant should go through a preliminary interview with a preliminary application. If he or she passes the test, they can proceed from there. To use the immigration system as a measure to generate revenue to the Government of Canada is not fair. I would suggest it is also discriminatory.

Eighty per cent of the cases that my office deals with are immigration cases, refugee cases and visitor applicants. Believe it or not, in some cases it takes up to three months for somebody who wants to come and visit Canada to get a visitor visa issued. I received a call from a local lawyer who told me in business you have to move fast. If there is a deal here in Canada and a prospective investor from Hong Kong, in this particular case the applicant is from Hong Kong, that prospective investor cannot wait two months to receive his visitor visa to come to Canada and have a look at the project at hand. There are certain aspects that need to be addressed.

In many cases prospective applicants have to wait over two years, separated from their wives and their families, before they hear an answer. I have many people who will arrive in the office asking why their brother or sister or cousin was refused when so and so was accepted: "Why was my brother, who speaks the language and has these qualifications, refused when so and so was accepted?" There is inconsistency and simply put, to a large extent when we talk about applications from outside of Canada, the applicant is at the mercy of an immigration officer. That has to be clarified and put in a way that is consistent.

You bring those landed immigrants here to Canada, many of them with Ph.D.s, with a lot of qualifications. I want to say it has saddened me to see many of them are cab drivers, waiters, garbage collectors, doing all sorts of odd jobs, and not because they want to do those jobs. Simply put, it is because in the way we deal with it, in our educational system, there is absolutely no provision to recognize their qualifications so they could fit in to the mainstream.

I have dealt with a dentist who finished his degree in the United Kingdom. He came here to Canada only to end up being a sales person, a real estate agent, for two and a half years and could not qualify in order to practice as a dentist here in Canada even though he had his degree from the United Kingdom. A physician, an electrical engineer and so on, many of those professions are very much needed here and yet we do not deal with their qualifications in an effective way in which we could give them the accreditation they deserve so they could be full-fledged citizens.

On second language training, we have many immigrants who bring their moms, their dads or their children who do not have second language training, who do not speak either French or English back at home. Our second language training in Canada is a total failure. Simply put, there is no system that is in place in order to see whether all of this money we are pouring into second language training is getting the results we should be getting.

School-boards are getting stuck with the end product. Many children are coming to a school in which they do not speak the language. The teachers have to be not only social workers but moms, planners, nurses—just about everything.

• (2000)

The government has not done enough in order to set up a fair and equitable system that is accessible whereby we could take our immigrants and put them into the mainstream by first giving them the education they deserve, and that is second language training, or the education they need to become full-fledged citizens.

My colleague from British Columbia alluded a little bit to citizenship. It is a major disaster. The Citizenship Act is a total failure in a lot of ways, not only because an applicant for citizenship would have to wait over one year in order to receive an application form to become a Canadian citizen, but after that one year, once he or she is given the application, they would have to wait up to another eight months to have an interview with a judge, only to be asked by the judge about the length of the St. Lawrence River, the number of lakes between Canada and the United States. These are not the kinds of questions we should be asking landed immigrants. We should be asking landed immigrants about what they have done since they arrived in Canada, whether they have been in trouble with the law, whether they have raised their families, whether they have been full participants in the mainstream. These are the questions we should ask landed immigrants.

My colleague from Quebec agrees with me. He is shaking his head. That is the way we measure citizenship. Unfortunately the Citizenship Act which we have right now is not only discriminatory against potential citizens, it is also unfair, ineffective and a total failure. While we accept in excess of about 250,000 landed immigrants a year, we are not processing even one-third of that number for people who want to become full-fledged citizens of this country. Simply put, our citizenship courts are full. Take a number, as my colleague is saying; it is a long queue.

Nothing in this bill addresses the question of the full integration of immigrants in Canada. Nothing in this bill addresses the question of citizenship in Canada. Nothing in this bill addresses the question of what to do with qualified landed immigrants once they arrive in Canada.

I want to say that there are a lot of good things in the bill but my suggestion to the government is to go for a full-fledged public consultation before it makes it law.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Davenport for allowing me this opportunity to discuss for a few moments the contents of the bill that we are presently debating before this House, a bill that is designed to change the immigration policies of Canada.

My comments will be very general in nature inasmuch as this bill changes the policy and changes the philosophical principles by which we have built Canada over the past 50 years. The clause by clause interpretation will be handled by my colleague, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and myself as members of the immigration committee as the bill finds its way through the committee stage before it is reported again in the House at third reading. We intend to be involved very much in the process of trying to implement the changes that we on this side of the House feel are so necessary with respect to the policies and the philosophy by which immigration should be handled in this country.

Again, as a preface to the bill, it is very interesting to me inasmuch as immigration policies in this country allowed my family to enter Canada some 45 years ago. I guess I could be construed as a product of the immigration policies of Canada at that time. The bill is of particular importance to me because it dictates what we will be doing in the next 50 years in the progress of Canada as we build toward a stronger and unified future. I would like to repeat the words of our colleague from Windsor West who was applauded in this House just a few days ago for having served 30 years as a member of the House of Commons in almost every portfolio. Let me reiterate his words because I think they express what

immigration in Canada is all about in the best terms I have heard. He said:

> Mr. Speaker, as you know I am proud to be the son of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe.

If I could just paraphrase, if any member of this House were speaking she or he could substitute child of Finnish immigrants, Portuguese immigrants, Ukrainian immigrants, Polish immigrants, Cuban immigrants, Haitian immigrants, Italian immigrants, or immigrants from any of the countries Canada has been able to build and draw from for so many years.

The hon. member for Windsor West went on to say:

> Looking at the story of my parents and their hopes and aspirations, and looking at my part in that story makes me want to say to the members of this House that it is only a small part of the larger story of the Canadian dream, which is being told and retold every day in this country by the strivings of tens of thousands of people who are working to create better lives for themselves, for their families and thereby to build a better country for all of us.

Those were the words spoken by the member the other day in this House and they are as apropos today as they were 50 years ago.

Our immigration policy and procedure must give those people who choose Canada as the new home for themselves and their families every opportunity to do so in an efficient, streamlined and empathetic manner. We must make future Canadians feel welcome, needed and wanted by the country they have chosen as their new home.

The reality of the fact is history has taught us Canada is no longer a country made up primarily of those with English backgrounds. Nor do we have a country made up primarily of those with francophone backgrounds. Today in Canada more than 12 million Canadians, more than a third of its population, came from other lands and countries around the world.

Many people came to this country at the turn of the century and in the great immigration waves of the late 1940s, early 1950s, and early 1960s. Their fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters have made very substantial contributions to the future of this country.

They came to Canada with the ability and desire to work. They came to Canada because they wanted freedom and hopefully they came to Canada because they wanted to make a better life for themselves and their children.

I think it is inevitable when we look at what Canada is today, that the United Nations just recently voted Canada the number one country in the world in which to live.

Those people who came from all the countries in the world and chose Canada as their home have truly succeeded in helping to make Canada the country it is.

With this bill we are not just talking about another piece of legislation. We are not just talking about another bill. We are talking of developing a philosophy through this new immigration law of where Canada shall go as a country in the next 50 years.

There is no question in my mind once we overcome this debate on unity we are presently going through, many of the people who choose Canada as their home will add as substantially as those who have come to Canada in the past 50 years.

• (2010)

As a result, the legislation must be regarded not as just another piece of legislation, but it must be regarded as a philosophical concept of how we want and where we want this country of ours to go.

I must show my displeasure, not with the entire contents of the legislation but with the manner and procedure which was used to introduce it into this House. Last week the immigration bill that will guide Canada's immigration policy for perhaps the next decade, was introduced on Wednesday in this House. There was a short debate on it Friday—Monday is also a short day in this House. I am told—I was not able to be here early today—time allocation was announced and some one hour and a half from now there will be a vote for passage at second reading and then the bill will go to a committee.

To develop such important policy for the country, to develop the criteria we are going to need to help us build this country, we cannot do justice to this bill by speaking on it in this place for just 10 or 15 or 20 minutes over a shortened debate. There are many members on this side of the House and I am sure on that side, who want to make a contribution that elected members of Parliament

should be making with respect to the future allocation of people in this country.

I wish that I did have more time to expound on some of these principles. Let me say something else about this legislation. It is time—and I come to the support of all the municipalities in this country—that we stopped passing legislation that passes the burden of cost on to the municipalities. I see in this legislation, just in a cursory review, that again we have not come to grips with the fact that we make the laws and we pass the burden of responsibility for most of the costing on to the municipalities right across this country. We know that in these difficult economic times the costs involved in welfare, schooling and hospitalization are passed to the provinces which passes them on to the municipalities. It is putting a heavy burden of responsibility on these communities, which is intolerable.

As we go through the committee structure after second reading approval, we must always bear in mind on this side of the House, as will I hope my colleagues on the left, that we must stop putting the burden of responsibility for paying for legislation at the federal level on the municipalities of this country.

Those two areas are the only two areas that I have the time to discuss today and I thank you very much for the opportunity of making those two points.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to a bill that will fundamentally change our immigration system. This bill will give great arbitrary powers to use discretion in immigration selection. Instead of fair rules, which treat immigrants as human beings, a big brother attitude will now permeate the Canadian immigration system.

Immigrants to Canada will be required to live in a place chosen by the Canadian state, despite the wishes and the family and support networks that these immigrants might have elsewhere in Canada. Immigrants to Canada will be required to work in an occupation chosen by the Canadian state despite the skills, training and education they may have in another occupation.

I know of a doctor from India who was working as a taxi driver because his credentials as a doctor were not accredited in Canada. This type of situation can only increase under this bill. That doctor may at least now have the opportunity to requalify for his profession, but under this bill the Canadian government can say that there are too many doctors in Canada, you are not allowed to qualify or work as a doctor. You must drive a taxi or sweep floors instead.

This is clearly a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. More than that, it breaks the code of common sense and compassion to which I believe all Canadians aspire. Canadians are proud of their country. We see our country as being a tolerant country in a free society. The new immigration system is not tolerant and limits the fundamental freedoms of a certain class of human beings within Canada. It is simply wrong.

Along the big brother theme, this bill gives border officials greater powers to detain, even fingerprint and photograph people arriving, particularly refugee claimants, but also Canadians. These border officials have not necessarily received any anti-racist training.

I want to tell you a story about a person who worked with me here in my Ottawa office. She was from the west coast like me. She was sitting in a committee room one day with many others in the audience listening to an important session on my behalf. A security guard came into the room and surveyed all the people as a matter of routine. There was no disturbance, no noise. All the people in the room were white except for the staff person who worked with me.

The guard walked across the entire room to demand to see her House of Commons pass. She showed it to him immediately. He looked at the pass then looked at her again and said: "Whom do you work for?" She said: "Dawn Black". He asked: "What is the phone number of her office?" This kind of checking is unheard of. She had a valid pass, she told him the office number and he still looked suspicious but he then dropped the matter. He did not approach anyone else in that crowded room. He approached the only person in that room that was not white.

This is not an isolated incident. Black and aboriginal people talk about being stopped on the streets by the police when they were simply walking, talking, shopping or attending to their own business.

We have all read in the papers of examples of refugee officials being insensitive, such as the recent case of two refugee board officials making fun of the fact that a man had been tortured.

Refugee boards have ruled to send women back who would face persecution, violence and perhaps even death in their country of origin because these officials did not understand the different cultures in the world. A story broke only last year about a Canadian immigration official demanding sex from a woman in exchange for entry to Canada.

Most immigration officials are trying to do the best they can and operate ethically, but they are overworked, understaffed and under a great deal of strain.

We have also heard of instances where there have been abuses of power. These front line government officials certainly need more support and training, particularly, anti-racist and anti-sexist training. We need employment equity with mandatory goals and timetables in these and in all Public Service professions to ensure that these officials reflect what is the diversity of Canada.

This big brother bill would also turn away refugees who come to Canada through a third country that Canada has ruled to be safe. This is neglecting our role in the international community. Canada does not border any country from which refugees can come directly. Canada's new rule would mean that countries bordering other nations from which refugees come would be inundated and overloaded with refugees that have no hope then of going on to settle somewhere else. It is not fair to expect only a handful of countries in the world to take the entire load of refugees.

Canada cannot remain a strong and proud member of the international community if we send refugees back the way we have seen recently, the way the Americans are doing with the Haitian refugees right now. Canada has had a shameful past in this regard. It is important for all of us to acknowledge that and to remember it.

Before and during World War II Canada refused entry to Jewish refugees from Europe who were attempting to escape from certain persecution and death.

The *Komagata Maru* was a ship of predominantly Sikh passengers which sailed to Vancouver and arrived in 1914. They, like many Europeans, wanted to emigrate to Canada. The ship sat in the Vancouver harbour, denied docking, and Canadian officials would not even allow supplies of food and water to be taken aboard. The Canadian government sent those people back.

• (2020)

My riding has a large Indo-Canadian community which has in fact enriched our economy and enriched the culture of the Vancouver region. Many discretionary measures have been used in Canada's immigration past. The Chinese head tax was used to limit Chinese immigration to Canada. The Asiatic Exclusion League stirred up hatred against Chinese and Japanese immigrants and targeted Asian businesses for physical attack and looting.

This big brother bill before us would pass regulations similar to those passed in 1908 to limit Asian immigration. In 1908 a Canadian government regulation was passed requiring immigrants to arrive in Canada by way of a continuous journey from their place of birth or citizenship. As there was no direct steamship from India, this measure virtually eliminated immigration from India.

In 1992 this regulation has been recycled for refugees. Only those who have made it directly to Canada and not passed through any so-called safe third country can stay here. There are no direct flights or ships or any other means of transportation from Somalia, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Guatemala, China, Bulgaria, Iran or Lebanon, and most other countries in this world in turmoil.

In 1907 Prime Minister Robert Borden said in a speech in Vancouver: "British Columbia must remain a white man's country". The Prime Minister redrafted immigration regulations citing an overcrowded labour market in British Columbia and made it illegal for those of certain occupations to enter B.C. Of course those occupations were predominantly those of Asian immigrants.

In 1992 this government is revisiting these regulations. This proposed legislation sets up a system of quotas by country or otherwise that can be used to weed out immigrants from so-called undesirable places.

One's country of origin says nothing about how hard working someone is, how much they care about their family and society, how willing they are to contribute in every way to an economy and to our society. Everyone deserves an equal chance based on their own ability to adapt to Canada, not on some stereotypical notion a bureaucrat or a politician may have about their country of origin.

In addition, this big brother legislation restricts the principle of benefit of the doubt in Immigration and Refugee Board hearings, a principle to which Canada subscribes through its signature on UN conventions. Refugee claimants are assumed to be lying or defrauding the system even if there is no proof. This bill also further restricts the right to appeal, which is the right of all other persons in Canada.

The time for racism is over. Canada should be able to prove to the world that we are all equal no matter what race we are and that we can all live and work together, share our ideas and our customs and respect each other's religious beliefs. This is the tolerant and harmonious Canada I want to live in and work for, one in which everyone has equal access to the justice system, to services, and to fair and respectful treatment.

This bill and its cousin, the new immigrant language training program, are not steps toward this goal. This bill not only disregards the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms but also the UN conventions that Canada has signed. It is a step backward into a tarnished past.

This is Canada's 125th birthday. We should remember the positive aspects of our past and become active in changing what needs to be changed in our society.

Mr. Speaker, you are signalling me that my time is up. I just want to mention that we should remember, unless we are First Nations people, that we or our ancestors arrived in this country as immigrants. For the sake of peace in our country and around the world, we must eliminate racism and all unfairness, and we should begin with immigration and refugee system.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, one of the negative aspects of this proposed measure is that it reinforces the government's favouritism toward immigrant applicants from the Third World who are wealthy and well educated. My colleague from York West earlier today spoke quite eloquently about the discriminatory and negative effect of that policy for Canada. I would like to talk about its disastrous consequence from a sustainable development perspective, and particularly seen from the southern hemisphere perspective.

What we have here is a government which is working at cross-purposes with itself. On the one hand it funds the International Development Research Centre as previous governments have. If I remember correctly, it was founded in 1971. It does so for the purpose of supporting the establishment of scientific, educational and social infrastructures in the developing world. In doing so it supports the work of researchers and scientists in the developing world to develop research that helps the economic and social well-being of the people in the southern hemisphere where most of the developing nations are.

This work has two purposes: to help developing nations deal with its problems on their own terms and to help the educated élite to remain in the land for the total benefit.

The International Development Research Centre in major part was established to help developing countries begin to provide the necessary leadership, educational structures, research facilities and international prestige for their educated citizens so that they would stay at home and help in the development of their economies and their structures.

Yet on the other hand the government brings forward for consideration by this House a bill which would entice the well educated population in the developing world to emigrate, and hence aggravate an already serious brain drain to the northern hemisphere, toward developed countries.

Much mention is made of the growing wealth gap between north and south, the growing brain drain to the northern hemisphere of intellectuals and scientists from the south to the north. It is a serious matter. Emigration of educated persons from the south to a country such as Canada represents a much greater loss for the country of origin, since there are fewer individuals in the developing world to carry out the difficult struggle of providing the necessary expertise.

The world population is expected to double between now and the year 2050 to 10 billion. This bill seems to have been conceived in a vacuum. It does not deal with long-term population policies. It does not deal with the size that we intend or expect in our urban centres since most immigrants settle in urban centres. It is a measure that seems to be conceived as a reaction or as an attempt

to improve previous measures. It does not have any sense of vision nor a sense of long-term breadth and scope. It is just intended to rectify here and rectify there.

We must take into account the fact that over 80 per cent of this doubling of the population from 5 billion to 10 billion will take place in the developing world. With a consequent reduction in resources such as fresh water and arable land, the need for these developing nations to keep their own expertise becomes more crucial than ever. Bangladesh, not Canada, will need its best people to solve its critical problems. At the OECD in Paris, a publication was produced in 1989 which dealt with the impact of international migration on developing countries. In that OECD report the following statement is made:

• (2030)

> Migration of manpower from a developing to a developed country is bad because it inflicts irreparable losses on the former and robs it of irreparable innovative individuals.

It goes on to say:

> The brain drain leads to increased inequality; the rich countries continue to become richer while the poor countries become poorer – It removes strategic manpower from key positions in a country, causes loss of present and future production, of present and future saving, of taxes and potential innovation.

One must conclude that the Conservative government's pursuit of immigration policies which result in the steady increase of educated élites as successful applicants at the expense of a southern hemisphere developing nation is wrong within this broader context. It is wrong within the longer term and within the perspective of Canada's aid and development and international research policies aimed at assisting developing countries. In other words, it does not make sense. It does not add up.

On refugees, I would like to bring to the attention of the House because of this debate the plight of Somali refugees in the city of Toronto where I come from.

In the first quarter of this year some 118 Somali refugee claimants have been rejected by the department. Why? Because of the claim that safe areas do exist for Somalis in their native land to which they can return. I submit that these claims are inaccurate.

The minister of immigration must be aware—and if he is not he should perhaps have a briefing by his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs—Somalia is in a state of unbridled chaos without any sort of government in control.

The International Red Cross has stated that Somalia is presently suffering from the worst inhuman situation in the world today, without exception. Somali families are separated, many living in dangerous situations in their native land or in refugee camps in Kenya.

Measures are needed for those who are here. This was stressed and underlined by public demonstrations on June 4 at Queen's Park in Toronto.

It was repeatedly asked that the department of immigration do the job it was intended to do traditionally. That job is to provide settlement and adjustment programs for people who come to Canada as refugees and as immigrants upon arrival so as to facilitate and accelerate their integration into Canadian society. In the case of the Somali refugees it has been an abysmal failure so far.

In this measure there is also a denial of mobility rights if this proposal becomes law. It is unacceptable that one should expect from immigrants, be they in the category of refugees or otherwise, to give up their freedom of movement which every Canadian has. Once an immigrant is landed in this country that person cannot be expected to live in a designated area and remain there unless there are strong incentives for that purpose.

I hope the minister will reconsider that clause so that the legislation covering immigrants to Canada will allow them the same basic mobility rights that have been recognized for Canadians in general.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, it cannot be repeated often enough that immigration and refugee determination do not apply the same criteria. We use immigration to try and meet the needs of this country. Our economic interests, our manpower requirements—which often include the need for skilled workers—and family reunification all meet the needs of this country. I would like to stress that yes, family reunification responds to the need of Canadians to live with their families. However, when we admit refugees, We are meeting their needs, their need for security. The

1951 Geneva convention where the signatory countries agreed to wave their right to select those who enter the country, is an exception to the rule of international law.

This evening, I will speak very briefly about immigration, but I would prefer to focus on the issue of refugee status determination. As far as immigration is concerned, the government has announced that in the family class, files will be processed according to specific deadlines. The government says that its objective will be to process applications from people in the immediate family category in six months, whether they apply in Germany or in India. We welcome this kind of specific timeframe and objective. I hope the government will be able to meet this objective.

[*English*]

As I said, I want to concentrate most of my remarks on the question of the determination of refugee status because I believe that it is in this area that the government is spreading misconceptions about the nature of the problem we face and about the nature of the humanitarian question we are trying to deal with.

In reading this bill and listening to the speeches of the spokespersons for the government, I have to conclude that the government has not learned very much.

I believe that the minister should apologize to Canadians for wasting taxpayers' money in the past five years. He should apologize to church groups and other non-governmental organizations. He should apologize to immigration lawyers. He should apologize to Rabbi Plaut for ignoring their advice. They all said that the initial screening would not work.

I want to emphasize that this government five years ago set up a two-stage process. The first stage was a screening known as the credible basis stage when it was the job of an adjudicator and a member of the refugee division to determine whether there was a credible basis for the claim. The second stage was the hearing on the merits before two members of the refugee division.

Rabbi Plaut, in his report submitted to this government in about 1985, rejected the idea of screening out refugee claimants with what are really known in international practice as manifestly unfounded claims which is really what the credible basis process was all about.

He reviewed this practice in those countries that had tried to introduce such a screening system only to find it unworkable. In these countries some cases which at first were judged to be manifestly unfounded claims eventually were determined to be refugees by a higher authority.

Rabbi Plaut then said that kind of procedure was not needed, but the government ignored all of the unanimous advice it received and went ahead.

I refer to the document that the government tabled with this bill last week. Today, the government says:

• (2040)

"The first stage has proved less effective and more costly than expected. Experience has shown that over 95 per cent of claimants have a credible basis for their claims so that the first stage actually screens out very few claimants. This preliminary stage will be eliminated. This change alone will reduce delays in the system by three to six months, depending on the circumstances of specific cases".

This was the recommendation of the non-governmental organizations and Rabbi Plaut six years ago. Does the minister today acknowledge the error he made? Does he acknowledge the enormous costs that were imposed on people, the delays in people's lives? Does he say he made a mistake but today he recognizes this and is going to correct that mistake? Not a chance. Not one chance that this government would admit a mistake even as blatant as that one.

Another mistake which shows again that the government has not learned from past experience is the lack of an appeal. Again this is an area in which the government ignored the advice of non-governmental organizations and failed to provide refugee claimants an appeal on the merits from a negative decision of the refugee board. This bill, again, provides for no such appeal. The government, presumably, has not recognized the folly of its ways. Because there is no appeal the only recourse for an unsuccessful refugee claimant is to apply to the minister for consideration on compassionate or humanitarian grounds.

The circumstances under which such considerations are given are extremely restrictive. Inevitably it ends up on the minister's desk. This recourse, as I said, because it is so restrictive, is futile. In Ontario and Quebec in 1991 only 23 such applications were accepted out of a total of 3,485. The door is practically hermetically sealed.

What I would like to suggest to the minister and to the government tonight is that they provide an appeal on merits and if they did we would not need this futile procedure known as an application on humanitarian and compassionate grounds to the minister.

Why should there be an appeal? I would like to ask the House to reflect on the reasons for courts of appeal in general, in civil and in criminal law in our system of law. Quite simply it is because people make mistakes. Should there not be an appeal on decisions when it is a matter of life and death?

Remember the context. Refugees have left their homes because of war and persecution. Even refugee claimants who one might expect to be fairly articulate, such as lawyers, teachers and union leaders, have been known to break down during refugee hearings. They have been unable to face the past, unable to talk about the experiences to which they have been subjected. We must understand that refugee claimants are in a new country. They may speak neither English nor French. Unquestionably they are unfamiliar with our laws and our procedures.

It is vital that such an appeal be provided for by the government in this procedure. Again, I hope this is an area which the government would reconsider.

In closing, I wish to quote from a communiqué published by the Canadian Council for Refugees which said that it is disturbed by the language and orientation of the government's statements. The emphasis and control and abuse, not justified by any available statistics, will undermine public sympathy for refugees.

As I said earlier in comments in the House this evening, this is perhaps the most deplorable aspect of the government's campaign of disinformation. By standing up and suggesting that we have somehow lost control of our borders, by standing up and suggesting that the country is being flooded by thousands of refugees with totally unfounded claims not supported by any statistics, this government is setting up a straw man which it will then proceed to knock down with its legislation and with its speeches in what I regard as a very cynical gesture. I am confident that Canadians will not accept this subterfuge.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill because it signals the reality of Canada in the global context.

There are not too many things we can be sure of in this day and at this time. We can be sure of one thing and that is that the population of the world is growing. We are now talking about five billion people. These are five billion people who are crowding the borders of almost every nation in the world.

They are crowding the cities of the world. As they crowd they seek what we have and that is open space, the number one place, the best country in the world according to the United Nations. Naturally there is a strong demand in the world for Canada, a strong demand that cannot possibly be met by Canada alone.

This is complicated by the situation that the world used to move freely among itself. The world no longer moves freely among itself. It used to be that in the world there were many countries that should you or I or anyone else choose to move to, you could do so easily. It used to be that if there were a political or a natural catastrophe here, you could move across the border in the next place and it would welcome you.

Those welcome mats have disappeared everywhere in the world. Every country has said it has closed its borders. Canada was the last country to come to this closing process through a target or quota system, a quota system that was put in place by every nation in the world in a very stringent way.

The world borders have been closing and as the world's borders close, it creates the 10 or 15 million refugees in the world; displaced people who cannot find another country for their home.

There are a lot coming as the hon. member knows. We were both in those refugee camps. Bud Cullen was the Liberal minister at the time and I said to him when we set that target level back why not take some as refugees. They would make the best citizens in the world we could find; people fleeing for their safety and their security from their own country. I asked: "Why not set a target of 5,000?" He said to me, and it is in the proceedings of the committee: "Good idea. If you think you have the Conservatives", the opposition at that time, "to go

along, then let us have a look at it". Six weeks later he announced 5,000, the first target of refugees.

Then in 1978–79, we had the boat people and our minister in government at that time said it would take 60,000.

What we were doing in that process was responding to a world that was tightening down and opening our doors to a very worthwhile group of people who have made fine citizens for Canada. Really we only opened the door a little crack because what is 60,000 out of 15 million? Anyone in a refugee camp would choose to come to Canada given that opportunity.

Canada as an oasis of hope and opportunity is facing the pressures of a world that wishes to come here. What a change from 40, 60 years ago when Canada went out and advertised for immigrants: please come to Canada. It had to give all kinds of incentives to come to Canada. That is not the situation today and our Immigration Act needs to reflect that. Canada is under the pressure of a massive number of applications. Our program now is to choose from among those applications, both in the interest of the person wishing to come and in the interest of our country.

• (2050)

The interest of our country changes from time to time. Right now there is a very strong interest and need in our country for young people with skills to come and help us build our country. There is a need for business men and business immigration and our act addresses this issue. It says we should welcome the entrepreneurs and business men of the world because this is now a global economy. Any part of the world that says it is going to be an isolated island is doomed to failure, poverty and a reduced quality of life.

We have to respond to choice. We have made the most generous choice of any nation in the world by saying we will set a target of 250,000. Who will these 250,000 be? As I said, they need to be young people, skilled people and business people. Of course we must have a very special place for immediate family and true and legitimate refugees. That is what this act says.

I do not think there is a Canadian sitting there listening to us tonight or reading in *Hansard* tomorrow who would disagree with those priorities. That is what this legislation is doing. It is saying we will create stream one and we will not put a limit on it. In that stream we will look to the priority of Canada's needs: immediate family, refugees and business immigration.

Of course that is not to say I agree with everything in the report. My immigration committee will report back to the House soon I hope. We are getting near the end and we are going to support business immigration. We are recognizing business immigration is more than just investors who will not become actively involved and just invest money in Canada. It is also entrepreneurs and the self-employed.

Therefore we suggest the government give us an idea of how the system might work. It is not fixed in stone at this stage. The government will look at the report of our committee and at the Ernst & Whinney report that is coming in later. It will take the Ferguson task force report, its own internal report and we will create the regulations that look to these kinds of examples as outlined here.

Obviously we want to take control of Canada. What kind of a government would not take control of Canada? That means we shall select the millions of people who want to come here in the interest of Canada, our country. That is 250,000 now for the next three years and perhaps some adjustment to that target over the intervening years. Perhaps that target will even grow because as we become stronger perhaps this country should not be just 30 million. Maybe it should be 50 million. Maybe 50 million is a viable population, a small not very dense population for the second largest country in the world that can deliver a high quality of life and place for many more people in the world. The old days have gone. Looking at our land as a vast empty unused land just waiting to be filled is an entirely wrong concept in this day and age.

Let us modernize our act. Let us gain control of those who are coming into Canada illegally and let us sort them out. Let us keep those who are legitimate refugees and let us send the rest home and tell them to come and pick through the regular process. I know this is what my constituents want. They want the government to take control of immigration. They want the government to use immigration to build Canada. They want to show our compassionate side through conventional refugees. They want to show our human side through recognizing

immediate family and they want to build our economy through recognizing business immigration.

All of us here have a responsibility to participate in this act, in its process, to get it to committee, to travel across the country and hear the views of Canada. As we hear the views of Canada, and I know that the opposition knows in their heart their job is to oppose, but they know that this act is the right place and the right time.

I have been working on this committee for many years. I remember 1975 changes, 1976 and 1977 in the committee. I think this is the right time, this is the right act and I support it most energetically and enthusiastically.

Mr. Cole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to revert to tabling of committee reports, with your permission.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if the parliamentary secretary wants to table anything, I am sure we would be amenable to the usual consultation and after that is done, be willing to do that. I think this is highly irregular to do so without such consultations. If there have been consultations I have not been made aware of them, as the acting person directing the debate for our group tonight. Neither the critic nor myself have been made aware of this and we would prefer this consultation first. We will revert to that if there is consent at a later time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): As I understand, there is not unanimous consent at this time.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to sit in the House and listen to the debate and listen to the comments, the direction and the tenor. I of course prefer our side of the argument rather than the side opposite, but it has been interesting to hear the discussion and to see the different points of view as we approach this legislation.

I do not think anybody doubts that Canada has to have an improved immigration law and that we have to have a proper system of immigration. All we have to do is look at our history to realize that is an essential component of building this nation. As we look at the history we see that immigration primarily from Europe made an absolutely most important contribution to making Canada what it is today.

We hear some of the naysayers and some of the negative people in our country saying it is time to close the door and to shut down immigration all together. All we have to do is to look at the statistics to realize the implications of that.

If we were to shut off immigration entirely now, by the year 2010 we would probably only have about 13 million Canadians because our birth rate is not keeping up and we would face that eventual decline in population rather than an increase. I read as well, and statistics will indicate this, that by the year 2015 if we just keep the present level of immigration, then our population will only be around 17 or 18 million. We need to have immigration if we are going to survive as a country, maintain the social programs and all of the things that we hold dear in Canada.

Immigration can make a tremendous contribution to this nation, but I think we have to realize that immigration as it is now happening will drastically change the mosaic of this nation. There will be a change and it will be one that will cause some people some difficulty. There are all kinds of misconceptions about immigrants and refugees coming and stealing jobs from Canadians, that they are making things difficult and lowering the wage rate, all of those types of arguments. Those are misconceptions that have to be cleared away from this issue.

We have to analyse the legislation on its merits to see whether it achieves the goals that we want. That is for a system that is fair and equitable to all and allows proper immigration and refugees to reach our shores and our country and to be properly taken care of once they are here. We on this side are most supportive of the concept of coming up with legislation and amendments to legislation in order to achieve that goal and that objective. But when you look at this particular bit of legislation, does it achieve the goal? We have to say, no, it does not.

• (2100)

As is typical, there are always some good sides to the legislation and there are some things we are supportive of. Obviously the first stage hearing being eliminated is a positive step because it did not work. It did not have any effect. About 90-some-odd per cent of the people got through that stage no matter what was there. In that sense it did not work.

We are concerned about things, and all we have to do is look at them very quickly because time is limited. This bill shifts the onus away from this place and puts it in the regulations and in the hands of administration, rather than having legislation with the weight of legislation.

There is a shift in authority. One wonders where the accountability will be. We know that we should have those regulations at least as a bare minimum brought back to this place to be reviewed to see there is the just system that we are all striving for.

We are concerned as well about the idea of a safe third country and the concept that if a refugee passes through a country before arriving in Canada, we can send that person back to that "safe country". All you have to do is look at the example of some of the people who have fled countries through the United States to arrive here, knowing that if they are sent back to the United States they will be sent back to their own country and face the responsibilities of fleeing that country and the possibility of death associated with that type of decision. So we have concerns about the safe third country concept.

We agree with the idea that there is more discipline as far as the refugee board is concerned. We have all been appalled at some of the shenanigans that have gone on with respect to that. In that sense we would like to see the changes put in so that something is accomplished there.

We also have to look at what happens in this whole area and what happens to new arrivals to our country. At the same time this government is cutting back on social programs and putting added burdens on the provinces and we are not sure whether the housing and the health and educational systems are in place to handle what is contemplated. I think we have to go back and hear more and not rush this legislation. Rushed legislation is normally bad legislation and this bill has the potential to be quite bad in the long run.

We are concerned about the idea that the minister can pick where an immigrant or a refugee will go once they arrive here. That is fundamentally opposed to our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I know that there are many people in this country who will say well, you do not acquire those rights and freedoms until after you are admitted into the country as either a landed immigrant or accepted as an immigrant, up until then you have no rights, and then you do not even have rights until you really become a citizen. That is wrong. The charter of rights is to protect all because those are fundamental rights. They do not have to be designated that they are rights for only certain people.

I am worried about the idea that a lot of the decision-making process will fall into the hands of administrators. We had a problem in Moncton, quite frankly, under the refugee program that was trying to attract entrepreneurs. I know there are all sorts of questions about whether you are buying a passport into Canada. In looking at that whole process and hearing the testimony of Zuoy Lam from Moncton, the investors were told: "Do not come to New Brunswick, it is a bad area. You should not be there, you will lose all your money. They are poor investments". This is the type and calibre of person who is advising people as to where they should be going.

As well, you hear things about the administration having fingerprinting and photos and greater powers of search. I think we are going to have to take a good long look at those types of provisions to see whether the legislation is treating refugees and immigrants fairly, as our system should.

There are many other reasons and rationale for us to take a long steady look at this legislation.

There is no provision for appeals on merit, to name some. There is nothing in the legislation that deals with the use of section 114 and the admission of refugees on humanitarian or compassionate grounds. There is nothing to deal with refugees who were legitimate when they fled their country, but now that things have changed—and we see that in eastern Europe—they are being asked to go back home. We have even seen that in my community. We have a small population of refugees and immigrants, but we have seen that happen.

What is fundamental in all of this—and I am sure that all of us on this side of the House are most concerned about it—is the use of time allocation in order to ram this legislation through. We have known for months and months and months that this legislation was necessary, that it had to come forward. Then, at the time when the democratic process provides a chance to have an input,

this government brings in time allocation and gives in effect a day for debate or less than a day.

Under those circumstances we on this side cannot support quick passage. There may be some aspects that we are supportive of, some things that we want to see improved, but we cannot have this type of legislation rammed down the throats of Canadians and soon to be Canadians.

We on this side are going to oppose this legislation on some of the grounds that will become clear in committee but also on account of the high-handed manner in which this government has proceeded.

Mr. Cole: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions on both sides of the House, and I would like to seek Your Honour's permission and unanimous consent of the House to revert to the tabling of committee reports.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

48TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 48th report of the Standing Committee on House Management.

Pursuant to Standing Order 113(1), this report is deemed adopted upon presentation.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Valcourt that Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Allmand (p. 12472).

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join what is for my constituency perhaps the most important debate this House has dealt with, that is the rules in this country concerning immigration.

This has been an issue that Canadians have gone back and forth with perhaps every decade since World War II, but it is time that we come to grips with this issue, to show the progressive side of this country and to put aside a lot of the concerns and hesitation we have shown in the past.

Unfortunately Bill C-86 amending the Immigration Act is in fact a step backward. This bill is extremely complex and deals with 128 sections and 113 pages. It was presented to the House only a week ago. The House has been asked to deal with it in a very speedy fashion, which those Canadians concerned about legislation find very hard to believe.

I would like to spend my very short time in this debate because of the curtailment of debate explaining to Canadians why a more progressive piece of legislation is needed.

All parliamentarians hear from Canadians their concerns about the job market, about the changing nature of Canada, and about somehow or other losing a sense of what we were in the past through immigration policy. Governments come to represent one way or the other the voice of the past or the voice of the future. It is time this government realizes that it must become the voice of the future, not the voice of the past.

Let me give an example of an area of policy with which this government has refused to deal and which is fundamental to understanding this country. Several weeks ago the government introduced changes in family reunification. Leaving aside the details for the purpose of this debate, they have made it very difficult to bring family members over. Bill C-86 has not in any way addressed the question of the limitations put on family reunification.

For many of the people watching and listening to the debate, questions of family reunification seem to be, in the old Canadian sense, a question of bringing over mothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and distant relatives simply to have people together in the same house,

in the same neighbourhood. It is a social reason for many Canadians and that is all.

• (2110)

For Canadians wishing to retain in their mind a traditional notion of the country, this is offensive because they ask the question in times of high unemployment, in times of the deep recession, why we need so many people when we already have enough here in this country.

If we stop to think of it from a different point of view, if we stop and ask ourselves the basic question about the Canadian economy, we all know from various studies done in the late 1960s right through until the 1980s that the Canadian economy is facing a very difficult problem of foreign ownership.

If we leave aside the banking industry, almost every industrial sector in this country is owned by non-Canadians. We continue to be depleted by profits, by dividends and by industrial strategies outside our country.

We ask ourselves how in the next 30 or 40 years we build up the Canadian corporate structure. We must do it through some type of industrial base, manufacturing base and service industry in this country.

Then we ask who is going to come into this country to build up a base and use that base to expand and take on the country.

The answer in many cases is families working together. Families work together because they trust each other with cash. They trust each other's commitment. They trust each other's use of cash. They move from one generation to the other. It is no good trying to think that one generation is going to build up a company that is going to take on the whole world. In three or four generations they will be able to take on the world if they have enough family members working together. Canadians forget about that because many Canadians have not been involved with the building of a business.

We hear the international trade cliché. We hear the Minister for International Trade talk about competitiveness, getting out and facing the world. Let us stop and think about what the world is. Let us stop and think about our industrial growth rate being somewhere in the optimistic range of 1.5 per cent or 2 per cent per year to perhaps even a shrinkage. Then we can look at the Asian countries which are averaging 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 5 per cent and 7 per cent for the sake of argument. Sometimes it is higher than that. Over a 10-year period, 10 times 3 is 30 per cent growth; 10 times 7 compounded means a doubling of the size of the economy; and 10 times 1 per cent is probably a total growth over a decade of 12 per cent.

The growth we are looking for is over in Asia. To delve into Asian markets means we must have language skills, cultural skills and a knowledge of that particular business community.

I for one, as much as I want to encourage people, will never be an expert trader in Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Indonesia or the Philippines, but I want some Canadians to be there. I want some Canadians to have a base for trading from Canada into those countries so that we understand their trading patterns and we understand how to use what they are doing to our benefit.

A family nucleus of two or three people will come over as refugees or immigrants by other patterns. When new Canadians come to me, they say they want their brother, their sister, their aunt or their cousin to come in. It is not because for some romantic reason they want to share a roof, but it is because they want to build a business. It is the people who come from the refugee camps out of Vietnam who will form the nucleus of our business community.

When a government does not stand up, does not share belief in the House and does not articulate that belief for other Canadians, people do not realize the economic benefits to be gained through family reunification. We must take the effort to make sure we develop trade strategies, immigration policies and business support policies. If we want to begin to deal with the world, we must bring home this message to individual Canadian families who are dealing with our immigration policy. The department is not capable of dealing with these issues with optimism and openness. They receive too many messages from their political leaders, that in fact they should be very careful as to how they deal with different communities.

I say this is the opportunity to change this position. The bill as I noted at the outset of my short time of speaking here is a very complex one and I do not pretend that I can deal with more than one or two issues of the 128 being presented to the House.

I will say to the House and through the House to Canadians that this government has set us upon a course that is greatly disturbing to people who want to see responsible government. In the last month we have seen a number of initiatives, from immigration policy to the child benefit package, which has been thrust upon us out of nowhere to deal with immediately.

The government is not giving due time to consider how we want to build the country —and one can read on the front pages of the newspapers forever about the Constitution —not dealing with a fundamental openness and honesty in each step along the way, the Canadians you want here, how you want to build the businesses, how you are going to look after children, I could go on and on with the list.

Here the government is asking for the discussion of this bill in a few short hours today, to be hustled off to committee, to be buried from public view because it is answering some political instinct which to quote from one newspaper on May 6: "Tory immigration policy mirrors Reform Party".

It is not the task of Parliament to pursue narrow partisan interests. It is the task of Parliament to consider basic issues of immigration in the context of family development and economic development.

I beseech the government to reconsider its position, to be kinder to refugees, to be kinder to immigrants. If we want a kinder and gentler Canada the place to begin is the withdrawal of Bill C-86 and the rethinking of the immigration policy for the 21st century.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes this evening to speak on the bill that is before the House.

Immigration issues are never easy for Parliament to deal with. Unfortunately, it is all too easy for some to criticize immigration policies and it is all that easier when those you are criticizing do not look the same as other so-called typical Canadians.

Of course what I am indicating to you is that many times we behave in a manner that we cannot always be proud of when we are dealing with these issues. I remember that day in 1986 when Canada was allegedly invaded by 172 people from the Indian subcontinent, more particularly, from Sri Lanka, Tamil refugees that arrived on our shores.

This government recalled Parliament because 172 people had arrived in this country. On any day there are probably more refugee applicants at the Toronto airport than there were in that situation; except that the ones that come in every now and then do not happen to make news the way these 172 people did.

It left me to conclude that we were not reacting to the incident, we were not reacting to the 172 people, but we, this House, more particularly the government, were reacting to the television news of some days before. That is not a good way to govern. It is a pretty sad way to govern actually.

• (2120)

I also remember the original telecast when the people of the community where they landed brought sandwiches to the people who were arriving on our shores. To me, that was the Canadian way of doing things. That is what I like to remember.

When we talk about immigration policy we sometimes forget, very conveniently, what happened some years before. I recently had a conversation with a good friend of Irish extraction. Together we were reminiscing about how and what some people must have thought when the Irish came to our shores during the potato famine. You can imagine at the time the people probably looked slightly different from others, a little shorter, red hair, many of them suffering from malnutrition, getting off the boat, many of them unwell from the trip, many who had suffered tremendously before the trip began. I am sure the day those boats arrived in Montreal from Ireland people must have said: "What are we accepting in this country?"

Looking at it in retrospect, some of the finest citizens of this country came from Ireland. It is easy for me to say that because my wife is Irish. The Prime Minister will no doubt agree with my sentiments. That is where his ancestors came from and the ancestors of many members of this House, no doubt.

In 10, 20 or 30 years from now maybe one of the Tamil people or their children will be members in this House, they will remember that their ancestors were on that boat and we will once again reflect upon what happened and ask: "Was it not interesting how our ancestors came from a situation that was very hard to live with, to a better country and started a better life?" Then we will wonder what people were doing 20 years ago, just as we are asking ourselves now, what were we doing in World

War II when we turned back boatloads of people, Jewish people, many of whom were going back to a probable death.

We should all remember that when we look at amending legislation for immigrants coming to this country. What is the objective we have in mind? All members tonight when we vote on this bill in 30 minutes from now should remember that.

This legislation before us has 128 clauses, 116 pages. My colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce had about 48 hours to read the length and complexity of this bill before the debate on second reading started. Is that the way to deal with one of the most complicated issues facing us today? Just 48 hours before debating it after the government presented it the government says: "Oh, this is urgent". If it was not urgent enough to present the text of the bill to us earlier, why should it be urgent that we deal with it now so expeditiously? If the government is serious about it, surely weeks and weeks before a copy of that bill should have at least been given to the opposition critics and, indeed, all members of this House for review.

Then the government says: "That is okay. You will have time in committee to listen to witnesses". That may be true, but let us remember how the parliamentary process works. First reading is the printing of the bill so members can see it. Second reading is supposed to be the time when we have read the bill and express to this House and the government whether we think this is good or bad legislation. Is it reasonable that all hon. members were given 48 hours to do that? If that was not bad enough, after one day of debate a government minister stood up and said: "Oh, that is okay. Now you have had only 48 hours to look at this bill of 128 clauses and 116 pages, but I have decided you cannot even debate it any more. You cannot even listen to each other any more because we are cutting this debate off today. We want to go on holidays tomorrow".

This may be a good enough reason for some, but it is not a good enough reason for the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, my colleagues or me.

If the government really wants the support of this House, as some government members indicated earlier in this debate, then why is it acting in such a way? I can only conclude the government does not care whether this bill is adopted unanimously, on division, with dissent or with half of this Parliament against it. On an issue as important as this, the government should at least have tried to obtain the co-operation of other political parties in the House of Commons.

We have the ugliness of racism in our country. There are those of us who are concerned about this issue and do not want that ugliness in our country. The very least we can do is work together to the best of our ability and do our small part to eradicate some of these bad sentiments we have toward one another in this country. We can only do that with the good honest co-operation of everyone in the House. I am sure I speak on behalf of my colleagues when I say they will do their best to provide constructive amendments in committee, study the bill as thoroughly as possible and listen to witnesses from everywhere.

Let us remember we started debating this legislation at the 11th hour of the 11th day in a so-called emergency the government has known about since 1986. It is off to a bad start.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and not pleased to have the opportunity to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-86, which is before the House this evening. I am pleased to have the opportunity to give a critique, but the critique is unprocessed, to follow on the words of my colleague who has just spoken. There has been very little opportunity to critique the substantive issues involved in this bill simply because, as my colleague has mentioned, there has been absolutely inadequate time with which to review the 128 clauses and 113 pages which comprise Bill C-86.

Certainly members in this House have been criticizing our immigration policies in Canada for many months. We have been requesting the federal government to bring in amendments to the present immigration law, but it is most unfair not only to all parliamentarians in this House but to the public in general across Canada. It is unfair to the people who engaged themselves on a volunteer basis to assist immigrant applications to this country, particularly the applications made by refugees, the most vulnerable of vulnerable immigrants to our country.

There is no reason to justify the curtailing of debate on this bill this evening. There is no reason that justifies bringing us to second reading and a vote this evening.

• (2130)

At second reading of any bill in this House all members of Parliament are asked to vote in principle their support or rejection of proposed legislation.

Because there has been insufficient time to analyse the content of this bill it really is not possible to adequately vote on the substantive principles of this legislation. On this side of the House we will be voting against this legislation on the principle that there simply was not enough time to review and reflect on the legislation before we could determine whether or not we would agree with the legislation in principle.

It is important to say, because the government always says when we get into this kind of debate that the opposition opposes just to oppose, that that is our role. That is not the case. When we have had the opportunity to reflect on legislation which has been presented there have certainly been occasions on which we have agreed to the principle of the legislation at second reading.

It is not only members of the opposition who reject the process of bringing this legislation before the House this evening. I would like to quote from just a few of those organizations which deal with refugee issues and also express their concern. We have received letters from various of the non-governmental organizations which address refugee issues in this country.

I wish to quote from a letter from the Anglican Church of Canada signed by Dorothy Davies Flindall. She states: "There needs to be adequate opportunity for all concerned groups to study the legislation and make substantive recommendations. This can only happen if the second reading of the bill is delayed to allow time for consideration of the bill. Our preliminary reading of the legislation indicates that some of the proposed changes have serious implications for the refugee community with whom we work. Therefore, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I urge you to delay the second reading of the bill until after there has been time for adequate consultation."

The Jesuit Centre in Toronto states, and I quote from its letter: "This bill poses some very serious problems and should not be rushed through Parliament, but subjected to close scrutiny and serious debate".

The Canadian Council of Churches states: "Refugees and non-governmental groups which work with refugees should have the right to participate in the decision-making which affects their lives and work". I am quoting Dr. Stuart E. Brown of the Canadian Council of Churches: "Churches are worried that the government may use the summer session of Parliament to speedily pass this complex legislation without allowing refugees, churches and other concerned groups adequate opportunities to reflect and to share their concerns".

As I said at the outset, we on the opposition side have many criticisms of Canada's current immigration legislation. Bringing forth this bill this evening in this period of economic difficulty in Canada is a difficult time. When Canada is suffering through difficult economic times, the level of intolerance and the lack of acceptance of immigrants and refugees into our country is very high. The times are fraught with misunderstanding and myths about immigrants and refugees to this country and their impact upon our economic, social and cultural life.

I believe it would have been much more appropriate for this government to have presented this legislation in a way that we could understand its substance and content and reflect more knowledgeably upon the same.

The government could have done a lot more to help the Canadian public to understand the realities of the benefits of immigration to our country. The government could have taken action to deal with myths and to set the record straight. The government has failed to put in place a communication strategy to inform and educate the public.

The government in dealing with immigration issues in the last few years that I have been here has looked at different types of merit and desirability for prospective immigrants.

It bases merit and desirability more and more each day on wealth. The richer a proposed immigrant and the more educated, the more desirable you are as an immigrant.

In my view, this is a blinkered approach to the necessity for immigration and the need for us to have open arms and accept refugees. Certainly we do not want the system abused, but does the abuse that exists in this country merit the new directions that policy is taking at this time?

In Canada it is very important as Canadians that we not only address the impact upon present immigration and refugee policies on the economic, social and cultural life of this country, but that we take a much broader global perspective of immigration and the growth of the numbers of refugees world-wide. I believe more and more the stories of refugees will become the stories for this decade and the next decade. We must understand the linkages of environmental degradation to increase refugee flows.

In the past, and I am afraid to some extent still, we in Canada think of refugees only in terms of politics. We must recognize that more and more we are seeing flows of what we would call economic refugees and the thing of the future will be the environmental refugees. I am reminded very strongly of a speech given by the head of state of Micronesia, a southeast Pacific nation, who was speaking about the environmental global warming impact upon his many-island nation.

Global warming has had the impact of raising the sea level around his nation by one and one-half metres. Micronesia has a population of 60 million people. As the sea levels rise around its islands, the people lose the land on which they can live and prosper and have any future. Where are 60 million people going to go if they cannot stay in Micronesia because of the effects of environmental degradation? They are going to look to other lands around the world.

The fact that we regard wealth and education and high educational achievement to be the only criteria that attract immigrants to us is really to neglect facing the realities of global and environmental degradation and the fact that we must encourage these people to develop and help their nations to grow and to promote sustainable development within their nations.

I regret that this House has not had sufficient time not only to address the substantive issues in Bill C-86 but to review Bill C-86 in the context of the larger immigration issues which face not only Canada but the world at large.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to participate in this debate, however briefly this evening. I would like to leave a couple of minutes for my colleague from Hamilton West who would like to address a couple of remarks on this important legislation.

I want to express my concern briefly on the failure of the legislation to deal with the important issue of adjustment programs for Canada's recent arrivals. In my own community of Kingston and the Islands where there is a significant and very important and very rich group of relatively recent immigrants to Canada, the situation in respect of language training in particular is very important and has caused a considerable problem. There is a need for enhanced language training. There is a need for better adjustment programs operated on a more consistent and regularly funded basis.

These are not dealt with in this legislation. This government has failed in this bill to deal with this issue in a meaningful way in this bill. It has produced a bill that obviously has taken some considerable time to put together and it has neglected a very important area for Canadian immigrants, an area that helps their adjustment to Canadian society. It helps them find jobs, it helps them find housing, it helps them with language difficulties upon arrival in this country. These are programs that are worth while from the point of view of integration into the fabric of Canadian society and all very important for the integration into Canadian society. Part of the problem that this bill apparently has sought to address is any negative reaction among other Canadians to recent immigrants. The easiest way to solve that problem it seems to me is through sensible adjustment programs. The bill fails to deal with that important issue.

• (2140)

Second, it gives the government considerable power to determine where people will live in Canada, a power hitherto unknown to our immigration system. I suggest it is regrettable because I think it may leave many persons living in communities where they have no relatives and no friends and where adjustment becomes an increasingly difficult problem for those people.

I am sorry that my time is so short, but I know what is going to happen. The guillotine is going to fall at a quarter to ten because of this government's approach to legislation in this House. This bill was introduced less

than seven days ago, on Tuesday, June 16. By agreement there were three speakers on this bill on Friday. That was the first time it was debated. Very rarely, and let the record show this, is a bill debated at second reading so soon after its introduction in this House. It was introduced on Tuesday, so members of the public had a total of three days to digest the bill before it was called for debate in this House. It was called for debate on Friday. It has been called for debate today and the debate will end today on second reading. This bill will be shunted off to a committee which the government will then have meet to hear public input on this bill.

It has changed the rules in respect of legislative committees to reduce the impact of witnesses. Certain witnesses will not be allowed at legislative committees because of the new rules the government has adopted. It is an attempt to force this bill through Parliament without proper public input, without allowing the public its opportunity to express its views on this bill. I do not mean just the public as represented here in Parliament, but the public across the country who will want to read and study this bill, various groups that work with immigrants and immigrant groups themselves. Various ethnic bodies in this country will want to comment on this legislation. They are being denied an adequate opportunity to do so because of the indecent haste with which the government is moving to ram this bill down the throats of Canadians.

I have had reason to comment before on the government's abuse of the rules of this House and its use of time allocation and closure. I could go through the statistics, but in the interest of time, I will forgo that. This is, as the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce said in his speech on Friday, a disgusting abuse of the rules and the government should be thoroughly condemned for its approach.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in Hamilton West, I again say that I consider it a privilege to rise in this place to debate at second reading Bill C-86, amendments to the Immigration Act. I thank my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, for allowing me a couple of minutes as well to add the voice of my constituents through me to this debate.

Yes, this place, the House of Commons, is the highest court in the land, so each and every one of us on both sides of this House are lawmakers. But before we can rise in our place to lend support to or choose to reject a proposal that is being put forward by the government or any member in this place, we must be given the opportunity to reflect on what is presented. I pass this message along to the members across the way, but especially to my constituents who may be watching this very debate in their homes tonight or may read my remarks at a later time.

This is Bill C-86, the most revamped, revised, revisited immigration act of the Immigration Act since 1978. This bill is complex, 113 pages and 128 clauses. My time is short so I will not plead with the government across the way or the members across the way to be fair, to do what is right, to delay this vote. That plea I suspect will fall on deaf ears. I plead with Canadians who are watching this debate and who may read the remarks at a later time to write their member of Parliament. Write your member of Parliament and request a copy of Bill C-86. Have a look at what members of Parliament on this side of the House, in opposition, have only had less than 48 hours to look at and enter into strong debate in the House of Commons in order to revisit each one of 128 clauses to deal with a bill that is an incredible revamping and an incredible revisit.

This bill, of course, falls on its face in many areas. We are aware of that. We have heard debate this day on this bill and the greater use of regulation by the minister and the cabinet, matters that until now have been in a law, and are being transferred to regulation, reducing of course the power of Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry, but it being 9.45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier this day in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the second reading of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the amendment standing in the name of Mr. Allmand. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 223*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Anawak
Arseneault
Berger
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Butland
Catterall
Dingwall
Edmonston
Finestone
Gaffney
Harb
Heap
Jordan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
McLaughlin
Milliken
Plamondon
Rideout
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker—51

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Black
Blaikie
Breaugh
Caccia
Comuzzi
Duhamel
Ferguson
Fisher
Gérin
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Proud
Riis
Stewart
Taylor
Tremblay (Rosemont)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Browes
Chadwick
Charest
Clifford
Collins

Andre
Beatty
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bourgault
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Cole
Corbeil

Corbett
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dobbie
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horner
Hudon
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McLean
Moore
Oberle
Plourde
Redway
Richardson
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Winegard

Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Hawkes
Holtmann
Horning
James
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
Marin
McCreath
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Porter
Reid
Robitaille
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Worthy—108

PAIRED MEMBERS

Attewell
Marchi

Bélair
Thorkelson

• (2210)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, before you put the next vote I would ask you to seek unanimous consent. You might find there is such consent to apply the results of the previous vote in reverse with regard to the next vote.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for applying the vote in reverse?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order please. Is there unanimous consent for applying the vote in reverse?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The next question is on the motion of Mr. Valcourt.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those in favour 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.

Some hon. members: On division.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the motion carried on division?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Do I see five members rising?

I declare the motion carried, on division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 52(1), the House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, when you asked five members to rise, you saw there were a dozen members, including members of the Bloc, who rose to show their opposition. You decided to ignore those members and to start all over again, which is entirely against the spirit of this House. Madam Speaker, I ask you to put the question as it should be put.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With respect, the hon. member will agree there is a lot of noise in the House right now.

Mr. Plamondon: Is the noise blinding?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order please. I could not be sure the question had been heard by everyone, so I put the question again. There were yeas and nays, and the yeas had it, as far as voices went. I asked a second time whether there were five people asking for a recorded vote, but there were not. The matter is closed. We shall now proceed to the next item on the agenda.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

[*English*]

FISHERIES

NORTHERN COD FISHERY

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 52(1), the House will now proceed to the consideration of the motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the situation of the northern cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador and other parts of Atlantic Canada.

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

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place to begin the emergency debate that was granted by the Speaker and to speak about the crisis in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, in particular, but also in Atlantic Canada.

Let me say in rising to initiate this debate that I want to thank the Speaker of the House of Commons and the people who advise the Speaker for deciding to give Parliament an opportunity to conduct this debate.

Let me also thank the more than 60 members of Parliament who over the last four or five sitting days officially petitioned the Speaker to allow such an emergency debate to take place, including many of the members who are sitting here on this side of the House tonight.

I particularly want to say that this debate is in the name of all of those who believe that the crisis in the Atlantic fishery in general and in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular, has to be addressed. This debate is brought about by the hard work and determination of the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, the member for Burin—St. George's, both of whom will participate in this debate tonight, the member for Gander—Grand Falls and the member for Labrador are both in their respective constituencies this evening, dealing with the crisis in the fishery in their own respective areas.

If there was ever a doubt whatsoever as to the need for this debate tonight, that doubt was dispelled this afternoon when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for Canada, the member for St. John's West, with whom all relevant members on this side of the House want to work, are willing to work, are compelled to work because of the gravity of the situation, we had the incredible spectacle of that minister saying, in essence: "What crisis? There is no crisis".

In answer to questions put to the minister by me and the member for Burin—St. George's, the minister said, and I should quote him to be exact. I quote from the record what the minister said in response to questions on the crisis in the gulf cod stock: "There is an acknowledged crisis in the northern cod stocks but on the gulf cod stocks—"

I put a fair question seeking information. The minister said: "There is not any immediate crisis that I know of in that particular stock at the present time, with the exception that we have had to restrict mobile gear vessels because of the size of the cod that were caught and because of some other activities which had to be discouraged".

• (2220)

The minister said there was not any immediate crisis that he knew of in that particular stock. Let us deal with the gulf cod stock, the forgotten cod stock, the cod stock in the region known as 4R and 3PN, the cod stock that is the fishery that begins off the southwest coast of Newfoundland in the riding of my friend and colleague, the member for Burin—St. George's, and that migrates all the way up through the gulf, all the way up the great northern peninsula. That is the gulf cod stock.

The minister says that stock is not in crisis. Let us examine the record. The record is that approximately 10 days ago the minister's own department conducted a test fishery in the gulf cod stock. It went out itself to conduct a test in the fishery to find out what kind of fish if any were being caught.

What was discovered as recently as within the last two weeks? The department discovered that 80 per cent of the fish being caught in the gulf, fully 80 per cent, were pre-spawners.

Non-Newfoundlanders or non-Atlantic Canadians are asking: "What does that mean?" That means that 80 per cent of the fish being caught were not yet mature enough or old enough to reproduce, and if those fish are caught now before they are able to reproduce it means the stock is wiped out. It means it is fished to commercial extinction.

That is not my test. That is not the union's test. That is not the fishermen's test. That is not the media's test. That is the minister's own department that conducted a test within the last 10 days which showed that fully 80 per cent of the fish being caught were under 18 inches.

In the words of anybody who knows anything about the fishery, to catch a fish under 28 inches is a slaughter, a criminal slaughter of the resource. That is the size of the fish being caught and that is one of the reasons the minister moved to restrict the activities of the mobile fleet in the gulf.

The minister says there is no crisis, but I have in my hand the report of William Steele for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, for the minister. The report is dated December 1990. What is the conclusion of the report? Let us deal with facts tonight, not with fiction, not with opinion, not with commentary, not with rhetoric. The report was done as a background paper for the working group report on groundfish commissioned by the minister. What does the report say?

An hon. member: I would not know about it.

Mr. Tobin: The minister says from across the way: "I would not know about it". I hope he does know about it.

The report states at page 11 under conclusion: "The cod fishery in western Newfoundland is in a crisis. The fixed gear fishery in western Newfoundland is at a point

of no return if there is no strategy to rebuild the cod stocks in the near future."

I could quote pages and pages from this report to show the extent of the crisis that the minister says does not exist, but that is sufficient for the moment.

Let me then pick up a copy of the Marshall report, also commissioned about a year ago by this minister. It was conducted by Jack Marshall, former area manager for federal fisheries in western Newfoundland, the area manager responsible for the gulf cod stock, the stock of which I now speak. What does he say in response to the minister's claim this afternoon that there is no crisis? What does Jack Marshall say, the senior official in the region?

He states, and I am quoting directly from the executive summary of the report: "The cod fishery in western Newfoundland, southern Labrador is in a crisis mainly because the landings are the lowest on record. Employment and income levels have fallen and impacts are highly concentrated in the fixed gear sector. If present trends continue the fishery could collapse completely. Therefore new strategies are needed to rebuild and maintain stocks". We have started with the results of a test fishery done 10 days ago. The results are a disaster. We have had the report of William Steele done in December 1990, a year and a half ago. It says there is a crisis and we are headed for disaster. We have the report of the area commissioner, Jack Marshall, a report done about a year ago. It says the fisheries is in crisis and we need new direction or we are headed for the ultimate disaster.

Then we pick up the latest study. This study which I doubt the minister has yet seen—if he has not seen it I will provide him with a copy—was commissioned by the Central and Northern Community Futures Committees of the great northern peninsula. These groups are funded by the federal government to look at their current economic circumstances and to examine alternatives to the current downturn in the fisheries.

In fact the April 1992 report is called "The Assessment of the Fisheries Downturn on the Great Northern Peninsula Confidential Interim Progress Report." All of the analysis contained in this report is by Canning & Pitt Associates of St. John's. All of the data flows from the data banks of the department of fisheries, the minister's department. It is not opinion. It is not commentary. It is not hearsay. It is not rhetoric. It is raw data as recorded by the minister's department.

And what does this report say? What does it tell us? Let us review a couple of pages. It tells us that the total landings of all species by weight of fish on the great northern peninsula has dropped from 90 million pounds in 1987 to less than 50 million pounds in 1991. From 90 million to 50 million total weight of all species over a four-year period. That is a dramatic free fall in the total weight of landings of all species.

What does the same report say about the total landings of cod? It says the total landings of cod on the great northern peninsula over the same period of time—and the minister knows these figures—have dropped from in excess of 90 million pounds of cod landed on the great northern peninsula, cod from the gulf cod stock, to just over 30 million pounds. That is a 67 per cent decline in a few scant years. And the minister says there is no crisis.

Let us turn to another page of this recent report. What does this report which is aimed exclusively at the gulf cod stock at the great northern peninsula say in conclusion about the state of that stock?

> The region is currently facing—

That word comes up again.

> —a crisis in its fishing industry, and if fundamental changes are not made, the situation is bound to get much worse very quickly. At the present rate of resource decline there will be virtually no cod fishery on the great northern peninsula within a few years. Though higher prices have buoyed up the fishery during the past five years, this cannot continue.

It says:

> Within households of fishermen and plant workers, the economic effects have undermined personal security and self-worth and increased dramatically family stress—This crisis, which the study terms of reference call the "fisheries downturn," has been in the making for at least 10 years. Even though it has not been sudden, it has been profound, pervasive, and greater than in areas of the province where the drop has been more abrupt and therefore more dramatic.

The report is clearly telling us something different from what the minister of fisheries stood in the House this afternoon during Question Period and told us, that there is no crisis in the gulf cod fishery, that there is no sense of panic in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the great northern peninsula, that there is no sense of dislocation, no sense of 500 years of collective history and culture being suddenly crushed, vapourized, at the blink of an

eye it almost appears to those living in those communities.

When the minister says that, he is showing an incredible degree of insensitivity. The minister is not a stupid man. There is nothing stupid about this minister. This minister is not a minister to waste words. It is not by accident the minister stands in his place in spite of all the evidence I just put before this House and says: "There is no crisis".

That is what scares the people of the great northern peninsula. That is why there were 1,000 people out in St. Anthony last week to say we are here. We exist. We will not go away and we will not disappear. That is why on Thursday there is going to be 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 more out in Plum Point to say we are here, we exist, and we will not go away just because the minister says there is no crisis on the great northern peninsula.

• (2230)

What people fear, quite frankly, is this government has begun to gear up its advertising machinery, its propaganda machinery, and I want the minister to tell me that is not true. The government is about to wipe away all of the people, all of the fishermen, all of the plant workers, all of the communities that depend upon the gulf cod stock.

This minister has decided he is going to declare a moratorium on the northern cod stock. He is going to bring in some kind of compensation for those he claims are directly affected.

For the inshore fishermen of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception or for the inshore fishermen who reside in the riding Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, or for the inshore fishermen who exist along the southwest coast in the riding of the member for Burin—St. George's we are not going to declare a moratorium. We are not even going to recognize a crisis. We are going to abandon those people and let the department of welfare or somebody else look after them. That is the plan of the minister of fisheries.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Tobin: What is happening? The member opposite, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries, may think this is funny. Let me ask him this: does he think it is funny that in a St. Anthony, Newfoundland plant that several years ago employed 700 people there is nobody working today?

Does he think it funny that in the Port aux Choix plant that normally employs 580 people there are only 100 working today? Does he think it funny that in the Anchor Point plant that normally employs 237 there are only 50 working today? In Brig Bay that employed 137 there is none working today? That in Conche that employed 78 there is only one working today? That in Main Brook that employed 60 there is none working today. That in St. Julien's that employed 32 there is none working today. In Croque a plant that employed 34 there is none working today.

In a New Ferrolle plant there is only a handful of maintenance people where once 200 people worked. In Englee where 323 worked only one maintenance person is employed today. In Raleigh where there were 60 workers there is none today. In Bide Arm where there were 130 workers, none today. In Cow Head there were 65 workers, none today. In Roddickton there were 157, none today. In Savage Cover there were 80 workers, none today. In Green Island Cover where 150 worked there is none today. Bear Cove, none, Cook's Harbour, none, Bartlett's Harbour, two out of 35 and Flowers Cove none out of 65.

Does the parliamentary secretary think that is funny? Does the minister continue to insist there is no crisis in the fishery on the great northern peninsula?

Mr. Belsher: On a point of order. The hon. member keeps saying does the parliamentary secretary think that is funny? I do not think it is the least bit funny. I have been listening here to every word he has said and I have not been ridiculing either.

Mr. Crosbie: We do not find you funny either.

Madam Deputy Speaker: To put the record clear that is not a point of order and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, if the parliamentary secretary tells me he does not find that funny I am reassured. It means we have made a beginning with the parliamentary secretary. Now we have got to work on the minister of fisheries, the member for St. John's West

who insists in the face of the evidence, and I submit if we were in a court of law that would be sufficient evidence.

In the face of the evidence the minister has now got to admit that, indeed, we do have a dramatic crisis in the gulf fishery, the gulf cod stocks.

The minister will be the first to rise and say —and I will be the first to agree with him —that there is a crisis in the northern cod stock, that the northern cod stock has been devastated. In fact, what is frightening about that stock is what we do not know. The lack of scientific evidence that exists for us to make enlighted, intelligent, and knowledgeable decisions about how to manage that stock.

The minister will rise and tell us he is seriously considering placing a moratorium on that stock. I agree with him. You know why? Because there has been a 60 per cent decline in landings from the northern cod stock.

In fact, if you go back far enough it has been greater than that. My friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception reminded me before I began my speech that in 1968 there were 815,000 tonnes and by last year it was down to 127,000 tonnes. Just in the last four or five years, there has been a 60 per cent decline in landings in the northern cod stock.

I agree with the minister that is a crisis. I agree with the minister that he has to be prepared to compensate those who have been affected. If he agrees that a 60 per cent decline is a crisis, I ask him why then is a 67 per cent decline in the gulf cod stock not equally and similarly a crisis?

I want to put an interesting proposition to this minister. I want to remind him of something. At the end of the day, when it comes to the northern cod stock the area referred to as 2J–3KL, the eastern coast of Canada, the east coast of Labrador if you could picture the map of the east coast of Canada going off into the Atlantic, when it comes to that cod stock, the Government of Canada can always say: "We did our best to manage it well but offshore foreign vessels did not play the game". Foreign vessels overfished as the minister has said and foreign nations have to cease their fishing as we have. The minister pointed out that there is no point having a moratorium on Canadian fishing efforts if foreign fishing efforts continue. The minister is right.

The minister can always claim that despite his best efforts somebody can always trip him up in his management of the northern cod stock and to some extent there is truth to that.

We have a unique opportunity in the gulf. The gulf cod stock and the Gulf of St. Lawrence is surrounded completely by Canada. It is the only major coastline of the east coast of Canada and the only major cod stock that is not adjacent to the offshore and is not bounded by the 200–mile limit. It is the only stock in which we do not have foreign vessels just outside our 200–mile limit operating freely and at their own will. It is entirely enclosed and bounded by the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and western Newfoundland. It is totally in our control. Therefore we have nobody but ourselves to blame or to praise for any wrong that is done or any right that occurs.

I submit to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that the minister ought to grab on to the gulf cod stock, to that cod stock that migrates within the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It migrates from southwest Newfoundland to the great northern peninsula. He could use that gulf stock as a pilot project to show what Canadians when they are in control can do to rebuild the fishery. That is within the power of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to undertake if he has the imagination and the courage and the support of his colleagues in cabinet to do.

I want to say that we on this side want to support the minister in any attempt to rebuild the stocks. We know that tough decisions have to be made. It would be damn easy for us to sit on this side of the House and just say to the minister: "It is your fault. You fix it up. We have nothing more to contribute". We are prepared to stand with him and make some of the tough decisions.

We are not prepared to stand silent. We are not prepared to say to our constituents as Parliament closes for the summer recess: "You will not be heard. The reality of the desperate circumstances you live in will not be talked about and we will not call upon the minister tonight to give this House a commitment that when it comes to those displaced by a reduction in the northern cod stocks and by a reduction in the gulf cod stock that this government is going to provide the kind of short–

term and long-term economic assistance that the Prime Minister himself committed himself to on behalf of the government in this House last week".

I ask the minister when he comes to his feet to acknowledge that we have a crisis. I ask the minister to reach out and to accept that those on this side are willing to work with him, to share some of the burden of the tough decisions, but he has to have a plan of action. It is no plan simply to say there is no crisis and therefore there is nothing I propose to do. That we cannot and will not accept on this side of the House.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Madam Speaker, I did not hear the minister say this afternoon that there was no crisis in the Atlantic cod fishery. I was not here but I heard he is being quoted all across Newfoundland as saying this. I hope the minister is able to stand up this evening and tell us he was totally misunderstood by those who heard him in the House and all over Newfoundland this afternoon. If the minister himself does not recognize there is a crisis, then we are truly in great trouble. Certainly this species could very well become extinct.

• (2240)

I have told the story before of being told by the manager of the biggest fishing company in the area that within five years we could be looking for the last codfish off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. That was told to me three years ago. We are getting perilously close to the extinction of the species if the minister himself is not aware just how serious the matter is.

I had a telephone conversation with Clyde Newhook, our candidate in the Ferryland constituency by-election, to see what he knew about whether or not there truly is a crisis in the cod fishery in that area. He told me it is a total and complete failure everywhere. Perhaps he was exaggerating, but he did talk about three boats that went out in the past three days. They went 140 miles out from the southern shore and 70 feet of net was hauled three times. Fifteen cod were all they got for their effort. He told me of the inshore cod fishery at his own Ferryland constituency. Over three weeks of fishing there was no sign of any fish. A few fishermen who did catch some found them to be very small at 10 inches long. The fishermen there are saying if there is to be a closure, impose it immediately while there is still some hope of achieving something before any more damage is done.

In the offshore fishery in the 3N-O district the few cod being caught are full of spawn. We are destroying what little is left of the spawning stock in that area.

The only answer is to quit fishing. It is drastic. I suggested that 18 months ago in this House, and of course no attention was paid to it. I did not expect it would be.

If we do quit fishing, we have to provide for the fish shore workers, the inshore fishermen and the trawlermen. I think Canada is ready to do that.

The minister or anyone else should agree there is a crisis, instead of saying there really is not one right now through lack of knowledge or whatever. They should go to the government and say that, we are liable to wipe out the codfish as a species in the North Atlantic. We need money to pay these people not to fish. There are useful things that can be done, but we have to stop today or tomorrow and no longer. The damage is being done every day those fishermen are out there trying to find fish.

It cannot be like it was when they closed down the salmon fishery. The compensation to those who got out of the industry was paid on the basis of their last three years' catch, which was the worst three years in the history of the industry. We cannot pay these fishermen on the basis of the cod they have caught in the past three years or they will be getting next to nothing.

It is not just the cod, it is the capelin, the primary fish bait or the primary fish food. So far all of the capelin that are showing up, according to Mr. Newhook, are one-half the size of mature fish. The fishermen who see these capelin do not know the reason and I suspect the minister does not either and that is part of the problem. We have to find out why. What does it mean? What does it mean to the future of the capelin?

I have talked about the seals before and I am prepared to do it again. The population seems to be exploding in all the areas where they are not looking for fish. They are in quantities never seen before. There have been arguments as to what the seals are eating and whether or not they eat cod or the cod food. They are certainly part of the food chain, and we know they are not eating corn flakes. Is it already too late to save the northern cod stock?

The flounder stock seems low. We have talked about the nose and tail and the jurisdiction. It is time to do something about that. I think if we set an example we would not have to get tough with these people. We should say to these people this is serious. We are in danger of wiping out the species, Canadians are going to quit fishing in those areas. Quit fishing for cod. We want you to join with us in a management plan for the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. Co-operate with us to make sure there is no cod fishing in those areas as well as within the 200-mile limit.

Let us challenge them to show that they too want to save that stock for future generations rather than wiping it all out in a matter of one or two years.

Mr. Newhook told me about visiting families in his constituency where unemployment insurance ran out May 15. They are afraid they will not be able to feed their families. They are trying to get social welfare, but something more has to be done for these people, something that will encourage them not to fish.

The minister and others have said before that we do not really know what is going on. When I travelled to Europe two or three years ago with the fisheries committee under external affairs and talked to these people from the European Community about the alleged overfishing, they said that we did not have sufficient scientific evidence to prove our case. We had not proven our case to them. They said that we do not really know what was going on there.

The minister himself has suggested on several occasions that perhaps it had something to do with the high incidence of ice. The waters were so cold this year and maybe the fish went somewhere else. That could be but we do not know where they are. If they are somewhere else, let us find them. Before we catch another cod, let us try to find out where the survivors are if there are survivors. If we cannot find them, then until we do find some, we have to assume that the population is getting dangerously low and take some desperate steps. The thing we can do most effectively and immediately is to cease cod fishing, compensate the people who are going to lose their livelihood immediately and reasonably and persuade all other nations fishing in those areas to join with us.

We must mount a tremendous scientific campaign to try to find out what is happening. Talk and listen to the fishermen. Some of those people have a lot of knowledge. It is their livelihood and some of them know more than others. Some of them know more than people who are here in Ottawa trying to run the industry and run departments.

Let us find out and let us prove to the world that we are doing our best to make sure we know exactly what is happening in that area of the world, what has caused the deterioration in the quantities of cod, the legendary quantities that were there a few hundred years ago. We have all heard stories about how you could walk on the cod, how you could scoop them up by the netful, no problem at all.

It is not a case of laying blame. We know this has been going on for a number of years. There have been Liberal governments and there have been Tory governments. That does not matter right now. We can worry about those thing during the election campaign. Right now we have to arrive at a common decision that it is Canada's responsibility to do everything possible to save that species.

I am convinced that means talking and listening to people. From what I have seen on site, I am convinced that it means stopping cod fishing immediately and totally, demonstrating to the world this is the way to save the species. We have to prove to the world we are going to put the scientists to work who can accomplish anything, who can show us anything, who can tell us anything and teach us anything. We are going to find out what is happening and we are going to manage that resource in the way in which it should be managed, to have it as a perpetual resource for mankind and for the cod themselves.

It is serious. It is serious or we would not be doing it at this time of night. It is serious or the Speaker would not have agreed to this emergency debate this evening. A lot rests on this minister. He can argue and he can present other points of view. He can present other reports, no doubt, and tell us it is not as bad as we are led to believe it is and make us think that perhaps it is going to be better if we are patient.

I submit to the House that he does not know. The evidence to me is so overwhelming there is a serious problem that it is his responsibility to close down the cod fishing and do whatever is necessary to rebuild that stock so the species does not become extinct. He has a responsibility and an opportunity to turn back the tide, to undo the damage that has been done by 10, 12 or more

years of Liberal and Tory governments, and to preserve that species. I hope he does not fail us and the cod.

• (2250)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, this is an emergency debate on the fisheries situation on the east coast of Canada.

If I might just review some of the ground, it was at the beginning of June that the NAFO Scientific Council at our request met with CAFSAC, Canadian fisheries scientists, to review the findings and all the additional research we have had done in the last year or two years with reference to the state of the northern cod, the 2J-3KL cod known as the northern cod.

The northern cod is approximately 40 per cent of the value of all landings of fish in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is 11 per cent to 13 per cent of the value of all landings of fish in Atlantic Canada. It is a very important stock and probably the main reason Newfoundland was settled in the first place. It is a stock of fish very close to the hearts, minds and consciousness of Newfoundlanders.

We had referred this to the NAFO Scientific Council. It spent several days reviewing all this evidence with Canadian scientists. They agreed with the findings of CAFSAC, the Canadian scientists, and they came to certain conclusions which I am sure the House would be quite familiar with. I have the report here. Anyone can ready it. At pages 31 and 32 we see the conclusions. It stated that the age three biomass between 520,000 and 640,000 tonnes and, even more disturbing, the age seven plus biomass—that is the spawning biomass—between 72,000 and 110,000 tonnes were currently at or near the lowest levels ever observed for this stock. The fishery in 1992 would be dominated by only two year classes: those of 1986 and 1987. The limited information available indicated that the 1988 year class was below average and was currently estimated to be about the level of the weak 1983 and 1984 year classes.

Then it continued on page 32 by indicating that it therefore recommended that fishing mortalities should be reduced in 1992 from the levels of recent years.

We had already reduced the total allowable catch for this stock from 266,000 tonnes in the year 1988 down to 120,000 tonnes in February 1992. We set it in December 1991 at 185,000 for this year. There have been reductions in every year since 1988 because of revised estimates, forecasts and projections by our scientists. There have been very severe reductions already up to this time.

It recommended again that fishing mortality should be further reduced. It said that at FO.1, that is the fishing mortality rate of 0.25, the total catch should not exceed 91,000 tonnes. Given the uncertainties in the assessments and the obvious requirement for caution, it would be wise to consider the FO.1 catch to be at the lower value of 50,000 tonnes. It should not be forgotten that at least 20,000 to 25,000 tonnes appeared to have already been caught in 1992.

That is its main conclusion. It says that the stock was at the lowest level it had been since it started observing the stock.

I do not have the time tonight, but I can point out that it is at the same level as it was in 1977, which was the previous lowest level for this stock in its known scientific history. Obviously there is a serious problem with the 2J-3KL northern cod stock.

After the NAFO Scientific Council report came out, I said that I would have to review again the total allowable catch for northern cod for the year 1992. Already it had been reduced by 35 per cent from 185,000 tonnes to 120,000 tonnes. However, in light of this further information from the NAFO Scientific Council in CAFSAC, I would have to review the situation again with a view to either a lower total allowable catch or perhaps even a moratorium on the hatching of the northern cod if I concluded that the stock was threatened so that it might disappear if there were not a moratorium. This was obviously an option that had to be looked at as well. That was all said in the first week of June.

I said that during the month of June and early July, certainly during the month of June, we would be observing the northern cod stock hatched in the inshore fishery. We stopped the offshore fishery for northern cod last

February. There has not been an offshore Canadian fishery for the northern cod since last February. We wanted to see what happened in the inshore fishery during June and what cod fish were being caught.

The disturbing thing about the state of the northern cod is its age distribution. There are two good year classes, 1986 and 1987, followed by poor year classes preceded by poor year classes. The classes of 1986 and 1987 have not yet reached spawning age, which is the age of seven. They are only five and six years of age. We had to be careful this year not to allow these two year classes to be caught up this year and next year before they can spawn or else the future of the stock will be threatened. This is what we are watching for. This is now a problem greater than it was in 1977 because of the age distribution of these year classes of the cod.

This is based on evidence. The scientists examine the cod that are caught. They can tell you the distribution of the age classes by counting the rings in the inner ear. This is based on firm evidence that the age distribution of this cod stock is very peculiar. It is based on 1986 and 1987 year classes and the classes since have been very poor. That is why I am contemplating whether or not there should be a moratorium or a further reduction in the TAC.

A further reduction of TAC would still have serious consequences. Even last year, which was a bad year in the fishery, 127,000 tonnes of northern cod was caught by Canadians. The TAC was 190,000 and we caught 127,000 tonnes. Just in 1990 in the inshore fishery alone in Newfoundland we caught 114,000 tonnes of the northern cod. It has not been all bad years leading up to this year. We should not pretend that there has been complete decimation over the last two, three, four, five or six years in the fishery. There have been good fisheries and poor fisheries. In 1990 there was a superb inshore fishery in the northern cod. Last year the inshore only caught 75,000 to 78,000 tonnes. It is not all complete disaster in the last few years fishery. That is still the position.

The inshore fishery can come early or late in June or it can come in July. We do not know what the inshore cod fishery is going to be like yet in Newfoundland. Naturally everybody fears it is not going to be too good. We know that the capelin is late arriving. We know that the capelin that are out there are small, stunted, weenie, little creatures. They are not the size that you can sell in the Japanese market or anywhere else as yet. We know there are problems with capelin and with the northern cod.

Some time in the next week or 10 to 12 days I have to make a decision and I will as to whether we are going to have a moratorium on the northern cod fishery or not or whether we are going to reduce the TAC from 120,000 tonnes for this year to something much less. I will have to make that decision and I will not hesitate to make the decision. I have already said that I am going to make the decision based on the survival of the species. Whatever is necessary for the northern cod to survive, that will be my decision. When that decision is made, whether it is a moratorium or whether it is another severe reduction in the total allowable catch, we will be announcing a program of assistance for those affected by the state of that stock, who are affected by that decision whether it is fishermen, trawlermen or plant workers, the people involved will receive assistance.

• (2300)

If there is a moratorium then the assistance will be based on that. If it is a reduction to 50,000 tonnes or 70,000 tonnes that imposes hardship, it will be some kind of plan to help in that eventuality. I helped them last year. The government helped them last year. The Prime Minister helped them last year.

Last year they got ice compensation when we had a fantastic ice year with ice still coming down in August. We did not hesitate to help them. Last year we also helped the fisherpeople of Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada with a catch failure program, an emergency job creation projects and a gear-up program. The like of the assistance we have rendered to the fishermen of Atlantic Canada has never been heard of before in Canada. We do not need anyone from the opposition or from anywhere else to tell us that we have obligations we should meet. We have met them and we are going to continue to meet them.

We have worked night and day to get fish plants opened that were closed, like Galtus, Grand Bank, programs of economic development and diversification outside the fishery, programs of diversification inside the fishery. We do not need any tongue wagging or finger shaking at us because whenever called upon, we have

met the situation we were called upon to deal with and that is going to continue.

We have set up a task force, an incomes and adjustment for the Atlantic fishery, headed by Richard Cashin, the president of the largest fishermen's union in the country with five other people from the trade, the unions and universities.

An hon. member: One of whom is in the gallery right now, Professor Darby.

Mr. Crosbie: Professor Darby is in the gallery. He is a member of this task force. As a matter of fact the task force is working in Ottawa this week. We cannot produce a rabbit out of a hat for our immediate situation. We will be expecting them to give us advice on the longer term aspects of this situation. A whole series of steps have been put in place.

Hon. members opposite want to have an emergency debate. I understand that. They want to be on the record that they are concerned. Sure, we know they are concerned. I can see they are concerned. If they are not concerned, why are they members of Parliament? Why do they seek to get elected? Why are they here if they are not concerned? I will agree they are concerned and we on this side of the House are concerned. The member for St. John's West is concerned. The member for St. John's East is concerned. Naturally, we are concerned. We understand why they wanted an emergency debate. It is premature because I have not made a decision yet.

It is premature because I have not announced a decision that I have not made yet. It is premature because I do not have my colleagues agreeing on this. I am working night and day on exactly what program of assistance I think should be put in place in the eventuality that I have to make this or that decision.

I am seeing the Prime Minister tomorrow morning to review this with him. I know very well I will have his support. He has already indicated in the House that he is waiting for me to bring forward a plan that he can support. Why will he support it? Because he is humane. He is humanitarian. He has a big heart. He is concerned. He is eager. He knows why this is necessary. Much maligned, but there has never in the history of Canada been a Prime Minister or a member of this House who did more for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador than Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has.

An hon. member: Absolutely right. He made a promise and he kept it.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, let me deal with this business of crisis. I do not mind clear debate and I do not mind people being factual. This is malarkey that somehow I said there was no crisis in the Newfoundland fishery. I have *Hansard* here. Let us look at the *Hansard* of today. I am very disappointed in the hon. member for this cheap attack about crisis. According to the NDP member from Nanaimo, the member from Burin—St. George's and the member from the west coast of Newfoundland have been howling all over Newfoundland all day today saying: "The minister said there was no crisis. What kind of a fool, a nitwit and an idiot is the minister? He said there was no crisis". What did the minister say? The minister said in answering questions about the cod stocks in the gulf: "There is not any immediate crisis I know of in that particular stock".

If the hon. gentleman got on the radio and quoted me exactly, fine. He did not do that. He called the radio stations and apparently said I said there was no crisis in the fish stocks in Newfoundland. I say it again, there is not any immediate crisis I know of in that particular stock in the gulf.

Let us look a couple of pages further in *Hansard*. I said to the hon. member: "Because the hon. member rises in this House and shouts across the House does not make the situation a crisis. We hear the hon. member bellowing ceaselessly in this House in Question Period trying to make it appear that somehow the country is falling apart because he is yelling at the top of his lungs". I also said: "The facts have been known for months that he quoted about the gulf fishery and there is no sudden crisis today in the gulf", not in the Newfoundland fishery, in the gulf.

Then the member for Burin—St. George's got up and I said: "Mr. Speaker, we all know that was a reference to the northern cod stock in the province of Newfoundland in particular. There is a serious problem in connection with the fishery. We also know other stocks are under heavy pressure. There is no sudden emergency that has just occurred with reference to other fisheries". Those are my references to the situation in Newfoundland. The hon. gentleman screeched off to the telephones to

phone down to Newfoundland to misquote, tear up and give a false impression of what I said.

The hon. member says he wants to work with the government and then he goes out and tries to stab the minister in the back by misquoting and obscuring what he said.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I would prefer to make a point of order than try to make a long point of privilege. Because it is a matter of the facts, I want to tell the Speaker this member of Parliament has spoken to no journalist and no media in Newfoundland since Question Period this afternoon about the Question Period the minister refers to. His facts are incorrect.

I would be delighted to have the minister tell me he acknowledges the crisis in the gulf. If he would do that, I would be very happy.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I must say the Speaker is still wondering which one of our Standing Orders the hon. member was referring to.

Mr. Tobin: It is the same one the parliamentary secretary gave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am telling the hon. member exactly the same thing I told the hon. parliamentary secretary. The hon. minister has the floor.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, I am not interested in debating semantics. I am interested in discussing the situation of the fishery in Newfoundland. We should put this in context as well.

This is not the only cod fishery in the world that is in difficulty. If we look at the Icelandic cod situation, the Icelandic authorities have been told to reduce 1F and reduce catch to no more than 154,000 tonnes for 1993. Last year they caught just under 300,000 tonnes. They have a very, very bad situation in the Icelandic cod fishery.

I have charts to show the North Sea and the Baltic Sea cod are in desperate trouble there. The advice is to stop fishing in the Baltic. For the North Sea, reduce the effort to 70 per cent of the 1989 effort. There has been a tremendous decline in the catch of the Greenland cod. There is practically no cod left there to catch.

The only area that shows improvement recently is in the Barents Sea. For four, five or six years they had grave difficulty and had to just about cut out the fishery. The northern cod is not the only cod stock in grave difficulty.

The gulf cod stock is a different cod stock and it is not in the kind of danger the northern cod stock is in. I am going to act based on the advice I get from CAFSAC and fisheries managers. They are not advising me that the gulf stock is in severe danger of disappearing as a stock or that the year class distribution is in the same maladjusted pattern as it is in the northern cod. Our major problem in the cod fishery at this time is the northern cod.

• (2310)

I am not happy with the state of the gulf cod because the gulf cod is not in a very healthy state but it is not in the kind of situation that the northern cod is in in 4RS–3PN.

There are all kinds of crises if you want to talk about crises. There is a crisis with respect to Hibernia. There has been a crisis with respect to Hibernia now for six or seven months, since the Gulf corporation said it was no longer going to continue in the consortium.

When I think of the Hibernia crisis I think of the fact that the present premier of the province said the whole Hibernia development was not of all that great significance. It only amounted to two fish plants when it came to total employment. He may have changed his opinion since because there is a crisis with respect to Hibernia.

The hon. member from the northern peninsula said that the people in the northern peninsula are here, they exist, they will not go away. I know they are there and they exist. I do not want them to go away. That is why I helped them last year. That is why I will help them this year when the northern cod fishery and whatever action we take requires that they be helped, they will be helped. That is why I helped them last year with the ice compensation. That is why we will help them if the gulf

cod stock situation gets any worse. This is a government that helps people when they need to be helped.

The hon. member from the New Democratic Party talked about Mr. Newhook who is a candidate in a by-election in Ferryland in his constituency. He has been in more constituencies than you can count in the whole House. This is about his eighth attempt to get elected in a constituency. I think it is a bit premature to say that Mr. Newhook is in his constituency. His constituency happens to be part of my constituency. I am going to be a very surprised person if Mr. Newhook is seen in that constituency again after next Thursday when the by-election is over. He will be gone off to look for another constituency after next Thursday's by-election. I do not say that in any mean spirit. Every man wants to try to find the right constituency to be in.

I am not quite sure of my time. I think Madam Speaker is indicating that my time is getting close. That is the trouble. Look, I have 14 pages, a pile of facts and remarks prepared by my staff, all good solid stuff, what we have been doing in the last year and several months since I have been minister of fisheries, what we have done internationally, what we have done domestically.

In the next week or 10 days I will be able to describe for you what we are going to do in connection with the northern cod and the fishermen and women and plant workers of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is not going to be easy.

What makes it a lot easier is that I have a leader who is supportive, who is conscious of what needs to be done, who is concerned about people and who is going to be supportive again for us to help down in Newfoundland and Labrador, despite the kind of treatment that he himself personally has received from the leadership of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador. He rises above that.

Whether it is Hibernia or the fisheries, he is there to offer a hand in support. He will be there again in a week or two weeks' time when we have made our decision and when we have to say what we are going to do to help the people affected and afflicted. He will be there and I will be there and the hon. gentleman opposite can be secure in the knowledge that the same concern we showed last year will be shown this year, only in spades.

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, point of order. I think if you were to consult with the other side you would find agreement that from here on there would be 10-minute speeches at the maximum in order to accommodate as many as possible until midnight.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, there have been consultations and I would concur with the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Caccia: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, would the hon. parliamentary secretary be agreeable to removing the limit of midnight so as to permit speakers interested in participating in the debate to make their intervention?

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, I was led to believe there could be five to six speakers from the other side. If that is so then we could agree to that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Maybe we should start first by getting unanimous consent as far as the 10-minute speeches are concerned. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It might be that we will go over midnight for a little while. Would there be unanimous consent if I were to suggest that our pages, be able to leave?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I think we should examine why we are here tonight. It is for a very simple reason. It is an emergency debate because it is based on an emergency situation in which we have a situation of crisis proportion. We are here, as the hon. member for St. John's West says, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, because we are concerned.

The way I see things is not quite the way the minister sees them. I have heard about the compensation programs, every time I ask a question on compensation. I am told about the compensation the year before and the compensation the year before that. That is not doing much good for the people who need the compensation now.

The reason I and my colleagues are here is to respond to letters like this. I am going to quote a letter I received from a constituent of mine dated June 6. I want to share with you the destitution in this letter. It is from a Mr.

Dean Williams of New Harbour. He is in charge of a group of plant workers and he has written me and I am going to quote parts of his letter. He starts off by saying:

"Dear Mr. Mifflin: We as fish plant workers are very concerned about the state of the fishery in our province. Many of us have worked in the fishery for most of our lives. As you know, our livelihood has been going down hill in recent years. Those of us who have always looked forward to spring and summer as seasons we could count on for most of our annual income are now finding it difficult to keep our families fed and clothed. Since the cutback in northern cod quotas in 1989 the winter fishery is nearly non-existent. The sad fact is that UI is now the mainstay of our income. The changes made by Bill C-21 in November of 1990 made it more difficult for us to qualify. This increases our difficulty in maintaining our standard of living. We are searching for ways to help alleviate some of the problems we now encounter. We have to come up with some ideas that will help us to maintain a standard of living with our local economy the way it is.

Many of us find it impossible to work 10 weeks in a year because the fish is not there to obtain the weeks we need to qualify for unemployment insurance.

Most of the plants in your riding have slowed down or even stopped production. We would appreciate any idea you may have and any support you would give".

I have 57 plants in my riding. The member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte rhymed off the number in his riding. We have 252 plants in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This gentleman represents one of thousands of people within the last three to four months and they are in two categories. The first is those people who have no unemployment insurance now because either they did not have it when the plants were closing down or they had it but they have run out because there is no fishery, as Mr. Williams points out. The other class of people is actually in both classes, the class I just mentioned and they are also concerned about what we are discussing here this evening, a moratorium on the cod stocks which will prevent any fishing and any compensation in the form of wages.

They are looking at the long-term package, which we are talking about here tonight and the interim package, which was the reason this debate was started at the beginning; the 1,000 people in St. Anthony who had no jobs, the 500 people in the Charleston fish plant who demonstrated in Clarenville which is unheard of in my riding.

• (2320)

There are the 1,200 people in the deep sea plant in Port Union who have no work, the 50 families who had no qualifications since February 21. I made 26 interventions in this House and I have had no satisfactory response. That is why we are here this evening. Let me give you in another way the scope of the problem. The facts that the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte quoted, that is a crisis.

Mr. Cashin who is working on this is quoted to have said: "The gulf stocks are in worse shape than the northern cod stocks". I did not see that myself, but I am told he said that. Well, that speaks to me.

Let me give you some indication of the deep sea and inshore fishery and the crisis we have gone through. In 1968, 815,000 tonnes and last year 127,000 tonnes in a relatively short term in the life span of 500 years of fishing in Newfoundland, an 85 per cent reduction.

Again with the deep sea offshore plants, the one I just mentioned in Port Union, 1,200 jobs were lost and over 200 trawlermen were out of work. On February 21, it closed down and 155 trawlermen were out of work and 850 people had no work. Normally, at this time of the year, that plant is operating almost full tilt. Now other than just a few maintenance workers there is nobody there.

Let me give a stark and sad commentary on the inshore fishery. About 25 years ago, it was not uncommon for a cod trap—a cod trap is like a box that goes in the water. It has a door, the cod swim in and they cannot get out. It can hold a lot of volume. About 25 years ago, you could catch 25,000 pounds of cod. That was not unusual per trap. One trap would catch 25,000 pounds. About five or six years ago, you could catch maybe 10,000, a few years ago, maybe 7,000. Last year, if you got 1,500 pounds it would be considered to be good.

In Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, my riding, the three great bays in eastern Newfoundland are always teaming with cod. This year in Trinity Bay, I spoke with a fisherman last Saturday who had 27 traps and he got 103 fish. That works out to about four fish per trap, about 25 pounds versus 25,000 pounds 25 years ago. That is a devastating reduction. It is an astounding reduction. It

boggles the mind. That is the proportion and the scope of the problem.

Let me look at it in another way. What does this mean? Why are we here tonight debating? Why did it take us three or four days and 50 members to get this? I have trouble with that. Let me equate it. It is difficult to make comparisons. Sometimes it is odious. When you are in a difficult situation and the frustrating situation we are in on this side of the House, you resort to almost anything to make your point.

Let me make the point this way. In Newfoundland I mentioned 252 plants. If you count those involved in the fishing and the fish plants, in my riding I have over 10,000 people. In Newfoundland, there are 43,000 people involved in this business. That makes up 22 per cent of those people who work in my province.

Let me take the automobile industry in Canada. About 50,000 people who make cars and about 70,000 who are involved in car parts, 90 per cent are in Ontario. So if you take 90 per cent of 120,000 in Newfoundland mathematics it works out to about 100,000 people, actually 108,000 people, but that represents only 2.2 per cent of the working population of Ontario. If I were to take that 2.2 per cent and multiply it by 10 to give me 22 per cent, which is what fishing means to Newfoundland, it would mean that there are over one million workers equivalent in Ontario that would be without work or their jobs would be threatened. Now if that were not considered a crisis on a proportional basis, I do not know what would be.

There is the scope of the problem. The concern is yes for the future of the fishery. Yes, fishermen will co-operate. They understand if there has to be a moratorium.

In one of the plants the plant workers have agreed to have their salaries in Newfoundland, just today or yesterday, reduced from $10 an hour by $1.50 to $8.50 an hour. They will co-operate.

That is the long term but as for the short term there are literally thousands of people. There are 58 families today in my riding that never got any compensation because they did not have enough stamps to qualify and there were no fish since February 21, four months. They are hungry. They are losing their cars. They are losing their houses.

This is more than a crisis. I do not know what is more than a crisis. I do not know what term to put on it but it is of that proportion.

I have given the scope of the problem. I have given the two terms of compensation we need. I beg this minister of fisheries to take account and heed of what has been said here tonight, what will be said here tonight and not wait another month, not wait for another couple of days. Before this House closes down tomorrow, make some commitment to those people in the short term and then the long term, perhaps in a week or so, whenever that is planned.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate tonight and I would like to thank the Speaker for allowing this debate on a matter of grave concern to many people in Atlantic Canada.

It is an opportunity to discuss an issue that has been very much in the news in our region of Canada and about which there is certainly knowledge in other parts of the country, though perhaps not the same amount of understanding we have in Atlantic Canada.

There are basically three points or issues I would like to speak tonight and I will be very conscious of the clock, as I always am.

First of all, I want to make the point that the focus of this debate in this discussion is Newfoundland and Labrador but I want to make the point this is a problem that goes beyond Newfoundland and Labrador and impacts throughout Atlantic Canada.

For instance, in my own constituency of South Shore I have Mersey Seafoods Limited in Liverpool which has an offshore cod quota on the Grand Banks. National Sea Products is impacted. Sea Freez is impacted. Clearwater is impacted. There is a long line of fishermen from Cape Sable Island who fish cod off the Grand Banks.

While the greatest impact by far is in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, this impacts as well on my own province of Nova Scotia and I expect other parts of Atlantic Canada.

Accordingly, we will be watching with hope and encouragement that when the minister does bring down the aid package I know he will bring down as part of the response to this, it will extend to other areas of Atlantic

Canada that are impacted by this crisis as well, in particular the province of Nova Scotia.

Often we hear, when we are in central Canada and other parts of the country, talk about the problems of the fishermen. I think it is important to recognize that in many ways the people who are impacted as much if not more than the fishermen are the people who work in the fish plants, the plant workers. These people put in many hard hours and quite often do not get the same economic return as fishermen sometimes get. This problem is one that has a ripple effect right throughout the communities in which they are impacted.

I have listened to members on all sides of the House speak tonight and everybody is cognizant that we are dealing here with something that has a very pervasive impact on those regions of the country where it is involved. Solutions and measures must be extended to all those areas and that includes Nova Scotia as well as others.

The problem we are discussing here is twofold. It is long term and it is short term. The long term seems to be coming under control and I want to say a little bit more about that later. The focus of tonight's debate is the short term.

The minister has spoken earlier and made the point that it is a bit premature here to be discussing the response when a decision has not yet been taken and the response fully announced. It might be more appropriate to have a debate at that time but members opposite, for quite understandable reasons, were anxious before the House rose to have an opportunity to put on record their concerns. I must say I welcome that opportunity.

I think we must recognize it is inevitable in the short term that in the final analysis we are going to be faced with some kind of decision relating to the extension of the moratorium. As the minister has said, within the next week or 10 days he will be making that decision.

That moratorium, just as the moratorium that is down now, has a profound impact on the people who normally fish resources and on the people who work in the plants that depend on those resources as a source of supply to keep those plants going.

• (2330)

Inevitably this will require substantial financial assistance over a fairly extended period of time. This government has certainly not shied away from providing such in the past. We had the $584 million Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program two years ago in response to the first waves of this problem. Last year we responded to the destruction of the stocks with the ice program. One expects this government will come through again.

It is interesting to observe what is going on in this country. It is easy for those of us who represent fishing areas to focus on this issue, but we must remember that this is one issue among many in our country today. All Canadians are concerned with the unity issue and the efforts that are being made by people from coast to coast in this country to achieve a successful constitutional renewal so that Canadians could get on with dealing with the economic and other problems that are so important in our lives.

One would have to be blind not to have noticed that the premier of Newfoundland, on behalf of the government of that province, did not seem to be showing a great deal of flexibility in the constitutional talks. I wonder what the response will be from Canadians from other parts of the country for whom constitutional renewal is the major priority, if the response they are getting from the Government of Newfoundland is that it has its principles and its principles cannot be compromised in order to save Canada.

I guess what I am saying is that just as Canadians are going to be asked to be flexible in making their tax dollars available to assist Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with the severe difficulty they are facing right now, so also should the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and indeed the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, be prepared to be flexible in responding to the priorities that other Canadians have had.

I cannot think of a better person to go to the cabinet table to defend the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador in this crisis than our hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I think they should be erecting statues of that man from one end of Newfoundland to the other. We could have a few in Nova Scotia and the other maritime provinces because he has served Atlantic Canada marvellously well over the time he has been in office. We have to get behind this minister. We have to

show that Atlantic Canadians and Newfoundlanders are prepared to make the compromises necessary for Canada that they are now asking Canadians to make to respond to their particular crisis at this particular time.

The problem we are here to discuss of the dwindling fish stocks really has four sources: fishing by Canadians; fishing by foreigners —and I could say overfishing by Canadians and overfishing by foreigners; the impact of the growth in the seal population and as CAFSAC recognized, other environmental factors such as the cold ice conditions in 1991.

The easiest of those to deal with is obviously the seals. Clearly, with an increase of about two million seals in the population of Atlantic waters, it is time we recognize we have to have some kind of a seal cull. There is great nervousness about suggesting this because of the impact of the environmental movements of Europe and other places and their opposition to the notion that anybody should harvest seals or cull seals.

However it is time, in my judgment, that these European environmentalists and these people who call themselves funds for animal welfare started to show a bit of concern for animals called cod fish, flatfish and capelin. They may not be cuddly like seals but they are extremely important to the economy. An animal is an animal is an animal and all have a right to participate. Perhaps the minister will have to be considerate and will look to see what the response is with respect to seals.

Canadians obviously have taken the bite as far as having a moratorium imposed on the offshore fishery. We will wait to see what decision the minister makes with respect to the inshore fishery. If we are going to lick this problem we will need co-operation from those who fish outside our 200-mile zone. We will need co-operation from the European Community, in particular Spain and Portugal, and indeed from South Korea. Of course there are vessels under flags of convenience like Panama and Honduras.

Fortunately we have been getting some co-operation as we have never seen it before in recent years from all these sources. The minister had a very successful visit to Panama and Honduras. I think we will see a lot fewer flags of convenience.

It was very encouraging to see the response recently of the European Community, led by Spain, I might say, in pulling their cod fleet off the nose of the Grand Banks. Unfortunately, this announcement was met with a great deal of cynicism. Perhaps one can understand that in view of the overfishing that has gone on in recent years by Spanish and Portuguese vessels.

At the same time, if we wish others to understand our perspective, perhaps we have to be prepared to listen to them. As Canadians, we love to pilgrimage over to Europe and tell the Spanish that they are a bunch of pirates that are out there raping the fish stocks. I am not sure if I were Spanish how I would respond to that. Perhaps, as Canadians, we should be a little bit better at listening to the perspective of others, rather than just going over there and telling them what our views are.

We have to look at the fact that from their point of view they have participated in this fishery for over 500 years. They have always had a fleet of distant fishing vessels, as opposed to simply fishing in their own waters. They have huge fish plants. They have thousands of vessels, and of course they have a huge demand for their own local market. They do not have unemployment insurance and support programs such as we have in Canada. But they have made an effort and we have to encourage those efforts to see that we do get in the long term the diplomatic solutions that will bring proper control and regulation of transboundary fish stocks in places like the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. It is only through that that we are going to find the long-term solution.

In closing, I will simply make reference to the very significant development that occurred at the Rio conference when, through the leadership, primarily of Canada, and through the leadership primarily of this minister of fisheries, the United Nations agreed to convene a conference on overfishing and the regulation of transboundary stocks, which we hope will ultimately lead to the long-term solution of this problem.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, again we rise in this place to debate a crisis in the Atlantic fishery. It certainly is not a pleasant task. We all know that the fishery is in severe trouble. If we had ever thought over the years that it would come to the crisis we

are in today probably we would have done something about it many, many years ago.

The problem is that the people affected by it, the people who will really feel the brunt of this, are the fishermen who catch the fish, the people in the plants, the packers, and of course the people who sell this great commodity.

After listening to all the speakers here tonight, what is going to have to happen in this whole situation is that a great part, if not the whole area in the cod fishery especially, is going to have to close down. This is something that I and other people of my age never thought would ever happen. For 500 years we have caught fish, we have processed fish and we have sold it. Unfortunately we never took an inventory of what was happening off Newfoundland, off the east coast of Canada, off the eastern coast of the United States, off the east coast of North America.

We heard the minister quote other areas that are having problems, such as Iceland and Denmark. We have allowed this to happen in our lifetime. It has come to a situation that we would never have believed would happen, but now we are in a situation where we probably are going to have to close down this operation and rebuild it again.

I have listened to the people involved in this business, the scientific community. We have heard the experts tell us that, yes, this fishery can be revived and different time frames have been talked about, from two to five years.

The number one thing that will have to take place in that two to five years is the people who are displaced will have to be given compensation to let them, if they are going to stay in the fishery, rebuild or go on to work at other trades. A very important part of this debate here tonight is on what is going to happen to these people. As most members in this House know, especially those who live in the areas that are greatly affected by this, there is not very much else that these people will be able to do. A whole new philosophy and a whole new area has to be brought into being. These people must in the short term and in the long term be taken care of financially.

• (2340)

Then of course we have to start to bring back this great resource. We have let this happen over a period of years. If we had been nurturing, cultivating and tending to this, we certainly would not be in the situation that we are in now.

We have a responsibility as Canadians and we have a responsibility as part of the international community to do our part to rebuild this great resource off our eastern coast. We also want to make sure that all of the factors that contribute to this are taken care of. I am sure that when the people who were at the conference in Rio talked about the fishery in the world and what had to be done also took into consideration the other areas that are contributing to the decline of it, one of course being pollution. We talk about the overfishing and the seals, but we also have to talk about the pollution that has moved into our oceans from around the world from waste that we have been too readily able to dump into the areas. These are the things which I know are all part of the problem we see today.

We also know of course that our fishery has been harvested, has been overfished and has been pillaged over the last 500 years. Honestly, as caretakers of this, we have not been very good caretakers. We now have to start conserving and rehabilitating. We have to take a serious look at what we did not do. We paid lip-service to it, yes, but now the crisis has hit where it hurts: in the pocketbooks and at the dinner tables of the men and women who work this resource, fish this resource and sell it.

When we shut this down, the markets are going to disappear and therefore we are into a whole rebuilding situation. I am sure it is a very sad occasion for everybody who is here tonight. I am sure that the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, is not very happy that he had to move a motion on this because we let our resource get into the situation it is in.

Now that we have taken this look, the government and members of the opposition have to say that we are prepared to go all out to bring this resource back. We have to say that never again can the fish trawlers and the factory ships with all of the new modern equipment take and remove young fish from the area, fish that have yet to produce. This was talked about by all of the speakers here tonight. This shall never be allowed to happen again. We have to make sure that we have the co-opera-

tion of the whole international community to make sure that this does not happen again. When we rebuild this fishery, when we bring it back as we hope we can do, we want to hand it to our children and our grandchildren in much better shape than it was left to us. Once we rebuild this and get it back to a situation where we can use it again, we have to use it very carefully.

I say that we have to make a commitment to the generations that follow us that this is what we are prepared to do. If we do this and manage this fishery in the way we should have been managing it in the last number of years, we will in fact have something to pass on to our grandchildren.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Madam Speaker, on the points that have been made so far, one has to comment with regret on the fact that the minister felt he had to say that this debate was premature. If anything, one could say that this debate is timely, necessary and of the greatest urgency. One has to put on record two reports that deal with the situation of cod and fishermen whose livelihood depends on the cod in western Newfoundland. I would like to refer to a study by William Steele, the program co-ordinator on *Economics in the Gulf Region* of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans published in December 1990. In that report, he relates as follows: "The cod industry in western Newfoundland is in a crisis. The fixed year fishery in western Newfoundland is at a point of no return if there is no strategy to rebuild the cod stocks in the new future". These were statements made 18 months ago. Certainly, the alarm signal was already given to the government at that time.

In addition, in a report published less than one year ago, a report known to me as the Marshall study, again by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, I find the following statement which reinforces the one just heard by William Steele. In the Marshall report we read: "The cod fishery in western Newfoundland and southern Labrador is in a crisis mainly because landings are the lowest on record. If present trends continue, the fishery could collapse completely. Therefore, new strategies are needed to rebuild and maintain stocks. It is also felt that the fishermen and the union feel that a moratorium is required with compensation".

The minister claimed that this debate is premature because he has to make a decision. One begins to wonder why a decision still has to be made in view of the fact that his own officials have been bringing this crisis in the gulf to his attention. The first occasion was 18 months ago and the second occasion during the last 12 months. One wonders why the minister and the government have yet to make up their minds in order to meet this particular crisis.

It is a situation which is of great concern to the entire nation. We do not want to repeat the experience we saw with haddock in the 1960s and herring in the 1970s whereby entire communities in certain parts of Europe lost their livelihood. We do not want to see a situation in Canada of environmental migrants who would see the necessity of moving to central Canada in order to find a new livelihood.

Obviously a culture and lifestyle has developed over several centuries and a solution has to be found for these communities to continue to make a livelihood and to continue to plan for the future by making a living from the ocean.

One lesson is quite clear. Whenever we put the economy first instead of natural resources, in this case the fish stock, we sooner or later will regret that type of decision. This is what happened with the herring fishery in the North Sea and now is happening with the cod stock in the gulf.

We are learning the bitter lessons of sustainability. We must begin to apply the concept of sustainability to fisheries as we do with forestry, agriculture and other natural resources. Obviously we want to avoid further hardships and stresses. We have to build the necessary precautions that will enable this community to continue to have economic well-being where they are located at the present time.

• (2350)

Only the federal government has the means to provide the resources to bridge these communities over during this time of crisis, namely the responsibility of providing the economic aid that is necessary until the stock is rebuilt.

This is done when it comes to a crisis with the prairie farmers, when it comes to the dairy producers in Quebec and Ontario, and it has to be done with the fisheries as well.

It is interesting that Dr. Harris in his report in 1990 stressed the importance of sustainability in terms of conservation: "We must convince the domestic and foreign fishermen that conservation is a matter of the utmost importance and that violations of appropriate regulations will not be tolerated".

At this point one must raise as support of any policy the matter of the Law of the Sea because it has a bearing and a relevance to the capacity of Canada to maintain sustainability in the fisheries.

Canada promoted the Law of the Sea quite actively in the 1970s and in the early 1980s as well. It was among the first nations to sign this law. The next step, that of ratifying, which represents the final step in international laws, has not yet been carried out.

So far 53 nations have ratified the Law of the Sea but Canada is not among them. This law becomes operative only when 60 nations ratify it and here is Canada dragging its feet, losing credibility, waiting perhaps for a hint from Washington, who knows. In so doing we allow the international community to conclude that we really do not mean what we say.

I submit that Canada has to ratify the Law of the Sea because it contains important sections that would help our fisheries. It is the first major step toward an international ecosystem approach for the management of ocean resources for their sustained use. When it comes to the high seas beyond the national jurisdiction, international action is becoming increasingly essential. Advancing the Law of the Sea and making it operative is of the utmost importance in this regard.

Let me quote from page 274 of the Brundtland report, *Our Common Future*: "Indeed, the most significant initial action that nations can take in the interest of the oceans' threatened life-support system, is to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention".

We are painfully beginning to realize that sustainable development, be it in fisheries or in other national resources, can be secured only through international agreements which would include surveillance, management, development; all carried out in the common interest.

To reach such a plateau of international action we have first to get it right in our mind, namely a clear understanding of the relationship between the economy and the environment. This is essential.

It is not a matter of choice between the two or a question of balancing the two. Instead it is a question of integrating economics with environmental considerations. We will reach a sustainable path only when our policies and actions flow from the clear understanding that the economy is built on the environment. It would be folly to continue to believe the reverse.

In conclusion, we have here an opportunity in that particular part of the gulf known as the 4RS-3PN section, which is fully within Canadian control, to develop this into a model area for sustainable fisheries. All it needs at this stage is a statement by the minister declaring this an area for sustainable fishery development so we can prove to the international community that within our waters, within our boundaries, we can also practise what we preach.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): It is a pleasure for me to be able to speak in this debate. It is not a particularly pleasurable debate. It is a very difficult situation that affects my constituents, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and frankly it is a national situation we must come to recognize.

In thinking about this situation I wonder quite often how we got here, what it is we are really dealing with, and what in the short and the medium term has been discussed here tonight by my colleagues on both sides of the House. What must we do about it?

Perhaps because I am a bit of a sentimentalist I often think of the great Newfoundlander, the Hon. Bill Keough, who for years was the member for St. George's constituency, one of Mr. Smallwood's original ministers, a neighbour of my family and a great friend. He talked often about the last forgotten fishermen off the bill of Cape St. George. It became a catch-phrase for him and many others. It was really a reminder to us there are many people in the fishery who toil on and are often forgotten. They carry on year after year prosecuting the fishery, making their own living and their own way.

Sadly, this challenge or crisis we face hits people in the fishery for the first time, both those who prosecute the fishery and fish plant workers, particularly in my constituency where there are only about 300 fishermen. In fact that is a census figure and I suspect there are consider-

ably less. There are fish plant workers in a number of communities, but many of them have never had to deal with emergency response programs or qualify for unemployment insurance. They have never needed support. For the first time they are faced with one or perhaps two options: in the first there is no fish, and in the second they are confronted with a moratorium on the fishery and will not be able to fish. They will be forced to pursue or participate in programs this government will set up.

My colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the member of Parliament for St. John's West, talked a little bit about those programs. He said the government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has consistently responded to ice conditions, low catches or problems of that nature, and that protection will be there.

I want to come back to that, but I would like to just briefly touch on some of the problems we face and how we got here. I have been impressed all along that while from time to time we go off on particular tangents, it is recognized the problem is the result of a number of factors. The problem of reduced numbers that have necessitated lowering the total allowable catch and taking some pretty serious steps is the result of a series of problems.

In 1977 when we extended the 200-mile limit and the economic zone, the basis for calculating the number of fish was wrong. We recognize that. It was something officials at the time had over-estimated. Fishery science at the time was very new. The capacity to predict the number of fish and to know what was happening was something that has evolved very quickly over time. In 1977 we did not have the capability we needed.

• (0000)

Quite clearly, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of seals. Not only do we try to catch up with exactly how many seals there are, but we try through repeated studies supported by the department of fisheries or the Centre for Fisheries Innovations, the Marine Institute in St. John's and a number of private studies to assess how seals perform, what their behaviour is, what they consume, how they consume it. The argument is that they do not eat that much cod, but I am sure all members recognize that one bite out of the belly of a codfish may only amount to a few ounces of fish but it also means that the fish is dead and is of no value.

In 1990 we had a great catch. The inshore catch was as high as it has been in a number of years. Fishermen in my constituency did quite well. It should be recognized that even in 1990 we did not see the cod fishery start in Torbay, Flat Rock and Pouch Cove where it tends to strike first until well into the first week and the beginning of the second week of July. We have a bit of time yet on that.

In 1991 we saw some of the worst ice we have seen in a long time.

As the minister has said, in January it was recognized there were some serious problems with the numbers. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans undertook a major survey that has been referred to by a number of members to assess exactly what the problem was. In my discussions with the scientists they quite clearly have looked at all options. They have gone quite far east to see if the fish have in fact migrated into the middle of the Atlantic. They have tried to catch fish right through the water column. They have tried to follow the northern cod in through the Straits of Belle Isle and into the gulf.

They have concluded that with the water colder than it has been, with the water saltier than it has been, water that we call slubby, which is dirty and full of ice and mush, that something environmental has happened.

There is no question the increase in the European catches has had an impact. That is something we all recognize. I do not think there is any question that some of the practices we have followed, be it in the offshore or otherwise, have contributed to this problem. There is not one single thing we can point to.

Clearly, we have a problem. The northern cod stock is considerably less than was expected. Obviously, the catches for 1992 and subsequent years are considerably less than we would have expected in the past.

We have had a discussion and we have had debates in the media. We have had debates in this House through Question Period and otherwise.

There has been much speculation about a moratorium. I have talked to fishermen. I have talked to fish plant owners. Both groups have talked to me about a moratorium. What will a moratorium accomplish for us? First of all, a moratorium would allow us to have the stock of fish catch up, the number of fish that are available come back

to levels that are necessary to ensure the ongoing availability of fish. This is not simply fish to be caught.

It is particularly important that we recognize where in my view the most staggering numbers have come is not in the biomass available as much as in the breeding stock. That is estimated I think between 75,000 and 110,000 tonnes. That large number of fish, even at 110,000 tonnes is less than the inshore allowance we anticipate we would catch.

It is important that we look at both. The minister has talked about the impact of the year classes of how 1986 and 1987 are fairly strong, but obviously with cold water and the inability for fish to survive and fish to breathe, the later year classes logically would not be strong. It is too early to tell, but they would not be strong.

What is it that we do when we respond? The minister has talked about what he is doing to address this problem. He will have meetings with the scientists. He will have meetings with the industry. He will have meetings with his provincial counterparts, part of an ongoing process, a process that he and his predecessors have undertaken as a necessary tool in managing the fishery.

What is it that is important when we design a program if a moratorium is in place or for that matter even if we have to respond to those not able to catch the fish that they have been prepared to catch over time?

It is essential that we take into account the future, the long-term future of the fishery. That means that we have a stock that would ensure that those people who go after the fish have a good and solid income. It is essential that we recognize that communities and families and individuals depend on that fish but that fish cannot necessarily be there for everybody. It is important that we recognize that the program we put in place is not to take care of everybody's needs but to take care of the needs of those who have historically depended upon the fishery, for those whose life-blood has been the fishery for the last 400 years in many cases.

If I may say one thing in conclusion, and I recognize that my time is quickly passing, I have said this before in this House, sometimes to some ridicule, we deal unfortunately in politics of personality but the force of personality can have a tremendous effect on policy and our ability to deal with our problems.

In 1974 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was faced with a crisis in the fishery, not only the fishery itself but some of the programs which were in place. The member of Parliament for St. John's West, the current minister of fisheries, at the time was Minister of Finance, Minister of Economic Development, deputy House leader, the whole bit in Newfoundland. The premier of the day appointed him minister of fisheries to solve a problem. He went into that problem and he solved that problem. He worked with his federal counterparts, he worked with the industry, he worked with all aspects of the community to try and put the Newfoundland fishery back on an even footing. He was credited for doing that and he came to Ottawa in 1976.

The current minister of fisheries has about 1,200 fishermen in his riding; I do not know how many plant workers. I know that he has faced in his own constituency some of the biggest crises that we have seen in Newfoundland and Labrador in the fishery but nobody has more of a sense of the fishery, has more of a sense of the community, has more of a sense of public policy to try and put all of those things together, to rectify this situation for Newfoundland and Labrador and for Canada.

If I may say, it is a difficult task that you can never do anything right in. If I can say anything to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, right now that minister of fisheries needs a little bit of support to take the difficult decisions that are in the interest of Canadians, in the interest of the fishery, because nobody is more able to ensure that a government and a country understand the crisis and the challenge. Nobody is more capable of coming up with the solutions that will not solve all our problems but will do as well as they can and we will do as well as we can as a country to help all of those who depend on the fishery.

I ask for that understanding and I ask for that support, and together, with our friends in the opposition, with our friends in the industry, we can come to a solution.

S. O. 52

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): You spoke well. I just wanted a minute to get my breath back after that. He must have been necking with the Blarney stone all night to get that much blarney in the last two minutes.

He was doing pretty well there for a while. My good friend from St. John's East was not doing too badly but at the end he did a couple things that if I were his adviser I would have advised him against.

First of all, he made reference to the time when our good friend from St. John's West was minister of fisheries. I have news for my friend from St. John's East. If his colleague from St. John's West did such a marvellous job of saving the fishery then, how come it needs saving one more time?

Mr. Reid: Because you were in power in Ottawa.

Mr. Simmons: The member should stick to his subject. The subject was the administration of the department under the tutelage of his good friend from St. John's West. The thing I remember most about that was the gear scandal, as a matter of fact; all the money they blew on the gear down there.

• (0010)

An hon. member: That is right.

Mr. Simmons: That is what I remember about that.

Mr. Reid: And he was brought in to solve it.

Mr. Simmons: I never said he started it.

An hon. member: That is right.

Mr. Simmons: Now let us talk about our friend, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the gentleman from St. John's West. Do you remember, Mr. Speaker, when he was appointed to that cabinet post in March of 1991? I was absolutely delighted and I said so publicly. The fishermen were happy, the plant workers were happy and the fish companies were happy.

We all saw an opportunity in that appointment to have our case heard at the cabinet table. That is why we were so happy. We are not partisans with that minister, but we know a good thing when we see it or we thought we did. We said at the time: "Who better to put our case than that feisty, fearless, ferocious fox from St. John's West? He will finally get to the bottom of this failure in the fisheries. He will get his head around the problem in gig time. He would not be bamboozled by the bureaucrats or cowed by his colleagues in cabinet". How wrong we were.

The very fellow that we had looked to for a solution, it seems from listening to him in Question Period today, is far from being part of the solution and is becoming part of the problem. I would not say what he has become because I want to caution him to back off a bit, but he is fast becoming part of the problem with that kind of rhetoric he was into today.

I do not know who is advising him or if he has got something on his mind that puts him in an unusually sour mood these days. I do not know if his cabinet colleagues are giving him an extra rough time on this issue, but for some reason he is not himself. He is saying wild things. He is saying there is no immediate crisis.

Tell that to the people who live in Codroy, Port aux Basques, Fox Roost or Margaree. Tell it to the people in Burnt Islands and Isle aux Morts and the people in Rose Blanche and Harbour le Cou and Petites and Grand Breton, la Poile and Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, François, McCallum or Gaultois and Hermitage and Seal Cove and Harbour Breton. Tell it to those people.

Tell it to the fishermen in Coomb's Cove and Wreck Cove and Boxey and Mose Ambrose and English Harbour West, St. Jacques and Belleoram. Or go down to the coast farther to Long and St. Lawrence, the people I met on the weekend who have no source of income through no fault of their own. Tell it to those people that there is no crisis in those stocks. They will not believe you. Those 147 fishermen in Rose Blanche who caught four million pounds in three months in January, February and March of 1987, last year they caught fewer than 100,000 pounds. I say to the minister tell it to those people that there is no crisis.

The minister is listening to the wrong people. We should listen to scientists sometimes, I suppose, but he should stop listening to them if they are saying something that does not gibe with the reality out there because the best scientist is that fellow in that 20-foot open boat who goes out every day and does his research with a net. If it comes up less full some days than it used to maybe we should make a few deductions from his

findings. Maybe we should call what he is doing research for the sake of arriving at some sensible conclusions.

Yes, the man that we look to to be part of the solution is coming awfully close to being part of the problem. The vehicle has become the road-block.

Listen to what the minister said tonight. He said: "When we, this government, are asked we have responded". That is not true. Sometimes the government has responded, but I will tell you it has been asked for a long time by the people in Catalina, whom my colleague has the honour to represent. It has been asked for a long time by the people on the southwest coast who had four winter fishery failures in a row. They are depending on this stock that we have been talking about in 3PN, the one that the minister says is not in a crisis. The government has been asked a few times by those fishermen and plant workers and this minister has not responded. As a matter of fact it was only a month or so ago that the minister met with representatives of people from the southwest coast in St. John's. A startling revelation came out of that particular meeting after I had been here beating my gums all winter on this one, asking the minister question after question after question, as had my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, my colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, my colleague from Gander—Grand Falls and my colleague from Labrador. All five of us were up on this issue and related issues, but this issue in particular. What was his summation after his meeting in St. John's with those people? He told them he had not heard about the problem. He was unaware of the problem, unaware.

He says tonight that the emergency debate is premature because the decisions have not been made. That is why it is just in time, I say to him. We had hoped to get to him, to beat a little sense in his head before he made some more wrong-headed decisions.

One of the decisions I hope he is not about to make is to cut off those people down there at the knees as he did last year on the emergency response program. I hope this time he will find it in his heart to go to his cabinet colleagues and tell them that he was wrong last year, that he did not help them last year but he is going to help them this time.

Then we had that moment of truth, that moment of unwitting truth when the minister said unwittingly, I am sure: "I have not got my colleagues to agree yet". I guess that is more at the root of the problem than he would care to admit.

That is the real issue. The voice we had looked to, the man we had looked to to carry our case to cabinet, is having an awful job holding on to his place at the cabinet table in terms of influence. He is not making the case for us. He cannot be making the case. Let us hope that tomorrow morning when he meets the Prime Minister he will have benefited somewhat from what has been said here this evening and be able to make the case a little more forcefully.

He keeps saying—and cannot get away from it—the gulf stock is not in crisis. How does he explain those landings? How does he explain the fact that the landings in 4R and 3PN are down, as my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte said earlier, by 67 per cent?

We understand that the northern cod is down too. Nobody is knocking that issue because that is a serious one too. It is down 60 per cent and the gulf cod by 67 per cent. His friend, the chairman of his latest task force, Rick Cashin, said two years ago this stock ought to have been put under a moratorium. That was two years ago and things have gone downhill of course since then.

Every study this minister has received—and my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte rhymed off the numbers of studies that have been given to him—all say the same thing. Only the minister has a different view. Why? What is the reason that he persists in saying something that is just blatantly untrue? Is he trying to minimize the problem? Is he trying to pretend those people do not exist? Is he trying to wear them down? Is he trying to demoralize them completely?

Mr. Tobin: That is exactly it.

Mr. Simmons: Is that the issue? I appeal to him. I appeal to his good sense, his common sense, his humanity. These people are hurting out there. They are hurting in all those communities. Why does he not have the decency and the compassion to stop wearing them down and demoralizing them and instead send out a signal tonight or tomorrow that he is prepared to go to bat for

them because they need him and they are depending on him? I hope he is equal to the challenge.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darryl Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Madam Speaker, I would first of all like to say that I will not get into a political debate tonight. I come from the riding of Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, where fishing is our most important activity. I will not get back to that tonight by saying that everything which happened in the past or all the policy decisions are our fault. All I will say is that in June 1990, processing plants were closed under Department of Labour programs. There were six of them in our riding.

• (0020)

I am not here to get into politics, unlike my colleagues who just spoke. I was elected because I wanted to work for my constituents and that is what I am doing. Some people want to engage in petty politics, others do not.

First of all, I would really like the hon. member for Burin—St. George's to stay a while to listen to me. I want to talk about the minister's visit to Rio last weekend and the conference held there. As we often say, "God bless the minister of fisheries and Newfoundland". We do all we can, but some people still have problems, like the people in our riding and in the Gaspé, in Newfoundland, as was mentioned earlier, in the Magdalen Islands and on the lower north shore.

[*English*]

When we talk about Atlantic fisheries, when we hurt, we all hurt together.

Far be it from me to get into discussion this morning in which I should say anything about the Constitution. I will talk about fisheries. The opposition has made small cheap shots from Newfoundland and it can make them.

If I can be on the record, it is making small cheap shots at the same time as at the Constitution. I will shut myself up there on that. We will talk about fisheries. We have suffered on the Gaspé; we have suffered on the Magdalen Islands; we have suffered in New Brunswick and we have suffered everywhere. What we are doing tonight in our emergency debate is trying to say Atlantic fisheries are above Conservatives, above Liberals, above NDP's and above everyone else. The fishermen want someone to look after them and sure as heck do not want to have a politician.

I have perhaps a couple of solutions and I will always go back to Newfoundland.

My constituents live partly in the gulf. If we wanted to get really angry we could fight with St. Pierre and Miquelon. We do not do that. We have all kinds of fishermen in our area. We talk about it but we do not mix politics. We do not have to do that.

What we have to do is sit down together. Any politician who would stand up in this House —Conservative, Liberal, or NDP —and say our minister of fisheries is not looking after us would I am sure not do right for the fishermen and for the people they represent.

We have gone through a couple of things. I at the same time have had the opportunity to leave myself open to debate. I would say for my fishermen —and we in Quebec —

[*Translation*]

—until further notice, are still part of the Atlantic region. The fishermen in our area share the same problems as New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. When things go badly in those provinces, we are in the same boat.

[*English*]

With regard to fisheries, I do not know what will happen at the convention next year as a result of what happened in Rio. I know the situation off the nose and tail of the banks, which I have had the opportunity to look at, is not easy. It is easy for opposition members to criticize and say it is the fault of the Conservatives and vice versa.

At the same time I would say what we have done in government.

[*Translation*]

With everything that is done for us, for the Atlantic, for eastern Quebec, the Maritime provinces, the message we want to convey to our Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is that he and our government should understand and realize that this situation hurts us too, just as it hurts Newfoundland and the whole Atlantic region. This situation hurts the whole Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. With Madam Speaker's indulgence I want to thank all members who participated in this debate. I want to thank the Speaker for making the decision to allow the debate and I want to thank Madam Speaker for staying until the wee hours to hear members speak.

Again, I thank all those for the spirit of constructiveness that was evident here tonight.

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, I would just like to add to those words and thank all members opposite for the debate that has taken place here this evening and to assure the people in the Atlantic area that we on this side of the House do care extremely for the plight that we find many of them in at this time and we will be looking for solutions to their plight.

Madam Deputy Speaker: After these kind words, pursuant to Standing Order 52(12), I am satisfied that the debate has now been concluded.

[*Translation*]

The House therefore stands adjourned until 10 a.m. this day, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 00.29 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 23, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 13 petitions.

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

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[*Translation*]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONNER

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I have the honour to table the annual report of the Privacy Commissioner for the year 1991–92.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5) this document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Could I ask my friend, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, whether he is aware that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans plans to make a statement today on the request of the Shuswap Nation to meet with him to address the impact of the aboriginal fisheries strategy on their aboriginal rights, particularly including the reductions in funding for their stock production and enhancement activities. Does the minister plan to make a statement on that later today?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any knowledge of that statement. I will make the appropriate inquiries and get back to my friend.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARIANS

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF CANADIAN SECTION

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report on the activities of the Canadian section of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians at the meeting of the *Commission des Affaires culturelles* in Brussels, Belgium, from May 11 to May 16, 1992.

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

* * *

• (1010)

[*English*]

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

SEVENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, in both official languages.

The committee focused its study on the credit card market and ways of increasing competition and improving disclosure. It also re-examined the question of cap on credit cards.

The first appendix to this report is a draft bill that will at last provide consumers with the means to choose the credit card that best fits their needs. The bill calls for uniform disclosure by card issuers of the important terms on credit cards, interest rates, fees, grace periods, et cetera, on all advertisements, solicitations, flyers, circu-

lars and any other printed material. Experience in the United States shows that this information can make credit cards work more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, I request a response in accordance with Standing Order 109.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–90, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Ms. Campbell moves that the bill be read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

PATENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–91, an act to amend the Patent Act, to amend another act in consequence thereof and to provide for other related matters.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Blais moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

[*English*]

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent of the House to present a private member's bill and to waive the normal introductory period.

Do I have that unanimous consent?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–357, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (allowances of volunteers).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

[*English*]

Mr. Duhamel: I am informed that volunteer fire–fighters now receive a very well–deserved income tax deduction not to exceed $500.

This particular bill seeks the same consideration for other volunteers, such as volunteer ambulance and emergency medical services. In other words, any volunteer in situations involving the health or physical well–being of a person responding to an emergency for a public authority would get the same consideration.

[*Translation*]

So I present this bill for the purpose of removing a discriminatory element.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Duhamel moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

RECALL FOR ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

> That, notwithstanding Standing Order 28(2), at any time during the adjournment of the House between June 24 and July 31 and September 1 to September 21, 1992, the Speaker may, after consultation with the government, cause the House to sit for the sole purpose of giving Royal Assent to a bill or bills, and, following each Royal Assent, the Speaker shall, each time, further adjourn the House forthwith, until September 21, 1992; and
>
> That the provisions of Standing Order 28(3) respecting the recall of the House for urgent and pressing matters not be superseded by the provisions of this Order.

Mr. Riis: Yes, there is unanimous consent, certainly on this side.

I have two questions to my hon. friend, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. The bill on environmental assessment was recently held up in the other place. Has that been passed now? Could he bring me up to date on that? Also, the rape shield legislation that was passed through this House, could he give us some idea of the status of that legislation or is it still being held up in the other place?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to give full answers to the questions my friend was asking. I can give him a report on the bills we can expect to receive Royal Assent on today, and others that we anticipate will be receiving Royal Assent in the future, if the House is agreed to receive that information.

Specifically, the first bill he inquired about, Bill C–13, the environmental assessment act, has passed committee in the Senate and there is hope that it will receive a favourable disposition later today.

These bills that I am about to enumerate will be receiving Royal Assent today:

Bill C–22, bankruptcy; Bill C–48, CDIC; Bill C–74, customs and excise; Bill C–75, fuel tax; Bill C–81, referendum; Bill C–87, the supply bill; Bill S–9, the Northwest Evangelical Church; Bill S–10, Green Shield Canada; Bill S–11, airport transfer; and Bill S–12, the merger of the Montreal Board of Trade and *la Chambre du Commerce*.

We also hope the following will be receiving Royal Assent:

Bill C–7, status of the artist; Bill C–13, environmental assessment; Bill C–33, coasting trade; Bill C–41, energy efficiency; Bill C–45, dangerous goods; Bill C–49, sexual assault; Bills C–51 and C–52, the Northwest Territories and Yukon Water Acts; Bill C–58, oil and gas; Bill C–70, jury; and Bill C–82, CMHC.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, along the same lines. I might have missed it but I am glad the parliamentary secretary gave the numbers and/or the subject of the bill. I may have missed it but has Royal Assent been given on the bill concerning veterans benefits for the merchant marine?

Could you please tell the House the status of this bill? Has it already received Royal Assent? I would hope that it would.

• (1020)

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to consult the *Journals* of the House, but I believe that if my hon. friend will check, he will find that it has been documented as having received Royal Assent.

With a small qualification, I think we should consult the records. I believe on doing so we will discover that it has.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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*]

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, this morning I have 35 petitions from Canadians in nearly every province, from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

These petitioners urge the government and especially the Parliament of Canada to restore the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, regardless of their financial resources.

These people deplore the government's decision to end this important program which, as we know, helped Canadians assert their language rights and equality rights and have them interpreted by the courts.

These many Canadian petitioners ask this House to make a positive decision in this regard and reinstate the program.

OLD AGE SECURITY PENSIONS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition signed by Canadians who support the following statement: In the hope that all Canadians will give their elders the necessary support to live as independently as possible, the federal government has the primary responsibility to ensure that old age pensions are adequate.

Therefore, the petitioners ask the House of Commons to urge the government to make sure that Canada's old age pensions are high enough to meet the essential needs of Canadian seniors.

[*English*]

RURAL CANADA

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty to present petitions from my constituents in Whitehorse and Pelly Crossing, Yukon, who are very concerned about this government's actions which have very much undermined rural life in Canada.

They state in this petition that whereas recent actions of the government have been a direct attack on the rural way of life including cuts to VIA Rail service, abandoning rail lines and neglecting fisheries, forestry and agriculture and the erosion of rural postal services, particularly by the closure of small rural post offices, whereas post offices are the backbone of many of our rural communities, these petitioners pray and call upon the Parliament of Canada to support Canada's rural way of life, to support the maintenance of rural post offices and postal services and to reject the agenda of closures and cutbacks and make sure that rural Canadians can be truly Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present four petitions today on behalf of Calgarians who care about the Young Offenders Act. Their specific petition is to request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians from across the upper Ottawa Valley dealing with the promotion of pride in being a Canadian.

It is appropriate to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada. Canadians are normally a reserved people, often concealing their patriotic feelings.

Whereas Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada have created an opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the Proud to be Canadian project during the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Confederation in 1992, the petitioners hereby support the Proud to be Canadian project as an opportunity to nurture a positive lifelong relationship with our heritage and our flag, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

The petition is signed by people from many communities across the upper Ottawa Valley: Petawawa, Cobden, Westmeath, Pembroke and many other communities.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition in which people are asking the Parliament of Canada to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government and the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments to be determined by a majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada together with a majority vote in a majority of provinces, with the territories being given the status of one province.

The petition is signed by many people from across eastern Ontario.

[*Translation*]

HERITAGE CULTURES AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present two petitions with several thousand signatures of residents from the riding of Saint-Léonard and the general Montreal area.

Your petitioners ask the federal government to continue to support and encourage the preservation and promotion of heritage languages. Therefore, your petitioners humbly pray and call upon the Parliament of Canada to reinstate full financial funding for the Heritage Cultures and Language Program of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, which was cut by the government in the February 1990 budget.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions this morning from 100 residents of the riding of Jonquière and the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area.

Your petitioners call upon the government to remove the goods and services tax from certain items that are essential to women.

BILL C-21

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): I have another petition, Mr. Speaker, signed by 100 people who humbly call upon Parliament to review the provisions of Bill C-21 concerning parental leave for adoption, so that all parents, whether biological or adopting, will receive the same 25 weeks paid leave in order to spend this time with their new child.

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to present to the House three petitions. The petitioners request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lower maximum age of 13.

POVERTY

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by 585 Canadians.

This petition points out that hundreds of thousands of Canadian senior citizens live below the poverty line and over 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty. It is desirable for all Canadians to provide senior citizens with the necessary support to live their lives as independently as possible.

These petitioners call upon the government to ensure that Canadian Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present this petition, certified correct pursuant to Standing Order 36, signed by many residents of my constituency, The Battlefords—Meadow Lake. These are signatures collected by Fisher's Drug Store in North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

The petitioners recognize that the Government of Canada has put forward proposals for amending the Constitution of Canada and call upon Parliament to enact and carry out legislation providing for a referendum in Canada, binding upon Parliament to accept or reject the constitutional amendments, and that the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments should be determined by a majority of the total votes cast in Canada as well as a majority vote in the majority of provinces and territories in Canada, the so-called double majority that was dealt with by the House.

• (1030)

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions from people from Calgary Southwest who ask Parliament to revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act.

RWANDA

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I too have the duty to rise in this House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present the House with a petition certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions.

These are Canadians who have joined the hundreds of other petitioners urging the Canadian government to apply pressure on the Rwandan regime immediately to stop killing innocent Rwandans and they urge the Canadian government to support the EEC resolution on Rwanda issued on February 20, 1992, in Santa Domingo.

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege under Standing Order 36 to present a petition from a couple of hundred fishermen and plant workers on the southwest coast of Newfoundland in the communities of Rose Blanche and Fox Roost, Burnt Islands, Margaree, Port aux Basques, Petites and Isle aux Morts.

These people have two elements to the prayer in their petition: first, that the government ought to take immediate steps to rebuild the fish stocks and the petition specifically advocates the closing of 4RS–3PN fishery for the purpose of rebuilding the fish stocks. It also calls on Parliament to take such action as it deems advisable to assist the affected fishermen and plant workers in the LaPoile to Codroy area.

I am pleased to support the petition and present it on behalf of those 200 people who are going through some very difficult times and who need Parliament and government to address their concerns at this point.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present signed by residents of Bragg Creek, Calgary, and Edmonton, Alberta, requesting that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years.

NORTH THOMPSON RIVER

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of Chase and Kamloops, British Columbia. As a matter of fact there are quite a number of communities. It totals now into the thousands of people who are opposed to the diverting of water from the North Thompson River at Valemount into the California area as part of the plan that is presently being considered.

The petitioners are asking simply that we state as parliamentarians that Canadian rivers are not for sale to the United States.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour of presenting petitions from hundreds of people from Cannings Cove, Newfoundland, Burnaby, British Columbia, Baie Comeau, Quebec who are upset with the 37-cent increase in old age pensions; that 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty; that the federal government has a primary responsibility to ensure the adequacy of seniors' pensions.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to ensure that the Canadian old age pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I too have a duty and an obligation under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition today signed by residents from the province of Quebec who are calling upon the Government of Canada to make certain that Old Age Security and in particular old age pensions reflect the economic concerns that many old age citizens have in this country.

These residents are alarmed at the 37-cent increase which has been given to them. In fact, over 80 per cent of the women over 65 years of age are living below the poverty line. They call upon the Government of Canada to examine very seriously the provisions of the Old Age Security and to make certain that the necessities of life are able to be provided under this particular piece of legislation, thereby granting suitable increases as they deem necessary.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by a large number of Canadians who are very concerned about the goods and services tax and its impact on the tourist industry.

They are aware that the preliminary tourist industry figures for this year are way down over last year. Of primary concern is the goods and services tax.

They point out that a $50 expenditure means $5 provincial tax and $3.50 goods and services tax and creates an enormous burden on the ability of small businesses throughout Atlantic Canada— Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland—to earn an income.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by a number of voters from Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec.

Your petitioners are concerned about the abolition of the Court Challenges Program which has helped many individuals and minority groups to have their constitutional rights clarified before the courts. They declare that the abolition of this program represents an incalculable loss to social justice and equality in this country.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to consider the option of reinstating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present three separate petitions this morning.

The first one is from residents of Scarborough and area. It calls upon the government to amend the Immigration Act and the regulations to facilitate the visitor visa application process by bona fide family members visiting family members in Canada.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of West Hill, Mississauga and other parts of Scarborough, Ontario, evolving out of the recent criminal tragedies involving death.

They call upon Parliament to recognize that crimes of violence against the person are serious and abhorrent. They also call upon the government to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, and the Penitentiary Act.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, the third petition comes from residents of Scarborough and Durham region.

It calls upon Parliament to reaffirm its commitment to preserving and protecting the Rouge River Valley in Ontario and to participate with the Ontario provincial government in developing a Rouge River park and a heritage park at that location.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 295, 296, 297 and 298.

[*Text*]

Question No. 295—**Mrs. Stewart:**

With respect to the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, is its first mission to promote the integration of human rights and women's equality into all aspects of Canadian foreign policy and, if so, (*a*) how is this promoted through other ministries whose policies and programs are part of Canadian foreign policy such as trade, immigration (refugee determination) and aid (*b*) what specific functions are undertaken by staff to ensure the inclusion of human rights and women's equality into foreign policy (*c*) how is information gathered and who or what groups are consulted to gather information (*d*) how does it support or influence other federal departments to implement international human rights instruments?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): A prime focus of the Human Rights Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division, IMH, is to

promote the progressive integration of human rights and women's equality into Canada's foreign policy.

The Department of External Affairs, both IMH and other divisions, works in close consultation with other ministries whose policies and programs impact on Canadian foreign policy. This is particularly true with regard to CIDA on any matter involving official development assistance and multiculturalism, citizenship and justice on implementation of international protocols. It should be noted that trade issues are handled within the department itself. The division works with CIDA to offer a joint course in human rights and democratic development for officers in both departments. The course addressed, *inter alia*, trade and immigration issues. The division also takes the lead on interdepartmental meetings dealing with multilateral human rights issues involving the Departments of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Indian and Northern Affairs, CIDA, Justice, Status of Women Canada, Labour and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Specific functions undertaken by IMH staff to ensure the inclusion of human rights into foreign policy include:

Working closely with other divisions responsible for specific regions to ensure that Canadian concerns about human rights and women's equality concerns are, as appropriate, raised with foreign governments. The division is consulted on all military export permits to sensitive areas, relevant policy memoranda to portfolio ministers, ministerial briefing material, statements and news releases.

Requesting and co-ordinating the preparation of annual reports on human rights in various countries, monitoring these and ongoing reports from embassies, NGOs, media and other sources.

Working with Canada's multilateral missions and other external affairs divisions to ensure that human rights and women's equality are managed appropriately at the UN, the OAS, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie, and the CSCE.

Preparing briefs and instructions for the Canadian delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, and the Social Committee of the UN Economic and Social Council. Staff may also serve on these delegations as advisors.

Organizing consultations with non-governmental organizations in the human rights field. These consultations are also attended by representatives of geographic divisions. Individual meetings with Canadian and foreign NGOs are organized on request during the year.

Information on human rights in various countries is gathered from a variety of sources, the main ones being Canadian posts abroad, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations. In addition to preparing annual reports Canadian posts abroad keep the department up to date on any developments affecting the human rights situation.

IMH is in regular contact with Canadian and international non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights, and receives numerous United Nations documents and NGO publications, including all of Amnesty International's country and thematic reports. The division ensures that these are given appropriate distribution to concerned decision-makers. The division also has access to media monitoring services available in EAITC.

The division consults on an ongoing basis with other departments regarding the implementation of international human rights instruments, primarily Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, which has a lead role in that area, the Department of Justice, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Status of Women Canada, et cetera. The division reviews drafts of Canada's reports under the international instruments for coherence and consistency. Over-all responsibility for the preparation of these reports lies with the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and other sectoral departments assume responsibilities for the preparation of the relevant federal sections. The division is also responsible for ensuring that the reports are prepared and sent to the UN or OAS on time and as required, may assist in their presentation and defence before the relevant treaty bodies.

The division also ensures that UN and NGO documents, telegrams from posts and other relevant material is circulated to the appropriate officials in the domestic departments to keep them informed of international developments in the human rights field.

The division participates in the meetings of the federal-provincial-territorial continuing committee of officials on human rights to keep the provinces informed.

The division is kept informed about and is consulted by the appropriate legal authorities on Canadian responses to complaints received by the UN Centre for Human Rights under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Question No. 296—**Mrs. Stewart:**

With respect to the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, how does it convey Canadians in promoting Canadian values of human rights and social justice?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): A key objective of the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division, as cited in the division's mission statement, is "to convey to Canadians the department's deep and abiding interest in promoting Canadian values of human rights and social justice." In conjunction with other divisions, such as those directly concerned with public communications, IMH works to ensure that the Canadian public is aware of Canada's efforts to promote human rights at the international level. The division's specific activities in this regard include:

Informing non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights of Canadian initiatives and actions. This is done both through regular consultations between the department and NGOs, and through the mailing of reports, speeches and other relevant information to a list of some 150 non-governmental organizations.

Responding to correspondence and telephone inquiries from the public on what Canada is doing to promote human rights internationally.

Drafting and presenting speeches to Canadian audiences, including NGOs, universities, et cetera. and preparing or contributing to public statements on international human rights issues by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister for External Relations and other ministers.

Providing up-to-date information and briefings to the EAITC media relations office and ministerial spokespersons.

Ensuring that Canadian media representatives covering international fora receive copies of Canadian statements and are aware of Canadian initiatives.

Question No. 297—**Mrs. Stewart:**

With respect to the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, what procedures are in place which aim to improve public transparency with regard to policies?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): A key point in the division mission statement of the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division is "to encourage co-operative relations between the Department of External Affairs and non-governmental organizations, and to convey to Canadians the department's deep and abiding interest in promoting Canadian values of human rights and social justice." This is particularly relevant at a time when there is growing public interest in the issues dealt with by the division.

The public is kept informed of the department's policies and actions in the area of human rights in the following ways:

Ongoing consultation with non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights and organizations representing aboriginal peoples.

A three-day consultation prior to the annual session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Ongoing contact between IMH officers and NGO representatives. These can range from regular telephone conversations to meetings with specific NGOs. IMH has also facilitated bilateral meetings between major human rights NGOs and the Secretary of State for External Affairs and other authorities.

Reporting on Canadian and UN actions through the circulation of statements, reports and documents, for example, the division prepares a detailed report following the annual session of the Commission on Human Rights outlining the outcome of the commission and Canada's role. This report is sent to approximately 150 non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights. This year, the division also mailed out reports of the January consultations with NGOs and aboriginal organizations, as well as a report on the recent Second Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights.

Preparing or contributing to ministerial correspondence, statements and briefing material for meetings with parliamentarians or Canadian organizations. IMH regularly prepares responses to public inquiries on the department's policies and activities in the areas of international human rights, women's equality and social

affairs, and responds to requests for information and/or documents.

Drafting and presenting speeches to Canadian audiences, including NGOs, universities, diplomatic or foreign affairs associations, et cetera. IMH also welcomes and responds to invitations for the Secretary of State for External Affairs or other senior officials to speak or to participate in seminars or conferences dealing with human rights.

Providing up-to-date information and briefings to EAITC media relations office, ministerial spokespersons and posts for responses to media inquiries or to allow embassies abroad to communicate effectively.

Working closely with other departments and institutions, for example, Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Status of Women Canada, Indian & Northern Affairs, Health and Welfare, CIDA, Canadian Human Rights Commission, to keep them, their clienteles, and provincial authorities informed about the department's policies and activities and about international developments.

Question No. 298—**Mrs. Stewart:**

With respect to the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, how many are employed exclusively to fulfil the functions of the division and what background and qualifications are required to fill the(se) position(s)?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): There are currently nine person-years on the establishment of the Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs Division. These include:

One director;

Three deputy directors—Human Rights, Women's Equality and Social Affairs;

One officer as international aboriginal affairs co-ordinator;

One officer for international women's equality;

One officer for human rights;

One officer for international social affairs;

One secretary.

At various times the division's establishment may be complemented by short-term contracts with consultants, secondments, COOP and COSEP students, and support staff. As of May 11, 1992, the division also had the benefit of one desk officer on secondment through Labour Canada, one consultant and one secretary.

As with most divisions of external affairs, the majority of staff members are career foreign service employees with varied experience at headquarters and overseas. Foreign service officers are recruited through a nationally-advertised competitive examination and assessment process in which the Public Service Commission participates. All candidates must have a university degree. Selection is based on merit and positive measures are taken to ensure that successful candidates include employment equity target group representatives: women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. Assignment to the division is based on the profile of the candidates, for example, experience in multilateral affairs, previous postings in countries or work on geographic desks where Canada promotes human rights, relevant academic background or private sector experience, and required capability in Canada's official languages, and the career interests and aspirations of the candidates.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 251 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 251 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 251—**Mr. Duhamel:**

Since November 21, 1988, which organizations, boards or commissions have had appointments made to them and, in each case, (a) what was their location (b) what was the length of such appointments (c) what was the remuneration for such appointments?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-26

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada, not more than four further hours and one further sitting day be allotted for the consideration of report stage of the said bill and one sitting day for the consideration of the third reading of the said bill; and

That, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the final day allotted to the report stage consideration and on the day allotted to the third reading consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this order and, in turn every question necessary in order to dispose of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

• (1040)

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, once again we see the government resorting to tactics which can only be akin to bullying Parliament and bullying substantive public policy issues which the country believes to be very important.

I find it rather strange in the ninth inning while Parliament is to close today that the government would come in with this closure motion to terminate debate both on the report stage as well as the third reading stage of Bill C-26, which is of fundamental importance to Canadians and to members of this House. I find it to be totally—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I remind the House that the motion is not debatable. The opposition House leader.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary. Can he indicate to the House whether or not private members' hour will be proceeded with today and whether or not second reading of Bill C-88 will commence today after he has choked us off with the four-hour debate on report stage of Bill C-26? It is an intolerable position by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, in response to my friend's mock outrage, I can just say that part of what is contained in the motion, just for the benefit of the public, is the signal we got from the opposition that it would be nice to be able to adjourn earlier than 10 o'clock tonight.

In response to my friend's question, private members' hour will of course be in place today. If there is consent later in the day for second reading of Bill C-88, it is the intention that it would proceed.

There have been consultations with the Official Opposition and we are waiting to hear back from the New Democratic Party on that issue.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I think the record should show very clearly that there were very little if any consultations under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2). In fact the parliamentary secretary dropped off a copy of this particular order and I indicated to him quite clearly that we were opposed to it.

To suggest to the House and to the Chair that we would wish to adjourn the House in order to get out early, we are prepared to stay to 9.45 or 10 tonight if necessary and have a vote this evening, if the government is prepared to do the same. We are prepared to stay here tonight to vote on report stage.

Ms. Langan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am certainly quite offended by the reference to the mock outrage of the opposition in this House, as well as to the opposition wishing to leave this House early at the expense of public sector workers.

The committee on this bill met for weeks and weeks and watched while the government had not one word to say about this, only the bureaucrats.

We want to talk about this bill and we want the government to talk about it in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. That is not a point of order and this motion is not debatable.

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 yeas 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 agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 224*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Chadwick
Charest
Clifford
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Halliday
Hawkes
Horner
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Masse
McDermid
McKnight
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White
Worthy—109

Andre
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Cole
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Della Noce
Dick
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Holtmann
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacKay
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Têtreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle
Vézina
Weiner
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Butland
Catterall
Dionne
Ferguson
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Karpoff
Keyes
Kristiansen
Lee
Maheu
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McGuire
Milliken
Mitchell
Proud
Riis
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—53

Angus
Black
Blaikie
Callbeck
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Fulton
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kindy
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
MacAulay
Marchi
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mills
Nowlan
Rideout
Rocheleau
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Wednesday, June 17, consideration of Bill C–26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the public service of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and the motions of Mrs. Catterall (p. 12268).

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. There is so much noise in the Chamber at the moment that it is extremely difficult to hear the Speaker through the ear–pieces. I wonder if the Speaker could clarify exactly where we are at and exactly what we are doing and perhaps ask members to have their conversations outside so that those of us who have duties to perform here today can perform them.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I remind hon. members that we are considering Bill C–26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, at report stage. Further to the Chair's decision, we are considering Motions Nos. 1 and 3. The debate had begun at the last sitting. Several members had spoken. It remains to be seen whether other members wish to speak on Motions Nos. 1 and 3.

[*English*]

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on Motion No. 1. 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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8) the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The next vote is on Motion No. 3, standing in the name of Mrs. Catterall.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

• (1130)

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the motion rejected on division?

Some hon. members: No.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We now proceed to consideration of Motions Nos. 5 and 7.

[*English*]

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C–26 be amended in Clause 5 by striking out line 17 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"lished by the Treasury Board or by the Commission for purposes of section 5.2, to improve".

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C–26 be amended in Clause 5 by adding immediately after line 25 at page 3 the following:

"5.2(1) In exercising or performing any of its powers, functions or duties under this Act, the Commission shall act in such manner as is likely to advance the implementation of employment equity in the public service and may, for this purpose, establish policies and programs to improve employment and career opportunities for designated groups in the Public Service, including women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada, and to correct the conditions of disadvantage experienced by such groups in their employment.

(2) For purposes of subsection (1), the Commission shall, in consultation with the Treasury Board and the bargaining agents representing persons employed in the Public Service, advance the implementation of employment equity by:

(*a*) identifying and eliminating each of the employment practices of the Commission not otherwise authorized by law, that results in employment barriers against persons in designated groups; and

(*b*) instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable accommodation as will enable the employer to ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of representation in the various positions of employment within the Public Service that is at least proportionate to their representation

(i) in the work force, or

(ii) in those segments of the work force that are identifiable by qualification, eligibility or geography and from which the Public Service may reasonably be expected to draw or promote employees.

(3) The Commission shall, in respect of each fiscal year, prepare a plan setting out

(*a*) the goals that it intends to achieve in advancing the implementation of employment equity in the year or years to which the plan relates; and

(*b*) the timetable for the implementation of those goals.

(4) The Commission shall include in its annual report laid before Parliament the number of applicants for employment in the Public Service, the number of persons recruited, referred, and appointed by the Commission or within its jurisdiction and the number of such persons falling within designated groups."

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present these two motions which are intended to complete the issue of employment equity in the Public Service and to comment at this time favourably on the words of Senator Pat Carney who in a previous incarnation asked: "Where are the women?".

[*Translation*]

Of course, the basic principle in the Public Service with hiring, promotions, recruiting and the merit principle is that someone can have a job and advance according to his or her ability.

This has worked well for the past 70 years, if you are a white man. If you are a woman or disabled or native or have a different skin colour, the merit principle has not worked. Of course, half the employees in the Public Service are women, but less than 15 per cent of the other public servants are women. The same principles apply if you are not white or are disabled or a native.

The legislative committee made progress on this question. The committee agreed to ensure that Treasury Board, as the employer of public servants, must respect employment equity and have programs for ensuring equal opportunity in promotions and hiring, even for women, native people, coloured people and the disabled. The Public Service is a different kind of employer from the private sector. We have an organization called the Public Service Commission which has a very specific and special role to play in ensuring employment and advancement based on ability within the public service.

[*English*]

This principle of merit that the best qualified person gets the job has worked reasonably well for 70 years if you are a man and if you are white. The figures are absolutely clear that if you do not fit those two qualifications you have not been judged on merit.

We only need to look at the figures for this year for the Public Service Commission. Even in this year, with the voluntary policy of employment equity, although half of the employees in the Public Service are women, less than 15 per cent of the managers are women. Even this year over 75 per cent of the appointments, promotions and moves within the management category were men. If one happens to have skin that is not white it is even worse; representation in the management category is abysmal. Aboriginal Canadians or persons with a disability simply do not count and the glass ceiling is there throughout the Public Service.

It is unacceptable that more than two years after the task force on barriers to women in the Public Service reported to this House there has not been more progress, and that even these steps to achieve progress are not being taken.

The merit principle is one of the fundamental issues at stake in this bill. It is based on your ability to do the job, not who your friends are or how well your boss likes you. The merit principle should be the basis on which people

are either hired or promoted or, for that matter, demoted or fired in the Public Service.

We were successful in committee and I thank the members of the committee and the managers who assisted in drafting a change. We have had an Employment Equity Act in this country that applies to the private sector for over five years. It has never applied to the public sector. In committee we were able to move an amendment and work with members of the committee and senior managers to finally have the same requirements that apply to private sector employers apply to the public sector.

However, the job is only half done because those requirements apply to the Treasury Board as employer but they do not apply to the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission is the defender of the merit principle. Its whole function is to ensure that only merit applies and that the shape of your body or the colour of your skin does not determine whether you get hired or promoted in the Public Service.

The purpose of Motions Nos. 5 and 7 is to quite simply complete the work we did in committee to ensure that the Public Service Commission, as the employment agency of the Government of Canada, is bound by the same requirements to respect employment equity which the government has now accepted will apply to the employer.

The commission, for reasons totally mysterious to me, is resisting this. It says: "Well, we already do it". Yes, it does but it does it quite imperfectly. For instance 12 per cent of applicants last year in the Public Service were people of colour but only 5 per cent of hirings were people of colour. Why? What is being done to address that?

The Public Service Commission is the agent of Parliament that ensures that only ability to do the job counts in hirings, promotions, training or opportunities to progress in the Public Service.

If the Treasury Board has a legal obligation, which it will have under this bill, to be an equal opportunity employer then the commission, as its hiring agent and as the instrument of this Parliament to ensure fairness and transparency in the hiring process in the Public Service, must have that same obligation.

• (1140)

We will come to other amendments where the commission has resisted changes to how it carries out its work. I do not believe on this important issue that the commission can have the discretion to decide whether it wants to act in a manner consistent with employment equity or not.

It is up to us as Parliament, the commission is our agent, to provide a very clear legal direction that this Public Service is going to be fair and equal for everybody and to make it accountable to this Parliament and not leave it to the discretion of three appointed commissioners to decide whether they do or do not think that people of colour, women, aboriginals, and disabled persons should have equal opportunities in the Public Service.

I look forward to hearing the government respond to these amendments and explain why it does not think they are acceptable, if it does not.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank our colleague from Ottawa West and all members of the committee that examined this bill and who are proposing this particular amendment.

I want to thank them because since 1985 we have worked very hard to look at employment equity as a basic and fundamental principle in law. We have worked to ensure that section 15, which is the non-discrimination section of our Canadian charter, be not only written on paper but be applied in actual fact in the course of the life of this country, for the citizens in the working world and in general.

When my colleague came and told me that they had moved this amendment which would have an implication for Treasury Board and would apply the whole principle of employment equity to Treasury Board I was absolutely delighted. I congratulate her once again in public because that has been the most difficult group to move.

We wrote a landmark report on the application of employment equity and on the application of section 15 of the charter but when the government introduced the Employment Equity Act it managed to leave itself outside of the act and apply it to the private sector. Instead of being the role model that it should have been it left itself untouched by the application of non-discrimination in the work force.

The answer at that time was: "Well, we do it". If we do it then it must be applied in law and perceived to be just.

It must be just and in the laws of the land. I am delighted that this will come to be within the purview of this law.

I would really like to know how the government can step aside from one's responsibility when it accepts the principle that it has a responsibility for the employment of visible minorities, women, aboriginal people, handicapped people, and those who have been perceived to be the weak and the underemployed in our society.

The government is now going to accept its responsibility that it should have in the first place, through the Treasury Board, but it is not going to apply to the hiring agent that is going to do the job for the government, the Public Service Commission. That makes absolutely no sense.

It is like putting together a lovely picture but forgetting to put a proper base to hold the stand, or building a statue with no stand to hold it so it will not fall down.

This is a very key amendment, as are the other amendments that are being discussed. If we want to respect this country that we want to keep unified and in which we want people to feel they are being fairly treated, then fairness, equity and equality must be not only perceived but must be a reality in law. The government must accept the principle that these particular amendments will be accepted.

I found it surprising that the whole issue of the merit principle in hiring and promotion would not be perceived as an obligation worthy of promotion by the Public Service sector and by the Treasury Board. The opportunity through review of the employment equity legislation was there and now through this piece of legislation it is again here.

I hope the government will grab this opportunity. As my colleague points out half the employees in the public sector are women but only 15 per cent of managers are women, and that 75 per cent of those who have received promotions have been men and while only half of the employees are men.

The visible minorities and the handicapped are not being promoted in any measurable number. I would say that fair-minded people, men and women, would see that there is justice in this request.

I would like to support my colleague. I would like to ask my colleagues across the floor to be reasonable in looking at Motions Nos. 5 and 7 and to please support them whole-heartedly to provide the full measure of equality, equity, and justice in our society.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I too want to support my colleague from Ottawa West in these two amendments, Motions Nos. 5 and 7.

[*Translation*]

Before I make a brief statement, I would like to pay tribute to the men and women who render important services to Canadians.

[*English*]

I want to reaffirm my support of the civil service and those many able men and women who render on a daily basis valuable service to Canadians. They are among the finest people with whom I have ever worked. I want to recognize that too often they are the scapegoats of timid, weak, and cowardly politicians.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Duhamel: *Oui, c'est vrai*. Very often they are the scapegoats. You use them and kick them around because you have failed and then they become the target. If you want to debate that I would be delighted to debate it with you. However I suggest that you should not stand up and debate it because you would lose badly.

[*Translation*]

We talk about pay equity. I think it is an element of basic justice in our Canadian society. We must respect it. We must make every effort to ensure that we have a policy and regulations so that we can act more fairly towards those who are under-represented. When I talk about men and women who are under-represented, I mean native people, visible minorities, and disabled Canadians, whose handicap is often visible. And of course I am talking about women.

[*English*]

If one looks at employment in the Public Service it can be seen that there are a number of under-represented groups. We know that employment is a resource, particularly so today as employment becomes increasingly difficult for a number of Canadians.

If we want to continue to build a fair society and a compassionate country then we need to have policies such as those we are discussing today. We need to be sensitive to those who are under-represented.

Therefore, whole-heartedly, without hesitation I support these particular amendments and I would hope that my colleagues would do so as well. They reinforce the merit principle that must be the fundamental building block of our civil service.

Let us not fool ourselves. Many of these people, and I speak about aboriginal people, visible minorities, handicapped Canadians and women, are not getting the jobs that they deserve, not because they do not merit them but because of the deep-seated biases that are within the system. Clearly these amendments would go a long way toward setting those aside.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemarre (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak on Motions Nos. 5 and 7. As we all know, there are almost a quarter of a million civil servants. These people have studied, some of them at the university level, in order to better serve their fellow citizens, their community, the best community of all: Canada. The Public Service Commission of Canada is the model for civil servants who work for various agencies, companies and firms from coast to coast. That is where the employer should set an example, where it should be a pleasure to serve other Canadians, where we enforce the Canadian legislation. The commission is responsible for the inspection of food and other products so that the community and consumers are protected.

• (1150)

It is vital that the civil servants feel they contribute in no insignificant way to the well-being of this country. They must feel they have their employer's support as well as that of the legislators. They must be happy and feel at home in the Public Service. They should never feel they are being mistreated.

I sincerely hope not one of them will ever be unfortunate enough to work in a group where there is sexual or racial discrimination. I hope that all civil servants, present and future, will always feel equal among their peers and will always know they have equal opportunities in the Public Service so that they may continue to work and advance in their carreers. It must be a question of equity and justice and not a question of networking among friends.

At the legislative committee, the Liberal Party tabled an amendment to section 5 dealing with employment equity. The original section prepared by government was still seen as a discretionary policy, ill-defined and vague, offering no solution whatsoever for the discrimination problem. The amendment adopted by the committee submits the Treasury Board as an employer to the same obligations as those all Canadian employers must abide by since 1986.

The amendments extend to the Public Service Commission the actual obligations and responsibilities of the Treasury Board in the area of employment equity. They are necessary amendments since the Public Service Commission, and not the Treasury Board, is in charge of recruitment.

That is why, we must allow the Commission to implement employment equity programs.

[*English*]

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from the Liberal Party from Ottawa West for her success in getting tremendous movement in this bill in the area of employment equity. I also want to say a few words in support of this amendment and talk about the process that we went through in committee.

First of all, this amendment elaborates on the manner in which Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission would establish employment equity programs.

There has been great reluctance in the past to having employment equity, as applied in the Employment Equity Act, apply to the workers in the public sector. It is one of those laws that applied to others but the government was able to escape its own legislation. Now, with the inclusion of employment equity in this legislation, we feel quite heartened that finally the government is going to take its responsibilities in the area of employment equity seriously.

These two amendments enable the commission to establish affirmative action programs. Affirmative action is one of the fundamental bases for allowing women to take their equal role in the community, to take an equal role in every part of the process of their lives or of Canadian life, including the ability to take full and equal responsibility.

Without affirmative action and without employment equity we have had very real barriers to women's participation. When even one person in this country is faced with barriers, either because of physical disability, because of their sex, because of their sexual orientation, because of any of those reasons, then they are made less a Canadian than someone else who is not faced with artificial barriers.

These amendments are another step toward removing those artificial barriers for Canadian workers. They are another step toward showing respect for all workers in the public sector, whether they are men, women, people of colour, people with a physical or mental disability, or whether it is sexual orientation.

We think it is very important that the government acknowledge and respect these areas in the broadest sense, not in the narrowest sense that it can get away with but, in fact, in the broadest sense.

We had an opportunity during the discussion in committee to make additional amendments. We tried very hard to make amendments that would be all-encompassing as opposed limiting, and I have to say that my colleague from Ottawa West was able to make great gains. But the amendments that she is proposing give us the tools to see that those amendments clearly go into action.

We had witnesses for a number of weeks before the committee. It was from a broad range of presenters from the labour movement, from the unions that represent workers in the public sector, from the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women, from the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, and a number of others. They noted very clearly, particularly NAC and the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the under-representation of women and minorities in our government service. They strongly supported inclusion of strong employment equity provisions in this bill.

This amendment would bring the Public Service Employment Act into line with the federal Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act does not currently include those who work for the federal government, for the people of Canada. In fact, the recommendations tabled recently in the Employment Equity Act included a recommendation that federal government workers be included under that act. But currently they are not included.

The amendment includes a reporting mechanism for a timetable to be established to achieve employment equity goals. Without some kind of mechanism to measure progress how can we possibly hope to achieve the kinds of things that members on this side of the House are calling for? We need some way to measure the effectiveness of the amendments that are already achieved in the legislation.

I respect the efforts of my colleague from Ottawa West and other members on the opposition side in this committee. But I do want to say that I would very much like to hear from the government side its position other than when we vote some time in the future. I would like to hear articulated by this government what the problem is with this amendment.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that of all the dissertations made so far on this side of the House in this highest court of the land, we have not heard one come from the government benches yet. That makes one wonder. Maybe it makes those at home wonder. Maybe many of the members of the government, of the Conservative Party, are not knowledgeable on this subject.

Ms. Langan: That is probably it.

Mr. Keyes: That is probably the point. How many backbenchers can we turn to today, if the only time a backbencher has an opportunity to speak in the House of Commons is just on a Standing Order 31 or in Question Period when we have the media sitting around here and then outside for later comment. Bill C-26 is so flawed that the member for Ottawa West—and I congratulate her for all the work she has done—went through the entire committee process, with the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester and the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam clause by clause by clause in this incredible bill. Mr. Speaker, do you know what they came up with? They came up, just at this stage of the bill, with 82 amendments. That is how flawed this bill is.

• (1200)

Because there are certain rules about what you can apply at this particular reading, and that it does not have anything to do with the bill or changes or alters the bill in

some way, the Speaker ruled that a group of amendments just did not cut it, so he dropped them.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what that left us to debate? It left us with 30 amendments to debate in this House. How much time do we have to do that? If you were in the House a little earlier you would have learned that the government said: "All you get is four hours today and another day when we come back in September", if we come back. Maybe we will have an election and we will not have to come back in September. We could take this bill and throw it back in the garbage and just get rid of it.

An hon. member: In the recycling box.

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, what are we stuck with? We are stuck with a bill that is, as I said, so flawed it has now, and the Chair has accepted, 30 amendments grouped into 19 different piles because some of the amendments are very similar to others.

It is a shame that we have not heard from the government benches opposite. There is much explanation that has to come, a lot of explanation. I am sure that some of the members opposite have experienced in their offices back in their constituencies the same outrage by those employed in the federal civil service that I have had in my office. Representations have come to me in Hamilton West to the office. Civil service unions and their representatives are protesting Bill C–26, a bill for the information of some that amends several pieces of legislation covering the federal government's employment practices.

They have told me, and I am sure they have told the members opposite—even the member from Burlington, I am sure they have even been in his office—that this bill will severely damage the merit principle on which the notion of a professional, non–partisan civil service is based. They have appealed to us. They have said: "It is just not fair. It is not set up to create the programs that we need. It is not fair when we compare our workforce to the private sector workforce. Let us put it all into line here". We have the opportunity to do that but the government does not take that opportunity.

What happens? There is a gentleman by the name John Edwards. He is the official responsible for pushing this PS 2000 through the works. He claims the fears of the representatives of the unions that have come to our offices are exaggerated and unfounded. If the government members opposite and the minister have the nerve to stand in this House and respond to some of our inquisitions, they would say that all this disenchantment and this concern for the bill is all nonsense and exaggerated as John Edwards has said.

Guess what Mr. Edwards said when he went behind closed doors, when he briefed a meeting of departmental personnel directors on the impact of Bill C–26? This is what he said, according to the minutes and according to the record of that meeting, held back on May 25. He was asked how employment equity and the merit principle would be observed. His response was: "Bill C–26 gives managers authority to appoint and by–pass the system". Is that not great? Now, instead of being advanced on your merits, instead of being advanced because you have the skills, because you have been there and you have chewed it and know what it looks like, and because you can do a better job than anyone else in that particular department and you have the opportunity to be promoted, the manager is the one who will make that decision. Is that not terrific?

Talk about the formation of the old boy's club. Do you not think that is going to complicate the situation a little bit in an office environment? Now the manager has the decision. Maybe members opposite are not getting up on their haunches today to speak to this bill because they sure know what the old boy's network is about, do they not?

How about Paul Tellier? Guess what he is going to become. He is going to be the president of CN. Do you know what? He admits that he does not know anything about railways but they are going to make him president of CN. He is a good friend of the Prime Minister, a good buddy.

How about Glen Shortliffe? The hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, who was a member of the Conservative Party and is now an Independent, was a most competent chairman of the transport committee on which I have had the privilege to sit since the inception of this Parliament. He did a heck of a job. He was direct and he was honest. He will remember how many times Mr. Shortliffe appeared before us. Guess what? There is the old boy's network at work again. Now Mr. Shortliffe is the Clerk of the Privy Council. He will wear the top hat now and he will make the decisions on the Public Service.

In conclusion, we are dealing with a bill that government members are not about to get up and make statements to because it concerns fairness and this government certainly is not known for its fairness. This government certainly knows about the old boy's network and the old boy's club. It certainly knows about putting control into the hands of one individual who can make a decision and tell an employee who may otherwise have gained a promotion that: "Too bad. How sad. I do not like the colour of your skin or I do not like your height and I do not like the clothes you wear". For whatever reason they are not going to get the job. The manager is going to decide: "Well, I like Jimmy because he is a nice guy. We go golfing on weekends and all the rest of it". That is a very familiar scenario to members of the government opposite.

I will be more than happy to bounce up time and again on the different motions that have been presented by the member for Ottawa West resulting from the hard work the member for Ottawa West and the member for Carleton—Gloucester have done through the many months of sitting on the committee and preparing these important, crucial amendments that will adjust and make Bill C-26 more fair.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I was brought up to believe that when an invitation is extended one responds to it in one way or another.

I am afraid that the hon. member for Hamilton West has brought some names into this debate that perhaps ought not to have been brought into the debate. The name of Mr. John Edwards, who by the way is no relative of mine but who is a distinguished Canadian public servant, has been brought into this debate. I do not know whether political motives are being attributed. I guess it is old boy network motives that are being attributed. He is a distinguished Canadian who rendered the country a remarkable service as Deputy Minister of Employment and Immigration. Later, in his capacity as chairman of the Museums Corporation he oversaw the devolution of the four national museums, which my friends opposite supported so strongly.

It was interesting to hear reference to Mr. Tellier receiving an appointment. I think it is entirely appropriate because he is a distinguished public servant. Would my hon. friend rather have people of the ilk of Bette Hewes appointed president of CN?

• (1210)

Mr. Keyes: I rise on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I think you will find my point of order valid on two issues. First, if the hon. parliamentary secretary is, through his comments, attempting to imply that I have ulterior motives in mentioning the gentlemen's names that I have previously mentioned then I must assume that the hon. member opposite is entirely incorrect because I made no passing judgment on these individuals. Mine were comments made by individuals in one place and then another.

If, as the minister himself or the parliamentary secretary himself has implied, the hon. parliamentary secretary would stand and speak to the bill I would be more than happy to hear his comments on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am not sure that was a point of order.

Ms. Langan: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member for Hamilton West made reference to people in passing as they reflected the government's attitude toward the amendments on this bill. If we look at what the hon. member has been saying from across the floor, what he is saying has no relevance to this bill and therefore I would think that his intervention is not relevant.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I must say I am very glad that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader intervened and challenged some of the remarks of the hon. member for Hamilton West. I appreciate the point of order that we keep on the bill.

I have been sitting here. I should have spoken earlier when we were on a more general clause because I am very glad that the parliamentary secretary did start to respond, before the member for Hamilton West took umbrage, with not the personalities or the integrity or the character of some individuals involved, and I am leaving Mr. Edwards out of this. However, certainly if I can catch your eye sometime, Mr. Speaker, and make it somewhat relevant and using an old boy's club as a base to make it relevant—as a former chairman, and I did not realize my friend was going to intervene and say what he said.

I certainly tried to get the Speaker's eye yesterday on statements and today on the whole question of the old boy's club and not the integrity of any of the individuals. As a former chairman of a standing committee I am very disappointed and depressed that a top public servant, be it perhaps the Clerk of the Privy Council, as he is, has been appointed out of the blue to be president of the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. That is not a question of order—

[*Translation*]

To lighthen up the debate a bit, I would like to remind the hon. members of something Madam Sauvé said regarding the rule of relevancy. In December 1982 she remarked that it was a rule extremely difficult to invoke because there is always the risk that a member will tell the Chair that he will stick to the issue and that in two minutes the Chair will realize the relevancy of his remarks even though what he is saying right now does not seem to have anything to do with the issue.

It is always rather awkward for the Speaker to invoke the rule of relevancy because the member who has the floor may say that he was getting to it or that you are soon to find it. In such instances you put me in a very difficult position. But now that messages have been exchanged on both parts, I would very much appreciate if the parliamentary secretary could finish his remarks within his allotted time.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your injunction and I will endeavour to honour it. At some other place and some other time I will defend the integrity of Glen Shortliffe, the first Albertan to be named Clerk of the Privy Council. I do not regard him as a member of an old boy's network because he was two years behind me in school.

Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that what I am about to say is totally pertinent to the bill at hand. I move:

> That the House continue to sit through the lunch hour for the purpose of continuing consideration of report stage of Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Hamilton West had not raised the issue of how the government plans to circumvent the legislation then I certainly would have. If the government takes such umbrage at the naming of names that are certainly publicly known then I will refrain from doing so.

When the person responsible for the administration of this legislation says publicly that every effort will be made by the government to make sure that equity and fairness prevail within the Public Service there is no particular reason why one should doubt the man's words until we get evidence to the contrary, and we have.

It has come to the public attention that he has said that as far as Bill C-26 is concerned the manager will have the authority to appoint and by-pass the system. This more or less addresses itself to the question raised by my colleague from Mission—Coquitlam. She asked: "I wonder what the government members would say. It would be nice if they would get up and say something nice about the bill".

The whole philosophy of PS 2000, as it is commonly called, is to make it simpler for those in a managerial position within the Public Service to not alleviate the problems that people have, particularly concerns about sexism, colour and the whole thrust of the equity programs.

There are also other aspects that do not have anything to do with the colour of one's skin or gender. Many of my constituents have come to me about problems with the administration of jobs within the government service and it has nothing to do with either of those reasons.

What this government wants to do and what this legislation does, in spite of everything the government says to the contrary, is to really short circuit the very things that it has so vociferously proclaimed that it intended to do. I must repeat that the manager has the authority to by-pass the system and make appointments.

That is precisely the philosophy that the government has come to in its whole thrust in changing this legislation. I do not care whether it is called the old boy's network or the the old girl's network, the final result is the same.

The bottom line is to get your buddies, regardless of whether they are men or women, into positions of authority, as evidenced by the appointment of the most recent chairperson of CN. He is somebody who does not know anything about railroads, and perhaps did not know a heck of a lot about running government departments either as far as that is concerned. That is from the perspective of being a benefit to the nation and a benefit

to the country, but it probably worked well for the network, whether it is an old boy's network or whatever.

• (1220)

The fact of the matter is and the examples are numerous that the government's intentions are no different than they have been all along. This is simply something to make it easier.

We had the example yesterday. Cases of sexual harassment within the Armed Forces were shown to be of epidemic proportions. We also have the instance where the particular circumstances surrounding a case have become public knowledge and not made public by the person directly involved, the person directly involved is court-martialled.

An hon. member: Possibly facing.

Mr. Fisher: All right, I stand corrected. That person is possibly facing court-martial on the basis that the circumstances surrounding the case became public.

We have to take a look at what is actually happening, not listen to what the government is saying. Actions speak much louder than words.

There is nothing in this legislation as proposed by the government which will alleviate the kinds of problems persons in the Armed Forces are having. There is nothing to alleviate the problems which people in my constituency are having *vis-à-vis* the unfairness of the way the government conducts its business in relation to its employees.

Certainly, the member is to be commended for having brought forward this amendment. It is probably best described as self-serving and cowardly on the part of the government not to accept this very fine amendment to the legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, if I rise to speak about Bill C-26, an act to amend the Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act, which concerns the management of civil servants, it is because Public Service 2000 is perhaps the most important project this House has dealt with in many years. It is very important for us to carry an in-depth review of the government proposals and I must congratulate the member for Carleton—Gloucester and the member for Ottawa West and at least the entire Liberal caucus for their hard work, a major contribution to the bill, which I think greatly improved this legislation.

The section under review, Motion No 5, which was presented by the member for Ottawa West, is just aiming at transferring responsibilities to the Public Service Commission. We know that thanks to her interventions, the member for Ottawa West managed to do what we had hoped for, what we had been anticipating since 1985, that is to say she forced the federal government as an employer through the Treasury Board which acts as the employer of all civil servants, she forced this employer to abide by the principle of employment equity.

These are amendments that the hon. member for Ottawa West our Liberal Party critic, successfully proposed. A number of amendments that were adopted give Treasury Board in its capacity as an employer the same obligations as any other employer subjected to the legislation, namely to eliminate discriminatory practices regarding employment, and to table each year a report on the progress made, as well as to implement proactive policies and programs to improve job and promotion opportunities for those groups designated in the Employment Equity Act.

One must realize that these provisions did not exist in the original bill. It is an amendment proposed by the Liberal Party that forced the government to assume its responsibilities.

So, this is included in the bill that came back from the committee and that is presently being reviewed at the report stage. What the hon. member for Ottawa West now wants to do is to force the Public Service Commission to implement also an employment equity program that would be equivalent, if you will, to the employer's obligation.

One must understand that there is a distinction to be made between Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission. The latter is a parliamentary organization, an agent of this Parliament which is independent from the government and whose role is to recruit civil servants, to select the best candidate to do the job described by the employer.

As for Treasury Board, it identifies the positions that are to be filled, their classification, that is, where those positions fit in the civil service world, as well as the classification standards and the salaries.

The role of the commission is to search for the best candidate to fill a position that has been identified by the employer. As we know, this is done, or at least was done until now, based on the merits of each application.

Since appointments are the responsibility of the Public Service Commission, it seems perfectly normal and fair that the same commission be subjected to strict standards and guidelines regarding recruitment, precisely to avoid any discrimination and to make sure that the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which all Canadians value, be complied with and that no candidates are rejected because of the colour of their skin or a physical handicap.

Section 15 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms says, "any program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." That is in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

What we want to do with Motions Nos. 5 and 7 before us is to give the Public Service Commission, which selects the best candidate, clear and specific directions in establishing policies and implementing employment equity programs for the designated groups I just mentioned.

I do not think that is so difficult. I think it is very easy and completely logical. The Public Service Commission is responsible for hiring, for selecting the most deserving candidate for a position. We know that the commission has delegated 95 per cent of appointments to departmental managers. Therefore 95 per cent are made by the departments under delegated authority.

The purpose of Public Service 2000 is to give managers more power. I fully agree that they should have more power but their powers should be clear and specific and the House of Commons must give managers directions on our intention to respect employment equity programs.

It is not complicated. That is what Motion No. 5, like Motion No. 7, proposes. They require the Public Service Commission, in selecting the most deserving candidate, to comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and section 15 of our Constitution, which forbids discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour and other factors like those I mentioned earlier. I think it is a reasonable amendment; it is not so complicated.

• (1230)

I would just like to close by saying that I am pleased with the improvements that the Liberal Party made to Bill C–26. We will have other equally important amendments to debate. This amendment is clear and precise and I hope that hon. members have understood that it would not take much to accept it.

It would only require the Public Service Commission to implement employment equity programs in all it does—appointments, transfers, training or development—so that the candidates who have access to these programs are chosen without discrimination.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to support Motions Nos. 5 and 7 which have been introduced by my colleague for Ottawa West and deal basically with the issue of employment equity in the Public Service.

These motions would expand on the way in which Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission could establish an employment equity program. It would also enable the commission to establish an affirmative action program.

All of us who have been dealing with the issues of both pay equity and employment equity understand there is a fundamental difference between pay equity and employment equity.

Pay equity means people should be paid the same wages for work of equal value while employment equity means that one must look at ways to promote people of different ethnic backgrounds and different racial backgrounds within our Public Service to ensure our Public Service more accurately reflects the diversity of Canada.

Therefore, an employment equity program would be targeted toward disabled people, aboriginal peoples, women, visible minorities, and so on. These motions

then would give this provision to the bill we are debating today.

We know about the under-representation of women in the Public Service in terms of positions of responsibility. We know well about the under-representation of visible minority women, immigrant peoples and disabled people within the Public Service. There has been study after study done to document the under-representation of all of Canada's people.

There was a report commissioned by one of the previous Treasury Board presidents, Pat Carney. I think it has been mentioned already today. That report is called *Beneath the Veneer*. It pointed out very graphically and very clearly the troubles and problems that women, visible minorities and other disadvantaged groups have within the Public Service.

There has been a great deal of support for this kind of program in Canadian society as a whole. There is growing support for affirmative action programs. Most people who look at the situation for visible minority people and aboriginal people in particular in our society see that their numbers within the Public Service simply do not reflect the reality of their percentage of our population.

This amendment would bring the Public Service Employment Act into line with the federal Employment Equity Act. Unfortunately, the federal Employment Equity Act does not seem to make much sense to a lot of people. The federal Employment Equity Act does not even apply to our own federal government.

The amendment would also include a reporting mechanism so that goals could be set and a timetable set to achieve those goals and a mechanism for ensuring that in fact these provisions would be adhered to and goals that are set would be reported on. We would see how well we were achieving those goals in terms of the targeted groups in our society.

I am pleased to support the motion. I have done a lot of work over the years on the whole issue of pay equity and employment equity. I recognize very strongly how necessary it is to have teeth in the mechanism to ensure employment equity in the federal Public Service. It is a very much needed provision in this bill, one that I am sorry the government side has not seen fit so far to support. Without this kind of a provision, we will not make the kinds of gains in terms of all peoples in our society that we must make in order to ensure that we have a fair and equitable society, a society that treats all of Canada's people in the same fair manner, and gives all people an opportunity.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): I want to participate in the brief time allotted under the rules, the 10 minutes at report stage on these amendments on pay equity in particular. I compliment the member for Ottawa West who has done a mammoth amount of work on this very complicated bill.

I want to talk generally about the stage we are in on something the index of *Hansard* calls the Public Service Reform Act, which is Bill C-26, with the 82 amendments that were proposed, and I guess the 32 that were finally allowed by the Chair.

This is the blueprint for public servants from coast to coast in the Public Service of Canada. It is very interesting. In this last week or 10 days we had Bill C-55 which dealt with pensions of public servants, RCMP, the military and all federal public servants; and here we get Bill C-26 which is in effect the structure of the Public Service, and reforms and amendments to that structure.

It is rather incredible to me, but I certainly was stimulated to participate in this debate by listening to the hon. member for Ottawa West and other members, that this bill just came out of the committee and in effect on to the floor of the House last Wednesday, June 17. We all know Wednesday is usually a short day, but under our speed-up procedures in order to try and wind up for the summer, we sat that night. As I understand it, this bill really only hit the floor somewhere between eight or nine o'clock on Wednesday, June 17. There were four or five speakers under the 10-minute rule as well as the ruling of the Speaker on amendments. There was less than one hour's debate on Wednesday, June 17, and lo and behold, we get back here today and the government introduces closure to choke it all off, allowing a four-hour limit and then one more day some time in the fall when we come back.

In terms of parliamentary procedure, I find that a rather tight schedule, to say the least. In fact, dealing with something so fundamentally important as Public Service reform legislation and all its facets, it is almost impossible to have an adequate debate at this stage.

I may surprise some members, but I believe government perhaps should use time allocation and closure many times. This government certainly has been doing it as we try to get rid of a lot of parliamentary business before our summer recess. However, there is a big difference when using time allocation after you have had a second reading debate in a prolonged way and you know the bill is complex and very complicated and has got to be given serious study in committee. I think this government quite properly has done so in many cases. For example, we dealt with the immigration bill just the other day. It was very complicated and controversial. It affects people from coast to coast. Yet you could only debate that so long. I frankly think the second reading debate should have been longer, but you get it in the committee and that is where the real work is done.

The real work is done in committee. When that real work is over, it comes back to the floor where it is expected there will be meaningful time for debate on all the matters that were discussed in committee. As we know, most members are not members of that legislative committee that goes into the detail of the bill. This time we have allocation of time or closure to get a bill into committee. In this case the committee members, and I give them and the government credit, I understand wrestled with this bill for approximately three months in committee and did a lot of the detail work.

• (1240)

It is a perversion of the rules and in effect the reform spirit, so-called, of Parliament to have a committee wrestle with complicated Public Service structures affecting every public servant in Canada in the confines of the committee, where all the necessary detail work has been done and where conscientious members produced their amendments. This is one vital amendment. They are all very important. Some are more technical than the others, but this deals with pay equity. I must say as a man in this House I have been rather surprised and depressed at some of the reports showing that women at the top branch are not in those positions of responsibility, let alone visible minorities. However, I am more interested in the women, without being chauvinistic here, than some of the other groups.

However, in all the groups, the reports show that at the top level these women and visible minorities are very much in the minority. Therefore, this is a very serious amendment.

Yet we have the parliamentary secretary to the House leader on the second day it hits the floor, after only an hour or so of debate, choke it all off, so that four hours down the road some time today, that ends it as far as the report stage when members really can contribute to all these amendments and the bill.

Then we know at third reading, and I guess the allocation order gives one more day somewhere in the future, some time I guess this fall, it gets to be even a tighter schedule for members to participate in the debate.

I am glad I have the opportunity under this amendment to stand here to register my objection to the procedures of the government to in effect pervert a lot of the good work the committee has done by choking off meaningful debate at report stage. We are supposed to investigate, check and assess in committee. We ventilate in committee and then debate on the floor of the House at report stage. This type of motion absolutely makes a mockery of that procedure.

In terms of the motion of the hon. member for Ottawa West, I totally agree with it. Some of her other motions I agreed with, earlier ones that we have passed here on deployment and lateral transfers.

Just in the closing minute or so I have, I want to say I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Hamilton West because there are difficult areas to bring out in the open. I think the fact that it has not been done and there has not been more public disclosure and public debate on it is again a reflection on how inadequate we as parliamentarians are on public issue matters. I have no hesitation in saying it, with no reflection on the personal integrity of anyone involved.

I frankly think it is a pretty poor way to run a railway to take the Clerk of the Privy Council, who may be a top public servant, trying to run PS 2000 with the help of Mr. Edwards, trying evidently to settle the Constitution, flying around the country and bringing some focus and consensus to that very complicated issue, and pretend that because he may be an expert in those areas that he can run the Canadian National Railway where we al-

ready have a chairman. He happens to be a personal friend of mine, but he has no railway experience whatsoever.

In trying to keep this within the rules so that I do not create any problem, it certainly may be an old boy's club, but it is certainly not very much of a railway buff club. Here you have the chairman of CN and now intending its CEO and active president to be the head of a railway that is fundamental to Canada at a time when railway problems have never been more critical. I say this is a disgrace to the railway workers who depend on top management to do the job. Two neophytes are going to run this railway at a critical time of competition with American railways, let alone Canadian Pacific and the trucking problem in this country.

I suggest that there is no better illustration of the potential in PS 2000. I think in certain cases with checks there should be an Order in Council to make sure they are lateral transfers and/or in this questionable area, whether they are lateral transfers or promotions.

Talk about a choo-choo train running riot over procedures. We have the greatest illustration of a choo-choo train by having the Clerk of the Privy Council choo-chooing right into the presidency of CN when he himself admits he does not know a thing about a railway. I do not know if he even had a model railway as a kid growing up. Some of us may have had one away back when.

Then there is the chairman, who is a complete neophyte in the railway. This is a disservice to Canada, a disservice to Canadian railway workers and it is a disservice to Canadian taxpayers because CN costs the taxpayers a lot of money. In this day and age when you can have this nepotism of someone who has done well, work well and may nor may not be a friend of the Prime Minister, but a personal appointment to such an important position with no scrutiny at all—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order please.

[*Translation*]

I would ask the hon. member to be a little more discriminating in his choice of words, in referring to a particular person. I heard the word "nepotism" and I am not sure that is a very parliamentary term.

[*English*]

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I respect the Chair. I certainly withdraw it. It is unparliamentary. I will cut it out now. My time is just about up at this stage. All I am saying is that I will remove certain words. You are absolutely right, that is incorrect. I did not know it was. Frankly, I could think of a lot of other words that I think would be even more graphic but correct. However, I will not get into words. I do not care about the appellations. It is the procedure that concerns me. That is why members legitimately raised problems in the committee, as I understand it, reflected in amendments here as to the abuse that may be made of flexibility, of having transfers and promotions in the Public Service. When you have it at the top, then beware of what is going to happen all down the structure to the public servant who does not have a forum in which to protest and has to take his lumps without too much redress. You do not get much redress when you choke off debate in the House of Commons on something so fundamental as Public Service reform.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on this bill today because it has far-reaching implications for the Public Service of Canada. I say that without any partisan view. The merit system in the Public Service has always been the very basis of good administration in this country.

Where the manager in this legislation has been granted excessive authority, he or she can exercise their bias at will. That not only discourages employees on the scene at the time, but it also discourages well qualified personnel going into the Public Service of Canada. That is the serious part of this whole legislation.

We have had great public servants over the years. They have been loyal in their advice and in their attitude to administrations of the day over the years of Canadian history. Their role was to advise ministers, advise the government. When asked to provide bills on certain matters, given the parameters that the government wanted to included in that legislation, in those bills, their job was to provide that information in the various departments concerned.

We have had some outstanding specialists in the Public Service of Canada over the years. That is not going to continue under a system where the managerial ego within individual departments is going to be the order of

the day. Who is going to be favourite of the boss? What are you going to say to your boss? Are you going to tell him that you think that his ideas are bad and that only yours are good? Is there going to be a free flow of information? Is there going to be a free flow of comment, of advice on serious issues where that information must be of a specialist nature because it will be going up the ladder to the front benches, to the ministers and the Parliament of Canada.

• (1250)

We have had some great public servants in this country over the years and we have them today, but why are we so gung-ho about passing a bill on Public Service 2000 through this Parliament under closure? This is going to build into that legislation the type of law that is going to give excessive power to the few and discourage great students, talented people, from coming into the Public Service of this nation. It is going to prevent them from coming into the Public Service when Canada needs some of the greatest advice, the greatest base of accurate assessment of information we have ever needed in years.

The merit system is indeed the *raison d'être*, the reason for being, the reason for outstanding people coming into the Public Service of Canada.

The merit system promotes greater depth in the advice, in the accuracy and in the informed knowledge that will be passed on to this government and future governments in Canada.

If I am ever again on the government side of this House, I can say without any reservation or equivocation whatsoever that I will do my utmost to the nth degree and will not rest until the merit system is put back into the Public Service of Canada. There must be no favouritism. We want well-qualified people in the Public Service and we want people in this House who respect the employees of the Government of Canada.

A strong and well-qualified Public Service will be well managed by the minister. It will be well managed down the line into the Public Service, providing that minister is strong enough, is capable enough, of leading and if he is humble enough to accept accurate and well-based advice when he feels that his own is wrong.

That is the way the system must work. It must work on logic and firm foundations and well-informed decisions will come out of it.

A qualified Public Service not only shines across the country but it helps the country to shine in the eyes of the world. That is why this bill and the government's haste to get it through Parliament is so alarming. I have known a lot of those fantastic public servants over the years and governments in this House of Commons have benefited from their knowledge. Their knowledge does not just come from their own minds. Their knowledge would seep up through the Public Service from other levels and would end up in the best possible advice that could be given to ministers of the Crown.

In this bill, when it becomes law, the loyalties to the manager in the system can become very petty in nature. The loyalties will be more to the manager in the system than it will be to the Government of Canada politically. That is what is wrong. It can create jealousies, personality conflicts within the workplace and be a detriment to harmony in the Public Service.

Great statesmen over the years of Canadian history have made this country great. They have helped to make well-qualified elected public servants look very great too and have brought out the best in everyone.

If it was not for a great relationship between the Public Service of Canada and governments in Canada in the past, we would not have managed great issues like the building of the CPR railway across Canada; World War I, which required a lot of serious decisions; World War II, which was well managed throughout; the forming of the United Nations, which came about because of people like Lester B. Pearson, Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent in this country.

NATO was put in place to offset the Warsaw Pact and the power behind the iron curtain of the day and it worked. It is a success. That is why we have peace, relatively, in the world today. Our ambassadorial system has worked well around the world. Our peacekeepers have worked well because we have had civilian ambassadors and we have had military ambassadors built into the same system.

These are public servants of Canada. Never should this House of Commons ever vote for legislation that is going to take the merit system out of the Public Service

of Canada and damage the information that is going to the front benches of any government in Canada.

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 Motion No. 5. 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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

We shall now proceed to the consideration of Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13, all standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out lines 20 to 22 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"7.1 (1) The Commission may conduct investigations and audits on any matter within its jurisdiction.

(2) The Commission shall investigate complaints filed by employees alleging sexual or personal harassment or abuse of authority and shall report its findings and the corrective action taken under section 7.5, if any, to the employee who filed the complaint."

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out line 33 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"or person employed with the Commission."

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out line 11 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"sion shall, on the basis of any investigation,".

She said: Mr. Speaker, since the government has clearly indicated its intention to reject Motions Nos. 5 and 7 on employment equity, Motion No. 9 becomes even more important, because it is an amendment that ensures the Public Service Commission has the authority and the responsibility for investigating complaints of sexual or personal harassment or abuse of authority filed by public servants.

• (1300)

[*English*]

It is even more important, since the government is not prepared to give the Public Service Commission, on behalf of Parliament, any responsibility in the matter of employment equity that these three motions which touch directly on the accountability of managers and an impartial method of ensuring that they do not abuse the new authority that this bill gives them, to have these safeguards in this bill.

The question of accountability was one thread throughout our debate in committee and is a thread throughout this bill. It is worth quoting from the minutes of a couple of meetings because throughout appearances by the minister and by senior officials I repeatedly asked them to show me where in this bill is the increased accountability that the minister and Mr. Edwards, responsible for PS 2000, have told Parliament, have told Public Service employees and have told the public is there. Tell those who rely on this Public Service for fair and impartial treatment on the front lines, in unemployment insurance offices, in getting their welfare cheques or their old age security cheques. Tell us where in this bill is the increased accountability.

Not once in three months of hearings was one senior manager or the minister or the parliamentary secretary able to point to one clause in this bill that clearly increases accountability.

We support the need for reform in the Public Service. We understand that people have to be given the responsibility and the freedom to be creative, to make decisions, to take risks, to manage well, but we also understand that increased freedom, whether for a citizen, for a child or for a manager means increased accountability for actions. It means checks and balances to ensure that increased power is not abused at the expense of others who are less able to defend themselves.

[*Translation*]

I would like to refer to several issues of the proceedings of the legislative committee where we had these discussions and where I asked a number of questions. Take the report of the task force on barriers to women in the Public Service, for instance. In its report *Beneath the Veneer*, the task force said that attitudes were the main obstacle to the advancement and equal treatment of women in the Public Service.

In other words, the merit principle has never been applied fairly to women. I put a question to the President of the Treasury Board, and I said that they talked about increased accountability but I found no trace of it in this bill. I asked about this increased accountability of managers to Parliament, to the government, that would ensure the Government of Canada was not governed by favouritism and nepotism. I received no specific reply on the clause of the bill that deals directly with increased accountability.

[*English*]

At the end of the minister's answer I had to say that I asked specifically: "Where in this bill is increased accountability contained?" and made the point that I had not heard that answer from the minister.

[*Translation*]

I put the same question to Mr. Edwards, and I said that since we were giving managers more freedom and greater latitude and possibilities for filing an appeal or reviewing management decisions were being reduced, had they considered provisions that would enhance accountability, as a counterweight to this greater freedom? Mr. Edwards answered that in their opinion it was clear that the provisions of the bill contained certain legal requirements.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards, as well as the minister and Mr. Robert Lafleur, deputy secretary, Human Resources Development Branch, Treasury Board Secretariat, were not able to point out one sentence in this bill that increases accountability.

I attended hearings conducted by the Public Service Alliance and I attended meetings with Public Service employees during the development of PS 2000. I heard again and again from women and visible minorities that they do not get paid the same, they do not get treated the same, and they do not get the same opportunities for promotion. They never get beyond that glass ceiling. They are desperately afraid that with new powers it is going to become even more important whether their manager likes them and whether they are the kind of person he or she thinks deserves to progress in the Public Service.

Women particularly, but also those who are disabled and aboriginal Canadians, have expressed fears about both sexual and personal harassment and about attitudes that have nothing to do with their ability to do their work affecting their ability to progress.

This motion is an attempt to ensure that the commission, which is accountable to Parliament, not to the government but to Parliament, has fair employment practices. It asks that the commission has the responsibility and the power to investigate complaints of harassment and abuse of authority.

We as parliamentarians need that safeguard. I do not expect that every manager, most managers, or even a large number of managers are suddenly going to become raving power maniacs wielding whips over people in the Public Service. However we write laws for those whose own moral principles do not guide proper behaviour. We already have very good documentation that attitudes do not allow people to be considered only on their merits.

Taken together these amendments are very clear. Their purpose is to ensure that there is redress, there is accountability, and there are checks and balances against the new powers that managers are given by this bill.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I too want to lend my support to these particular motions. We have dealt with Motions Nos. 5 and 7 and they will be voted on in the future.

Now we deal with Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13. They are being grouped for debate. As we have heard so eloquently said by the member for Ottawa West, we are dealing with these particular motions on sexual harassment, personal harassment, or abuse of authority.

If anyone out there believes that we do not need to tighten the bill because the reality of today is that there is a change in society, men are more understanding of women and men accept the fact that women are equals, we cannot believe that. We cannot believe that is what is being felt by all men. That is just not the case.

• (1310)

I am part of a generation, one of the later baby boomers I suppose, that says: "We accept this as a reality. I am not challenged or feel challenged by a woman of equal or more powerful stature or responsibility than I".

There are men who are threatened. We do not have to go too far to bump into these individuals. We do not have to go too far out of this place to hear what goes on in private conversations between men when they cloister and have a few laughs. It is a shameful display but it is a reality.

That is why we want something in this particular bill that recognizes that fact. That is why on Motion No. 9 my colleague from Ottawa West explained that the commission does at present conduct investigations on complaints of harassment or abuse of authority. We recognize that it goes on. However, there is no clear mandate in the legislation for it to do so.

What is the point then? We are missing something. There is a piece of that puzzle, of that picture that is missing. The picture is not complete. That is what this motion attempts to do.

Since we all admit here today that harassment can be and is a clear interference with the merit principle this subclause clearly spells out the right of the commission to investigate such complaints.

As well, the increased authority of managers creates the concern that some managers may misuse their new control over employees and their career opportunities within the Public Service to the particular disadvantage of women and visible minorities. To believe otherwise is living in a fool's paradise. That is quite clear.

My hon. colleague for Ottawa West speaks of a glass ceiling. I am not so sure it is glass. I think it is a concrete ceiling. Maybe it is a rubber ceiling because when women and minorities hit it they bounce right down. They bounce right down because the opportunity that is afforded to them to advance is there but we all know that in many cases it just does not happen for them.

In this package we are also dealing with Motion No. 11, which deals with the delegation of authority to deputy heads when we are talking about audits and investigations. As the member for Ottawa West has already mentioned the common thread that is running through the entire debate, which went on not only at the three months of committee meetings that she and the member for Carleton—Gloucester attended, is the whole issue of attitude by individuals.

I had representation in my constituency office from those who are part of the Public Service unions. They were concerned that the commission could delegate to or allow investigations and audits to be conducted by deputy heads. Motion No. 11 will ensure that these investigations or audits are conducted impartially by someone under the direct control of the commission and independent of the departments.

It is especially important, given the extended authority of deputy heads, that investigations or audits be carried out at arm's length.

Also in this group of amendments, which we will seek the government to respond to in some way or say: "Yes, maybe we ought to have another look at that and maybe yes, we will accept that particular amendment", is Motion No. 13.

The purpose of this motion is to ensure that where an investigation audit or report indicates that corrective measures are necessary the commission shall take corrective action. In Bill C–26 it says "may take corrective action". We say "shall take corrective action". The clause still leaves it to the discretion of the commission to determine what corrective action is appropriate.

We are dealing with three motions at this particular time, Nos. 9, 11 and 13. These amendments to the bill have become very crucial by all indications. For the last hour and 15 minutes or so that we discussed Motions Nos. 5 and 7 not a single member got up in the House to debate those particular motions and answer our concerns directly. That is a shameful attitude on behalf of the government.

Couple that with the fact that we now have this jackboot tactic of closure and we are only allowed to speak for four hours on all 30 amendments put forward

by the member for Ottawa West. Just four hours of debate. What kind of time limit is that?

It takes me back to last night and the debate on the immigration bill. We had one day. We were talking about reform, the largest of any kind on immigration ever done since 1978. Today we are dealing with the Public Service and we are allowed four hours. This is an abuse of Parliament.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to these particular amendments, Motions Nos. 9, 10 and 11. It is a good idea to read what is actually in these motions, particularly Motion No. 9. In clause 7.1 it says that the commission "may" conduct investigations and audits. The key part of the amendment that has been put forward by this side is:

> (2) The commission shall investigate complaints filed by employees alleging sexual or personal harassment or abuse of authority and shall report its findings and the corrective action taken under section 7.5, if any, to the employee who filed the complaint.

The motion gets to the heart of the issue of protecting employees and giving them the confidence of feeling that they are part of a system that will support them rather than be against them and that they have the method of redress essential to this type of system.

We have to be mindful that the system is there to protect. The motion adds the additional protection of not having to work through the system but through the commission that reports to Parliament and tells us what is going on.

The concern I have, and I am sure others have as well, is that there is a trend away from Parliament. We saw a trend with the immigration bill last night to have things handled by regulation rather than by legislation in Parliament. We saw the use of closure in Parliament both on this bill and on the immigration bill. We only had one day to deal with the immigration bill. Now we have only four hours to deal with these very complicated and complex amendments, which were designed and offered in goodwill to improve legislation that has some flaws and problems.

We on this side of the House understand that reform is necessary and that reform dealing with the Public Service is an essential element. We want to work with the government to see that it is achieved.

• (1320)

However, you tend to lose your compassion and your desire to work with this government when you see the tactics that are being utilized to force this through.

It is the same thing, quite frankly, on a different topic. It ties in with Bill C–55 in dealing with pensions. The government adopted that legislation in an arbitrary way. It changed rates of contribution and established interest rates which were retroactive to the previous year. They may take away indexation and make changes to the plans that are in place and at their beck and call without Parliament or the people being fully consulted. We are again running into this type of situation with Bill C–26.

I think we all have to realize and understand that if we are going to have a civil service or a Public Service that functions properly then there has to be mutual respect and a system that will give these employees an opportunity to flourish and to achieve their goals and objectives as individuals.

Charlotte Gray in a recent *Saturday Night* article states: "Without the federal government to lubricate the wheels of Confederation, run airports, impose national standards, collect taxes and regulate phones, trade, and television stations, Canada might be even closer to disintegration".

We have to be mindful of what is involved with the Public Service. I think that when we do have these massive walk outs and wildcat strikes we do see some of the ramifications and we feel them for a short period of time. However, we do tend to forget all of the things that are done by our civil service which help hold this country together and provide the nuts, bolts, and glue to make the system work.

I will quote another portion of that same article by Charlotte Gray. It really drives home the point of the frustration and the concern and why we need Motions Nos. 9, 10 and 11. It is to put into the system those protections. I quote: "One layer below, morale among managers spirals downward because of the contraction of the Public Service". It now constitutes 1.7 per cent of the Canadian labour force compared with 2.4 per cent in 1974. "Promotion prospects have dried up. 'We are treated like light bulbs,' moans one 45 year–old who works a 60–hour week and whose career is going no-

where. The guys at the top assume there are always new ones to replace those of us who burn out'."

I think that typifies the feeling that a lot of public servants have to what is happening to them. They of course feel that there is no mechanism for them to redress those concerns. There is no mechanism that will respond to their concerns.

We on this side feel that by strengthening clause 8, and in particular with Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13, that mechanism will be strengthened to such an extent that people will not feel they are light bulbs who are just there to burn out and be discarded. Instead, they will feel that they are an integral part of a system that appreciates what they do, encourages them in what they do, and encourages them to seek the highest possible attainment of on-the-job satisfaction and the pride in doing a job and doing it well.

We have seen the politicization of the Public Service over the last number of years and I think that is a cause of great concern and another area in which the Public Service feels they have been put into the background and are not a contributor to the process.

I think they have been made to feel as scapegoats in the political agenda of this government. We need the strengthening of these sections and improvements in the bill over all. As we are dealing with these motions, we need some improvements in them to improve the power of the commission to protect the Public Service.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on the issues before us today that deal with a number of principles involving employment in the public sector. The first interesting observation was of course the previous member speaking about the horrors of closure and phrases such as the application by the Conservative government of jackboot measures and other rather sedate and calm language. I remember in the House of Commons when the hon. member's party was in government we pretty well had a closure bill amended here during that period of time. To hear the Liberal Party stand up and justify the necessity of using jackboot measures and closure surprises me. It is kind of ironic to see the jackboots on the other feet for the time being.

I am sure that as the next election plays out we will likely see closure being applied the other way. Maybe we should just find a better way of doing it rather than going through this hypocrisy.

The interesting thing about the principles of the bill—and I do support the amendments that have been brought forward—is the question of equity in the work place and the protection of employees from arbitrary and illegal use of the power of position. On those two bases, I think there is an extremely important point to be made.

One of them is on pay equity. I had an interesting opportunity with the leader of the Liberal Party of British Columbia. I admit that the individual is somewhat of a novice, but it would be interesting to see the federal Liberal Party and the provincial Liberal parties singing from the same song sheet. The song sheet that the provincial leader of the Liberal Party of British Columbia was singing from basically said that we are in a recession. The economy will not permit a government to pursue pay equity for women.

Rephrasing that, the Liberal Party of British Columbia is saying the same thing that the Conservative Party is saying. Speaking on pay equity, society, and the Conservatives and the Liberals as parties, say that in order to retain the privileged position of men, women have to stay in the job ghettos. They have got to take the pay ghetto, as it were, in order that men can maintain that privileged position. It is an unfortunate thing for the leader of a political party to make such a statement. It was done on television and it was absolutely untenable.

What should happen is that federal colleagues who are advocating the position of pay equity against a government that seems not inclined to recognize how important this issue is should be looking clearly at giving a signal to their provincial colleagues that maybe they should be singing from the same song sheet if they want British Columbians and Canadians to believe what they are saying.

It is almost the same position as they are in with the closure issue. Let us come up with a new approach so as not to look so hypocritical to someone who is watching the Liberals in government and then watching them, or the Conservatives for that matter, in opposition.

The next question is whether pay equity is a right for human beings. That means equal pay for work of equal value. It must be recognized and dealt with.

The next important issue again deals with the whole question of harassment. It could be harassment of any type against men or women in the work place where one individual with power over another exercises that power in an inappropriate or illegal manner. Again women have borne the brunt of the harassment in the work place. The amendments before us today ask that that the government consider putting in place effective measures to reduce and eliminate harassment in the workplace.

I think the key point here is that the Government of Canada should set an example. The Government of Canada should not be the worst employer in Canada. It should be looking to be a model to signal other employers that this is what our expectation is. It could be changing the attitudes of employers by moral suasion and example rather than legislation. The government really has not seemed to be inclined to do that.

If we look at the Canada Post Corporation, it is probably one of the worst employers in Canada. There are Neanderthal practices within that corporation absolutely beyond a doubt.

• (1330)

Maybe one could say that in a perverse manner it is setting an example for employers in Canada of what not to do as an employer. The practices within that corporation are absolutely disgusting.

As the owner the Government of Canada should be looking at ways of making that corporation a model in terms of employer–employee practices.

Here is another example that is absolutely critical. If one is going to signal other employers in Canada, then one should be making the agencies of the Government of Canada a model. The Government of Canada, with the Conservative Party in power, should be making its agencies examples of what other employers should be doing and not examples of what they should not be doing.

It would be an incredibly good opportunity to bring employment practices into the 20th century or on into the 21st century in the Armed Forces. If you look at the Armed Forces as an employer it is an incredible organization. Here is an example. When I represented an area in which the Armed Forces were involved an incredible issue would result where an individual would run into grief. They would go after tremendous frustration to their member of Parliament because they were suppressed by the officers. They were warned: "You do not go outside this system or we will get you no matter what happens".

Eventually they would go outside the system and go to a member of Parliament. The issue would then be adjudicated to some degree in the public eye, the individual would be transferred and, after a few years, he would indeed be driven out or he would be penalized to an enormous degree. If one breaks the chain of command then one is in serious difficulty.

It is time the Armed Forces in Canada had an effective union. In Europe there are countries with unionized armed forces. This country, in terms of its employment practices within the Government of Canada, is absolutely in the Dark Ages. We watched examples of arbitrary practices in there. Somebody is overweight. They decide to throw them out of the Armed Forces but the officer who makes that decision is overweight. Out they go. They put in a grievance. It takes two years for the grievance to be processed. The individual has been in total chaos and the grievance process in there is terribly ineffective.

In one case it eventually wound up where the cabinet had to consider the most dishonest practice that would ever have been considered in any public sector or any private sector of employment. The laws of Canada would have prohibited what went on inside the Armed Forces.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): The individual was eventually reinstated by a decision of cabinet. They would not tolerate inside the Armed Forces any remediation of a terribly abusive order. That started on the ground floor. It is amazing. The officer who inflicted the order in that case was promoted and now sits in Ottawa today in a promoted position which took two years of enormous conflict within the Armed Forces.

In there goes sexual harassment and harassment of employees where a tremendous abuse of power occurs and there is no effective remediation. We are going into the 21st century. It is time that this Government of Canada dealt with its Public Service, an honourable,

dedicated, committed organization, in a fair and equitable way. It should use the employer–employee relationship to set a prime, key example for other employers in Canada. It should not set an example of what you should not do or an example of employment practices of the last century.

I view the amendments put forward by my colleague as constructive and worthy of support, making the Public Service of Canada and the Government of Canada an example of good, solid future–looking employer–employee relations.

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill. That is why the hon. member for Mississauga should get up and give us a very inspiring speech as he knows how to do.

I am willing to give my time to the member for Mississauga if he would get up and give us his views on this very important matter. I know how he feels. He is a fair individual and a fair person. He is a man of great, great principle. He is a man who understands. All we are trying to do here, with these three amendments, Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13, is to give a clear mandate to the commission in the legislation for it to do these investigations on complaints of harassment and abuse of authority.

One does not have to be a genius nor a legislator of great experience to understand this is a fundamental right of individuals, to know what is going on and to know that they will be informed of investigations and will have a right to comment on them.

As we know, the commission at this time does these investigations. We are trying, with these amendments, to make it clear that harassment *per se* could be an interference with the merit principle. We would like the commission to be empowered by legislation to do these inquiries and to do them in an open manner and to do them with the follow–up that is required of these investigations.

All we are asking is that the commission do the investigations, not somebody from the department where the individual works, not somebody from outside government, but somebody within the powers of the commission to appoint within that commission so that we make sure that is protected in the law.

The first amendment says that the commission must do those investigations and audits on any matter within its jurisdiction and investigate complaints filed by employees alleging sexual and personal harassment.

I had a case this morning of harassment of a public servant by a superior. This individual works in national defence and his wife is very sick. He missed a few days because of his wife's illness. When he came back to work and told his supervisor that he was absent for the last seven or eight days because of his wife's illness, the supervisor refused to accept the medical certificate. He refused to accept the word of the individual and his medical doctor attesting to the fact that he was justifiably absent from work.

This is the second time this has happened. The last time this member of the Public Service was off work, every day at 7 a.m., at 10 a.m., at noon, in the afternoon and in the evening the supervisor would call to make sure that the individual was home looking after his wife. Getting seven or eight phone calls a day from your boss trying to verify that you are looking after your sick wife becomes quite tiresome.

An hon. member: Harassment.

Mr. Gauthier: That is what we call harassment. That is exactly what we are trying to do here. An employee who is harassed that way should have a right, if there is a complaint lodged by the employee as to a supervisor harassing him or her, to say to the commission: "Investigate this problem. Find out why this person is harassing me and for God's sake, let us stop that nonsense". That is all this does. It gives the commission the authority to do not as it so feels about it, not as clause 8 says: "The commission may—". We want the word "shall", not "may". We are trying to replace the word "may" within the legislation before us with the word "shall". The commission shall investigate, not may investigate.

The other point we are trying to make with Motion No. 11 is that the unions have expressed concerns to us that to delegate this authority to investigate or audit to deputy heads of the department could be a conflict of interest within the department.

That point is very easy to understand. We are telling managers that by Public Service 2000 we will give them more powers to manage. That was not anything new. It was said in many royal commissions before: Give the managers power to manage and pay them accordingly. That is why managers are paid more than the average worker. It is because they manage a department. They have responsibilities and judgment calls to make.

• (1340)

In Public Service 2000 we have a different tack now. Not only are managers going to be paid to manage, but we are also going to give them a carrot. We are going to give them something else and that is more authority. Well, that authority must be controlled.

With these amendments, all we are saying is that people in the departments have a right to and should be entitled to equal rights. All we are asking is that the House adopt the three amendments that would make investigations and audits of the commission an in-house Public Service Commission obligation. A follow-up must be done and as much as possible it must be done by somebody not within the department, not within that section of the government where the person works.

These amendments are not very difficult and I recommend them to the attention of the House.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): On these amendments dealing with auditing within the department concerned or where the complaint comes from, that procedure would be a very simple one because we have a situation here where unions express concern that the commission could delegate to or allow investigations and audits to be conducted by deputy heads.

I have just gone through some of my public accounts papers when I chaired the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for three years. Oddly enough, I found in there that we are supporting the Auditor General of Canada in having a greater control over the internal operations of departments and that is the role that any public accounts committee in this House should be playing. My colleague from Ottawa—Vanier is now chairing that committee and I am sure he would agree with me very strongly that is precisely what should take place.

Instead of bringing in a bill that is going to delegate these duties, instead of tightening up the system, where are we going to get the strong financial control in the Government of Canada? It is not only in big contracts or big deals that money sometimes is lost, but it is also all the dribbling away here and there down through the system. That is where the tax dollars are lost.

I support the Auditor General in his desire to have absolute tight control within departments. I support the suggestion of my colleague from Ottawa West who brought in Motion No. 11 which specifically mentions the term "investigations and audits" which the commission might wish to delegate to other department heads.

So let us not throw the baby out with the bath water. We have had some good systems in place before which have served the country well. In passing any legislation in this House we must support the Auditor General of Canada because he is the one the public of this country looks to, to make sure that he is bringing out the wrongdoings in government, the leakages and wasted tax dollars in government, and to try to tighten up the system and give the Canadian people some value for their dollars.

In relation to Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13, they deal with some very serious matters. Harassment is mentioned here. My hon. friend from Ottawa—Vanier mentioned one case this morning. You are going to run into some very good managers in the Public Service of Canada, but you are also going to run into some managers who cannot handle a little bit of authority. Calling somebody's home six, seven, or eight times a day I would say is a pretty good case of paranoia. These people should not be in positions of authority.

How can anybody say that by passing this legislation today we are going to increase the efficiency of the Public Service of Canada? Is that manager or his delegate getting paid on a salary or at hourly rate to pick up the phone every once in awhile to phone somebody's home like a little Gestapo agency? Why do we pay people to do those things? Is there no trust left in the system at all? If a boss cannot trust his employees, why should the employees trust the boss? That is where management comes into this system.

I want to read something relating to procedures outlined in these three amendments in a very general way. It is a report I tabled in this House on November 8, 1990, when I was chairing the public accounts committee.

Part A says: "Your committee recommends that the government give consideration to tabling a discussion paper prior to proceeding with the introduction of legislative amendments and/or administrative changes and that this discussion paper set out the principal conclusions and recommendations arising from Public Service 2000". That covers the type of details we are talking about here.

Part B reads: "Referring the aforementioned discussion paper to a special committee of the House on reform of the Public Service and that the special committee conduct a consultation process involving employees, the Public Service unions and other interested parties and report back to the House within a reasonable period".

At first, the President of Treasury Board wrote me a letter. He thought it was a tremendous idea and he was willing to adopt it. Then he went ahead and did the very opposite. He brought the legislation into the House and what do we see today? Not only did he not have full consultation with the Public Service of Canada as he promised me as chairman of the public accounts committee that he would do, but he also brought legislation into the House and skipped the process altogether. That is why we have this legislation before us today.

The government has compounded the difficulty of dealing with Public Service reform today because not only did it just bring the bill forward for discussion on report stage today but it has also put a time limit on this bill when it must be passed by the House.

We might as well face the facts. The government had its mind made up right from the start, right from the beginning on what it wanted to do. It was going to do that regardless of who said what or what process took place in the Parliament of Canada or in the public accounts committee or any other committee dealing with this issue. That is the ramrodding business this government goes through.

One of the people we had the most trouble with during the discussion of Public Service 2000 was none other than Mr. Tellier who has just now been promoted to head up the CNR. I hope he can run a railroad better than he ran the government business at that time.

He was always very agitated when he had to come before the public accounts committee. He even sometimes suggested when his officials should appear and when they should not. We ran into many problems with Mr. Tellier. I must say with regret that I was very disappointed in the type of co-operation we had from him and his little department.

• (1350)

Now I come back to the same thing, right to the beginning. If we are going to have good conduct in the Public Service of Canada, if we are going to have value for the tax dollars of the taxpayers of Canada, and if we are going to have proper auditing then I would very strongly suggest that the Auditor General of Canada must work very closely with the Public Service Commission when these audits are done in departments. We do not want someone else fixing things up before the Auditor General has a chance to report them to the Canadian public at large. That is his job.

The Auditor General has specialists in his department. He has about 670 or 690 employees over there and he brings people in on contracts to do special types of projects. He can bring somebody in on contract to do a particular investigation or audit in a department if he sees that there is a serious problem there.

Let us make sure, as we go on with this legislation, that the Auditor General is going to play the responsible role on behalf of all Canadians in departments of government and it is not going to be delegated to someone who is going to fix up the problem and as a result the public are not going to know what dollars were lost.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise to speak on these amendments. It is important in any large organization that complaints of personal, sexual or other types of harassment be treated with a great deal of dispatch in an independent investigation and that there be some method of reporting back to the people involved.

Over the last period of time we have become much more sensitive to harassment in the work place. Certainly the issue of sexual harassment has become a major focus of attention, not only in government work places but also in industrial work places and places like the Armed Forces.

Sexual harassment has been pervasive within our work force for many years and has resulted in the inability of women to contribute to the maximum and to their potential in support of themselves and to the betterment of the total community. However, there are other kinds of personal harassment that this legislation would also assist.

Racial harassment in the work place, including racial harassment in government work places, is something we must all be concerned about. There have been allegations made about the National Research Council concerning the fact that people of visible minorities have been openly harassed at work and have also been harassed by not being given fair opportunity to apply for and receive promotions.

As a country we cannot afford this. We must use the talents of everybody to their maximum. Harassment in the work place takes this away and people who have a lot of skills, a lot of knowledge and a lot of expertise are not then contributing.

Racial harassment can take many forms, from open confrontation and open racial slurs to casual derogatory remarks that to the visible minorities are very hurtful but to the rest of us may seem to be rather humorous, or which we think are humorous when they are not.

It is important that these amendments go through because they do a number of things. They ensure that there shall be a commission that is independent and has the ability to report its findings and take corrective measures and that these findings will be reported back to the worker involved.

That is one of the significant things that must happen. In large bureaucracies when there has been an allegation and there has been an investigation the person involved often is told: "That is a personnel matter. That is a matter on which we cannot get back to you and tell you what is taking place". That is simply not acceptable.

It is particularly important when we take a look at some of the new powers that have been given to managers in this scheme. The more discretionary powers we give the more the people who have been harassed become frightened of making a complaint. Therefore, it is more important to build in some type of an independent commission that has these kinds of powers.

Another area we are not very sensitive to is the harassment of disabled people within the work place. People who have disabilities frequently are subject to belittlement, to crude comments or to designs of the work place that are a physical harassment because they do not allow them to function to their maximum ability within the working community.

We already heard another member talk about harassment of people who are ill. I only wish that this legislation directly applied to Canada Post. It has a horrendous record of harassment of people, particularly people who are ill. I have had a number of complaints in my riding from people who have illnesses, particularly mental health problems, and who have been systematically harassed both at work and at home about their mental illness and have been questioned about it, even with a doctor's certificate. All sorts of snide comments have been made that it is not a real illness but simply malingering, that it is a method of trying to get out of job assignments, and all sorts of things. That constitutes harassment.

Unfortunately, this legislation may not directly apply to Canada Post but it is going to be the model legislation for public corporations, particularly corporations in the federal domain. I would think it would be the model for Crown corporations in the public field, in which Canada Post is certainly a significant and major player.

I support these proposals. We all have to become much more sensitive. We have to build in mechanisms that allow for the independent review of sexual harassment and personal harassment, whether based on racial characteristics, disabilities or other things. There is personal harassment of people because of their clothing styles. It is still quite incomprehensible that in this day and age there are employees being harassed because they choose to dress slightly different than the norm of society.

An hon. member: We cannot even come in here without a tie.

Mr. Karpoff: That is true. People still report to me that they are harassed about the length of their hair. I wish I were in the position to be harassed about the length of my hair but unfortunately I am not. Young people, particularly, tell me that they still receive comments and harassment in the work place from superiors because they wear a hair-style more in keeping with the younger people in this country than with the middle-aged managers in their departments. We have to be much more sensitive about this.

These are good proposals. They include an independent commission and the responsibility to report findings and corrective measures back to the worker involved. Make sure the investigation is done by an employee of the commission, not some other nebulous person. It would be a tremendous step forward to ensuring that harassment in a workplace ceases.

Mr. Speaker: 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

[*Translation*]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bank of Canada recently published a special newsletter issue on Canada's 125th anniversary. It says that Canada has become what is called the first international nation in the world and that this remarkable cultural diversity should be viewed as a source of strength and national pride.

I am in complete agreement with that and urge the members of this House to keep working at making this cultural mosaic even better by making full use of the varied resources at our disposal. Canada is a country where every one has the right and the duty to make their difference known.

* * *

[*English*]

PESTICIDE CONTAINER RECYCLING

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers in co-operation with agri-chemical companies, the Crop Protection Institute, federal and provincial governments and rural municipalities are speaking with action to promote environmental stewardship of the land.

One excellent example is a program where farmers bring their used pesticide containers to collection sites where they are recycled into products such as fence posts and reinforcing bars.

The University of Guelph Centre for Toxicology has tested these products and found them to be totally safe to humans and the environment.

Just a few years ago, up to 5 million chemical containers were used on farms annually. Today, in some parts of the country, up to 80 per cent of these are being returned by farmers to the sites for recycling.

This week collection sites are being set up in the maritimes and Quebec. Through the efforts of farmers and the Crop Protection Institute, what was once a disposal problem has been turned into an environmentally and economically viable solution.

* * *

CANADIAN OLYMPIC COINS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, in 1976 the Government of Canada to finance the Montreal Olympics issued $5 and $10 coins. These coins were guaranteed to be worth everything one paid for them, were always to be a good investment and were certified to be worth their face value.

The profit on the coins was retained by the government and the surplus earned on the sale of the coins was turned over to finance the games.

Again in 1988 in Calgary, the government did the same thing. The government issued $10 and $20 silver coins. The promise was the same. The coins would always be worth their face value.

These coins cannot be cashed. No one will cash them. Coin dealers will give 50 cents on the $1 for these coins. I suggest that something be done to honour Canada's reputation before our coinage becomes worthless.

* * *

CANADA 125 CELEBRATIONS

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, it is exciting to see that so many Canadians are in the mood to celebrate Canada's 125th birthday next week.

In my riding of Hamilton Mountain, a Canada 125 party I recently hosted was attended by more than 500 people.

This is a great country and we have much to celebrate.

One thing has puzzled and disturbed me and many of my constituents who have heard the song *Listen to the Land*, which has been chosen as the Canada 125 song. The song is very pretty but the lyrics do not contain the

word "Canada". In fact, there is nothing in the lyrics to signify the song is about Canada. It could be about any country in the world or if it were still national, a great VIA Rail commercial.

It was the Minister of Communications who organized the contest to choose this song and provided the $10,000 award. I wonder if the minister would agree to have the word "Canada" inserted in the lyrics before July 1, Canada's birthday.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you, Mr. Speaker, and everyone in the House, and indeed all Canadians a very happy Canada Day.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Ricardo Lopez (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague from Sarnia—Lambton did yesterday, I want to stress the importance of this seventh annual Occupational Health and Safety Week, which continues until this coming Saturday, June 27.

We must not seek a competitive edge and increased productivity at the expense of the health and safety of our workers. They are our most precious resource. We must be as inventive and vigilant in protecting our employees as in preserving other vital interests. Health and safety also influence the level of prosperity and quality of life achieved by Canadians.

Labour Canada has the mandate to develop progressive policies to ensure that workers and managers carry out their occupational health and safety obligations toward each other. The Minister of Labour met with his provincial and territorial counterparts two months ago to look at the possibility of further harmonizing Canadian legislation in this area. All agreed action was urgently needed and will be paying closer attention to this national issue.

As members of Parliament, we too should exercise our influence to support any initiative aimed at improving regulations dealing for instance with building safety, dangerous substances or the handling and storage of materials. On the occasion of the Occupational Health and Safety Week—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time is up.

S. O. 31

SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DAY

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, a very popular French singer, Yves Duteil, was saying in his song *La langue de chez nous*, that French is "a melodious language, with wonderful words which flow through history".

On the eve of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, French-speaking people have good reasons to be proud. French Canadians are no longer alone in celebrating their national day. They are now joined by a growing number of francophiles like me whose mother tongue is not French. We had the good fortune of learning it and sharing it with our families.

We celebrate with pride this Canadian heritage. This is why I wish to all my friends and constituents, and all Quebecers, a merry and festive Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

* * *

[*English*]

ATLANTIC SALMON

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): While there appears to be broad and instinctive support in Canada for the concept of native self-government, there are a great many Canadians who are concerned about what that concept will ultimately mean in terms of practical applications.

Nowhere do these concerns exist more currently than among those who are committed to the conservation, indeed the preservation, of the Atlantic salmon. This magnificent resource has been declining under serious pressure by all users for many years. Despite conservation measures on all sides which have been introduced recently, the continued use of gill-nets by many native people constitutes a serious ongoing threat to the salmon's future.

Surely, the fundamental principle of self-government is one of responsibility and self-control. It is in that context that I call upon native fishermen to consider their own interests and obligations with respect to the Atlantic salmon and to voluntarily abandon gill-netting as some bands have already done in favour of a less destructive method of exercising their fishing rights.

The salmon is a symbol of our environmental integrity. Let it also become a symbol of responsible self-government by all Canadians.

* * *

TRADING CARDS

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): The Minister of National Revenue said he would stop the importation of mass murderer trading cards which outline the grisly actions of over 100 serial killers. He has failed.

These cards are currently being sold to children and adults in stores across Canada. They tell children, for example, how one man raped and killed four women, removed portions of their corpses as trophies, dressed their bodies in underclothes from his collection and photographed them.

Our obscenity laws are out of date. I call on the Minister of Justice to amend the Criminal Code along the lines of the Supreme Court Butler decision to deal with the presence in Canada of violent and sexually violent materials, not just their importation.

Consensual sex itself is not obscene, but violence, murder, degradation and dehumanization is, with or without sex.

What will the government do about the violent images that have become an ordinary part of our children's lives?

* * *

CANADIAN SIKH COMMUNITY

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): I have a letter from the World Sikh Organization of Canada referring to the National Alliance of Canadian Sikhs. I would like to quote from that letter: "The interference from the minister of multiculturalism in our community is truly appalling. Such an act is common in the Third World, but in a civilized country like Canada it should not happen. It undermines our credibility as a nation."

• (1410)

"The World Sikh Organization has represented Sikhs since 1984 without any grants or subsidies, either provincial or federal. This in itself is proof that we are truly representative of our community. Sikhs believe in the World Sikh Organization enough that they are willing to pay from their pockets to keep us running".

"After spending $130,000 of taxpayers' money, Mr. Weiner calls the alliance the principal organization of Sikhs. This is an insult to our community. We are being approached by Sikhs in all walks of life to seek your support to advise the minister of multiculturalism to stop his unwarranted interference". It is signed by Ram Chahal.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, on this eve of Quebec day and, shortly, Canada Day, I wish all my constituents in Abitibi merry celebrations.

May these celebrations be evidence of fraternity and unity, allowing us to share our pride of being Quebecers and Canadians. Filled with pride for our identity, let us look toward the future with confidence and optimism.

* * *

[*English*]

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, every two hours in Canada a woman dies from breast cancer. More than 14,000 Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and more than 5,000 will lose their lives to this disease.

Despite these grim statistics, many questions remain about the disease such as, what causes it, how best to detect it and how best to treat it.

I therefore welcome last week's breast cancer report by status of women sub-committee which calls on governments, the medical community and the general public to answer these questions. Finding these answers must become a national goal and a national challenge because breast cancer affects not only women, but also their families, communities and indeed the whole country.

I urge the government to adopt the principles of the sub-committee report on breast cancer and to support my private member's motion which calls on the government to take effective action against breast cancer.

* * *

SHOP CANADA DAY

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the initiative of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, its president, Dick Dolphin, its executive director, Rebecca Johnson, and all of their out-shopping committee and thanks to the members of this House for their gracious consent, Saturday, July 4, 1992 has been proclaimed Shop Canada Day.

This is a great opportunity for all retailers, large and small, in Canada through advertising to invite their customers to shop at home on July 4. Let me suggest to all retailers in this country that they run a trailer in all their advertisements reminding Canadians to shop on July 4 in Canada.

Today, I will be asking Eaton's and Simpsons, the largest retailers in Canada, to incorporate that in their advertisements.

This is a great opportunity for all Canadians to work together to make Shop Canada Day a success and make all Canadians think about shopping at home.

Let us protect Canadian industries. Let us protect our retailers in Canada. Above all, let us protect those jobs that those retail industries will bring to our country.

* * *

MILTON POST OFFICE

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, there was a time when members of Parliament had a lot to say about the affairs of the post office.

In most rural areas the post office was the one direct and visual link between the people and the Government of Canada. Naturally MPs took strong notice of constituents' concerns regarding postal issues. Most rural MPs still do. Certainly I do.

Canada Post has been a Crown corporation since 1981, operating increasingly at arm's length from government. Canada Post officials say they have removed politics from the post office.

Nevertheless, the people in rural and small-town Canada still expect their MPs to be able to do something and influence decisions regarding the post office. That is why 650 residents of Milton have written to me during the past week with a plea that I save their post office.

I took that plea to officials of Canada Post who listened but who will not budge from their unpopular conversion policy. In the case of Milton, a centrally located and convenient post office will be replaced by an inconveniently located RPO on the edge of town.

People in Milton are mad and dissatisfied and I urge Canada Post to reconsider this bad decision.

* * *

DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, when Bill C-22, the amendment to the Patent Act, was passed in 1987, the government and the multinational drug companies pledged to create jobs and to hold down drug prices.

They have done neither. They no longer talk about the promised 3,000 research jobs which have not materialized. In fact 700 jobs have been lost in drug manufacturing. The cost of drugs has risen faster than any other component of health care costs.

Where do the Liberals stand on Bill C-91 tabled in this House today that will kill the uniquely Canadian generic drug industry? Their consumer spokesperson stated this morning that he supported the prices review board which approved all these inflationary drug prices and increases for multinational drug companies.

Who is the chief spokesperson and lobbyist for the multinational drug companies? None other than Judy Erola, former Liberal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. That is like making the shepherd the spokesperson for the wolves.

* * *

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, while women professionals have made great strides in establishing their abilities in a number of professions, they have been less successful in achieving substantial progress in the engineering field.

The proposal to build institutions for women offenders across Canada provides a unique opportunity to address this problem and encourage women engineers and architects.

My proposal is that women engineers and architects be given special consideration when selecting professional services for the design and construction of these institutions for women.

I urge the Solicitor General to take careful note of this request and act upon it. Otherwise women engineers and architects will not achieve the advances they deserve.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, Parliament rises today and will remain in recess until such time as Your Honour calls us back for matters relating to the Constitution, whether it be a referendum or other business dealing with proposals.

I say to every member in this House and to every Canadian that this is a time of reality and a time of coming to grips with yet another challenge in Canadian history. It should be looked at as another challenge because we have had many in the past.

From now until such time as we return, let us consider the examples set by great statesmen like Baldwin and Lafontaine in the years leading up to Confederation, George-Etienne Cartier and Macdonald, the Fathers of Confederation in 1867, and all responsible MPs who have sat in this House over the years.

Let us also remember, as we come down to the constitutional discussions this summer and fall, that common sense, decency, fairness, flexibility, the love of nationhood, and loyalty and dedication to Canada must stand foremost and out front.

That should be the objective of each and every one of us in this Parliament of Canada as we work together to try to blend a good constitutional arrangement for the future of Canada.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, the people of Sarnia—Lambton have always exhibited three basic qualities: optimism, confidence and pride.

In our community, the discussions on the Constitution have been no different. First and foremost, my constituents are proud to be Canadians. The deliberations under the Sarnia—Lambton constituent assembly are a good example.

My constituents are also optimistic that a constitutional deal can be reached. They are confident that in the end, we will pull together as a people and as a country.

Today, on behalf of my constituents, I rise to express thanks to all parties involved, especially to the Prime Minister and the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. I thank them for their unrelenting resolve and leadership in reaching a negotiated settlement.

To the provinces, aboriginal groups and other participants, I also thank them for their commitment and determination for bringing about meaningful and lasting constitutional change.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO HOUSE OF COMMONS PAGES

Mr. Speaker: I would like to make a statement about our pages.

All members will agree that these young people have diligently fulfilled their duty over the year. Their dedication and hard work reflect well on the rest of our Canadian youth. Parliamentary pages are the ambassadors of youth on the Hill and they served it well.

[*English*]

I am sure hon. members will want to join me in thanking the parliamentary pages whose term will end shortly.

As they prepare to leave we extend our best wishes, and perhaps some of them will one day return to the Chamber to sit among us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I also wish these young people every success.

[*English*]

Every one of us has enjoyed them. They have worked hard and have learned a lot about Canada in meeting members from across the land.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

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

Since this is the last day of the session and there is still a great deal of uncertainty about the constitutional future of this country, could the Prime Minister give the House the assurance that any agreement his government will try to conclude will contain two very important components that were supported by this House? I am referring to a strong economic union in Canada and the preservation and promotion of the linguistic duality of our country, two aspects that were emphasized by Parliament and which we absolutely want to see in the constitutional agreement we hope to obtain very shortly.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs happens to be working on obtaining these two provisions, among other things. I am referring to the two clauses relating to economic union and linguistic duality, which would in any event be major clauses in any constitutional agreement.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister on the subject of a strong economic union in Canada. Constitutional negotiation cannot be a one-way street going in the direction of devolution. If we want to face a strong future for all Canada, we need to make sure that the movement of people, goods, capital and services will be protected and enhanced in the new Constitution.

Could the Prime Minister give a clear assurance to the House of Commons that the notion of a strong economic union to strengthen the federation will be part of the negotiations and the results of the negotiations in the days to come?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, we have been seeking to obtain this kind of a clause precisely because of the difficulties my hon. friend has indicated that he encountered himself 10 years ago when we failed to incorporate this kind of clause in the Constitution in 1981–82.

I say that recognizing that my hon. friend tried to have it achieved. Unfortunately it was rejected at that time. We have made some improvements and we are going to try to make certain that the concept of an economic union will be accepted.

Obviously there is something bizarre when there are fewer trade barriers existing in Europe among 12 sovereign countries than there are among 10 Canadian provinces and two territories.

Canadians seem to be all in favour of liberalization of trade outside but not within our own boundaries. It does not make a great deal of sense that a company from Toronto would, for example, have to dig up bricks that were put in a street in the Outaouais, in Hull, because they did not meet certain provincial requirements. This is destructive of productivity. It is destructive of enhancing our competitiveness.

The provinces have to understand themselves. They talk about one Canada. One way they can strengthen one Canada is by lowering trade barriers within Canada.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with the Prime Minister. It is what we have always said. It would have been more logical to have an economic union within Canada before having one with the United States and Mexico.

In order to achieve this goal that we all share in the House of Commons, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question. Does he agree with the opposition that if the people of Canada were to be consulted in a national referendum they would tell the premiers and those who oppose a real economic union in Canada that they are wrong, that we need one in Canada and that the best way is to consult the Canadian people in a national referendum?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why the government brought in legislation in respect of a referendum was precisely to keep open for Parliament that option in the event that the premiers or the first ministers failed to agree on methods of strengthening Canada and strengthening our Constitution including the economic union.

As my hon. friend knows, I have not set aside at all any of the possibilities. I will be meeting with the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, with Mr. Tellier and with others over the next couple of days. I will be consulting with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the NDP. We will take whatever actions are appropriate to do what most of us in this House—not all, there are a few exceptions—want to do and what most Canadians want to do.

They want to keep Canada and they want the economy modernized. As well they want the Constitution modernized, brought up to date for 1992.

Mr. Chrétien: They want to be consulted.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says that they want to be consulted. Indeed I think he would acknowledge there has been historic consultation in the process so far. No doubt we could do more, but most of all the objective is to strengthen Canada, to maintain Canada, and to promote and strengthen the unity of Canada.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, this side of the House shares with the Prime Minister the desire to see a true economic union in Canada. It has been an essential element in our position on the Constitution from the very beginning.

So it has been for many governments in the past. There have been governments after governments, not just 10 years ago but for most of Canada's 125 years, that have asked for or sought a true economic union in our country.

Could the Prime Minister state whether that is a basic position of his government on completing the constitutional talks? Is he committing his government to that requirement? If so, could he tell the House which of the provinces have now agreed to a true economic union in our country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I have indicated that many people including the Leader of the Opposition have regretted the fact that among the weaknesses of the 1981–82 arrangement was the absence of this kind of economic union clause.

When we brought forward our proposals, I think on September 23 or September 28 last, they contained recommendations in regard to an economic union. They then found their way into the Beaudoin–Dobbie report. We have been building on this, trying to persuade the provinces of not only the value but the indispensable nature of lowering barriers to trade among Canadians.

That has been our objective. The Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and Mr. Tellier are out today doing precisely that.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall that in the Meech Lake proposals there was any such commitment on the part of the government.

Let me ask the Prime Minister this. He himself has drawn attention to the rapidity with which Europe is moving toward a single market. Here in North America this government has committed itself to a North American free trade agreement with enforceable provisions.

Is it his commitment to the Canadian people that in seeking a true economic union in Canada there will be provision for its enforcement through an internal trade tribunal or some other device to ensure compliance with a true economic union in our country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that I certainly would not be opposed in any way to that kind of concept.

I find it very strange indeed that provincial premiers would be asking, for example, for some jurisdiction in international trade. They want to play a larger role in international trade. I can understand their request, but they turn around the next day and are disinclined even to lower barriers from one province to another.

It is a kind of advanced thinking in respect of international trade but very parochial thinking in some cases in regard to trade among provinces in Canada.

My hon. friend says that the Meech Lake proposals did not contain an economic union clause. He is quite right. As he will remember, the premiers met in August 1986 in Edmonton. The premiers requested the Quebec round designed specifically to bring Quebec back into the signing of the Constitution.

This was a course of action that was encouraged by the Leader of the Opposition in December 1984 when he strongly advised me to begin negotiating with Quebec with a view to bringing Quebec back into the Constitution. That is exactly what we sought to do. It was for that reason there was no economic union clause at that time. Obviously this is something we should continue to fight for and it is part and parcel of our constitutional objectives.

* * *

• (1430)

HEALTH CARE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I believe every Canadian is aware of the great crisis our health care system is in, both as we see funding cut back and increased demand.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, given that just before the Canada–U.S. trade deal this government introduced Bill C-22 limiting generic drug availability in this country, why now, just before the NAFTA talks may be concluded, this government insists on increasing the limitations on competition for generic drug companies. Why is this government introducing legislation that would undermine further the ability of provinces and territories to finance their drug plans and subsequently their universal health care system?

I want to ask the government why it has chosen once again to favour multinational corporations over the health care of citizens of this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I announced on January 14 of this year our intention to comply with the proposal in the Dunkel paper on the GATT talks which provided for the elimination of compulsory licences for all member states.

Canada has been out of step with the rest of the world as the only industrialized country which did have a compulsory licensing system. It was the proposal of Mr. Dunkel to see this eliminated as part of the freedom of trade in products based on patents.

We have seen a delay in the GATT negotiations but we believe it is important, since we are in a very competitive world, to attract this type of high quality, high R and D, high value-added investment to Canada and in that way create jobs and economic growth and welfare in Canada. That is important to our country.

It is on that basis that we decided to proceed to eliminate any lack of understanding or lack of confidence that could be perceived and in that way ensure that the $320 million worth of investments that have been committed for Canada would indeed come to Canada.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

This country has seen cutbacks by the federal government to health care that have resulted in a loss of jobs in the health care professions across this country and in health care services.

[*Translation*]

On January 15 the minister said that if the price of drugs increased faster than the rate of inflation this would kill the health insurance system.

Well, that is exactly what happened. According to a report by Green Shield in Ontario, the price of drugs manufactured by multinationals has increased 11.4 per cent since 1987. My question for the minister is this: What will the minister of health do to prevent his predictions from coming true?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think the report to which the leader of the New Democratic Party referred, the Green Shield report, includes the salaries of pharmacists in the price of drugs. I think we should put this report in perspective like all the other reports that have been mentioned.

As for the price of drugs, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology believes that the bill tabled today represents an increase of practically zero per cent for this year and up to 2 per cent by the year 2000. I think the bill tabled today is a commitment.

Furthermore, last week I gave the health ministers the assurance that everything would be done to guarantee a reasonable price, and that is what we did after Bill C–22, a bill the hon. member severely criticized, but in the final instance the hon. member must admit today that the government was right. Canadians know we will apply the same procedures.

As the minister of health, I do not expect prices to increase beyond what is reasonable.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister.

I am surprised that the minister is not concerned that under the current rules the generic drug industry has saved the Canadian health care system $1 billion a year, $1 billion which is so badly needed by the health care system in this country. The provinces of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and British Columbia have already commented that this legislation will cost them hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

The government says it does not have choices in health care. The government does have choices in health care. It is true that the generic drug industry has helped keep prices to the consumer down.

Why does the government insist on supporting multinationals instead of those most vulnerable in our society, the sick and the elderly who need to have reasonable drug prices?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada supports research and development. It is a little different from what she said. Second, I will give her real figures.

Listen to me. The difference between the drug industry, the pharmaceuticals, the innovative drugs and the generic drugs is about $300 million a year; $225 million is for off-patent drugs which will continue tomorrow as today. It means that we have $75 million and half of that $75 million is covered by the health care system. It means about a $30 million increase for all the provinces in Canada.

Do you not believe, Mr. Speaker, that we need to encourage research and development of drugs in Canada for that $30 million? I believe it is a very good deal for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. Ten days ago, the President of Mexico announced in Rio that he would seek to conclude not only a free trade agreement but also a common market with Brazil.

What would the effect of such initiatives be for Canada in its agreement with the United States and Mexico?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, our first objective is to complete negotiations with Mexico and the United States to complete a North American free trade agreement.

If following that there is interest from other countries, whether it is Brazil or Chile, which are two countries that have indicated some interest in this, then that is a step we could contemplate at that time. Our first objective is to complete the negotiations with the United States and Mexico.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the minister is not responding to my question. On the other hand, he is being consistent.

Two weeks ago the Prime Minister was unable to comment on how new country accession would occur within the North American free trade agreement. Three weeks ago the Minister for Science was not aware of the significance of Chile's initiatives with the United States and Mexico. Latin American governments are on the move and it is very clear that this government has lost control of the agenda.

So that Canadians might better judge the Mexican agreement, will the government undertake to provide them, prior to signing NAFTA, with a paper setting out its trade agenda for all of Latin America, if indeed, it has one?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to respond to my hon. friend's questions when he has a question to which I can respond. When he asks hypothetical questions, it is difficult to come up with a response that will meet his requirements.

He asks a question that indicates he is supportive of the North American free trade agreement being completed and being extended to countries like Brazil and Chile. As we have indicated before in this House, there is a good possibility that we might in future negotiations increase the free trade zone to other countries. At this stage it is important for us to simply contemplate the terms of the one negotiation before going further.

Clearly a free trade zone that encompassed these other countries that are going through a reform similar to what Mexico has done do deserve the support of countries like Canada.

* * *

• (1440)

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Earlier today the government tabled legislation which effectively puts an end to compulsory drug licensing in Canada, a system which has saved Canadian consumers up to $1 billion annually on the cost of prescription medications.

At the very time that this government has been lecturing provincial governments about spiralling health care costs, how could it possibly justify introducing legislation which certainly will lead to higher health care costs in the provinces?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the report of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, PMPRB, was tabled in Parliament earlier today. It reports that last year, as in the previous five years, the price increase for patented medicines was under 3 per cent, 1.5 per cent less than the Consumer Price Index. This shows that the system in place has kept patented medicine prices for which we are responsible from increasing.

Furthermore, the new government policy announced today is that beyond the $1.1 billion in investment obtained since 1987, the increase last year alone of nearly 24 per cent more investment in Canada means $2 billion in investment for Canadian drug companies over the next five years. That means jobs and better medication for people in hospitals. It is a plus for Canada and Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

It is very clear that this government has the support of the multinational drug industry in eliminating compulsory licences in Canada. What is less sure, however, is whether or not this government has the support of the provincial health care ministers in doing the same thing.

I want to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare if he has the support of the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia in eliminating compulsory licences, thereby increasing provincial health care costs.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I informed the ministers of health in Canada about the policy and of course the ministers had questions. I said that during the summer, particularly on the 25th and 26th at the deputy ministers' level, we will have meetings to determine exactly the conditions that the provinces would like to see put in the legislation to be sure that we will have control of the legislation.

The provinces will support it when they are sure that the recommendations they made will be considered. But by and large, we do not make recommendations before the legislation is tabled in this country.

* * *

BREAST IMPLANTS

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, we had questions last week about information the Ministry of National Health and Welfare had in 1989 calling for action on breast implants and this government's failure to act.

I have in my hand a document which shows clear alarm in the department of medical devices in 1987, five years ago, five years of pain and suffering for women with defective implants.

Will the minister admit the failure of his ministry to act for Canadian women facing the need for implants or for those more particularly who already have had implants?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I could provide as many documents as the member does, but I will not because all the documents we have on breast implants have already been tabled.

We know the way the department works. I will answer at the same time the fallacies raised by the member for Hamilton East last week about that. I would like to correct what she said.

The Department of National Health and Welfare makes decisions at the bureaucratic level on whether or not to accept certain kinds of implants. The decision is not made by the minister. At no time were documents presented to the then minister to make a decision. It was made by the officials of the department, on scientific evidence, as it always is done.

All documents are provided to the people who make the decision at the departmental level. So do not say that the documents go to the minister for a decision. It never happened.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I never said that the document went to the minister. I said his department had failed. I asked him to admit that his department had failed.

Last Friday, the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration said that this government did not want to deal with the past but wanted to deal with the present and the future. Yet we have women in provinces in this country today who are unable to get the help they need to deal with failed implants. We have had not one, not two, but three Ministers of National Health and Welfare, successive ministers, who have failed to act while these women suffered. Will the minister tell us that he will ensure a woman's ability to get implants removed without having to depend on her own pocket-book and not depending on whether or not her implant was cosmetic?

Second, will the minister tell us what arrangements were made at last week's provincial health ministers meeting to ensure that Canadian women will get the care they so badly need?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that the silicone gel breast implant was removed from the market last January and the ban was imposed and maintained since last April.

Ms. Langan: But not on our bodies.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): I want to deal with that issue in the best way I can. If the member wants to listen to me, that is exactly what we are trying to do. We have put forward different studies since April. She knows that the report I received from Dr. Baines' committee asked for many recommendations which we are trying to follow in order to give women in Canada the best guarantee on any kind of breast implant. As long as we do not have the assurance, we will not permit its use again.

In the meantime, women who have already had breast implants will be asked to report to their physician. We are looking to the physicians and doctors offices as the best way to answer any questions women have. This is what we want to do and I know it is what the member wants done. If the member wants to work with me and the department, we will certainly give her the answer. Once again, it is not in the way the member works that we will find the answer.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade and concerns the negotiations with the United States and Mexico.

On May 12, in answer to a question from my colleague from Saint-Léonard, the minister told the House that he was trying to improve the Canadian position in the textile and clothing sectors.

He said: "The basis on which we are negotiating —is to have a special access to the United States market which would be greater than the access provided under the free trade agreement".

Has the minister been able to obtain better access for the textile and clothing sectors?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend is aware of the status of the negotiations. We are not satisfied nor is the clothing sector satisfied with the current state of the negotiations. That is why we continue to press for greater access than has been offered at this point.

We will continue to do that, working closely in consultation with both the clothing and the textile sectors in order to ensure that there is balance also between these two segments of industry which are so closely interrelated.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the minister says he is not satisfied with the current state of negotiations. He knows that the mistakes that he made in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement are coming back to haunt him today.

I would ask the minister to state categorically that he will not sign a North American free trade agreement which would mean a further restriction of Canada's ability to export clothing to the United States.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend refers to the FTA. I think that there are some segments in the clothing sector that have made considerable strides in developing the improved access that they have from the FTA into increased business. There are a number of companies in his region that would qualify for that description.

We will continue to improve as best we can the access that is there, as I said working closely with the industry as well as with the textile sector, which is also an important industry in his province and in that way try to get the best possible deal that we can for those two industries.

* * *

• (1450)

NCC GREENBELT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works. The greenbelt lands here in the nation's capital were created in the 1960s by the federal government to protect environmentally sensitive lands, to limit urban sprawl, and to enhance the nation's capital. Recent actions by the National Capital Commission have Nepean and other area municipalities concerned that there is movement away from the original objectives for these lands.

Does this government plan on maintaining the *status quo* on all greenbelt lands or are these lands in fact up for sale piece by piece?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to inform the member for Nepean, whose interest I greatly appreciate in these matters, that the NCC as she probably knows is conducting a major review on the greenbelt to re-examine and redefine the use of the lands, and to ensure these lands continue to enhance the quality of life of the national capital into the next century.

Any changes that will be made on a case by case basis will be looked at closely and all levels of government and affected residents will be consulted. I can assure her there is no drastic change contemplated. We continue to exercise the most careful stewardship over these lands.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. I have here a letter which clearly reflects the wishes of the majority of the people in this region and it states: "We do not want the greenbelt lands severed and sold for residential and commercial development". Can the minister give a clear undertaking to this House here today that this will not happen in the national capital region?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly identify with those sentiments. I want to assure my colleague again that any such steps affecting these lands will be taken after close examination on a case by case basis, after close consultation with all levels of government, and with adjacent owners.

I see no likelihood of any of these lands being severed and sold for residential purposes except in perhaps very exceptional circumstances. I certainly do not endorse such a policy.

OLYMPIC COINS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance and Privatization. The government has known for a long time the banks will not accept the Olympic coins issued at the time of the 1976 Olympics or the 1988 Olympics for their face value or in any way at all.

These coins were issued, as the minister knows, on the undertaking by the government that the coins were true coins of the realm, they would always be worth their face value. They were issued at a premium but they would always be worth their face value as a good investment. Is the government prepared to redeem these coins at face value?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows because he has been kept right up to date, this matter is actively being pursued by the Department of Finance. I can assure him however that the stability of the Canadian currency is not based on the value of Olympic coins.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and relates to the fact that the deputy minister negotiated with aboriginal nations in British Columbia a number of co-management agreements in the fishing industry. The deputy then reneged on those agreements and has refused to meet with the aboriginal nations concerned.

Would the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans order the deputy minister to go to British Columbia to meet with those aboriginal nations, to complete those fisheries co-management agreements, and then honour them?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the assumptions or suggestions of fact contained in that question.

The Deputy Minister of Fisheries and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Fisheries were both in British Columbia last week. They have done a first-class job of conciliating and dealing with the various conflicting interests in the fishery in British Columbia, including the aboriginal peoples.

They will meet with aboriginal leaders from time to time as that is required. I certainly have no intention of issuing such instructions on such unspecifics. The member's question lacks all specificity and all decency and all truth.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, perhaps to offer some specifics, the minister will be well aware that the Shuswap Nation in the interior of British Columbia has operated for the past 10 years in good faith with the co-operative management programs of the department.

They just learned from the deputy minister that their fisheries program which is funding for fish stock production and enhancement activities will be cut by in excess of $1 million this fiscal year. This will put their entire fisheries program in jeopardy and make it impossible for their hatchery, which was a training hatchery, to be able to continue.

On those two specifics would the minister indicate a willingness at least to meet with representatives of the Shuswap Nation to discuss these cuts and the implications this would have in terms of their future co-management production?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately or fortunately, we have disciplines imposed upon us with respect to the amount of money that is available for various purposes so we cannot always spend all of the money on good causes that we would like to spend.

However, we do not spend our time straddling every issue. It is a miracle to see how the NDP are such expert straddlers. On the one hand they are supporters of the aboriginal interests and on the other hand whenever there is any complaint from any other conflicting interest or the fishery, they write to me and support the other conflicting interest too. Get your act together.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

HOUSING

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

It has been encouraging to note that housing industry activity in Canada has been increasing in recent months. For example, at the end of the last period, May 31, for the first five months this year housing starts were just over 52,000, whereas a year ago at this time they were under 40,000. We have a long way to go to recover the pre-recession levels of housing activity in this country, but we have a good start.

I would like to ask the minister if the measures which were introduced to stimulate housing earlier this year have had an impact and, if so, which of the two, the 95 per cent mortgage or the RRSP funding, has been most effective.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to inform my colleague that there is some good news from the housing sector these days. There is more to be done of course but some of these measures have had a noticeable effect.

I guess the most encouraging one would be the 5 per cent down payment provision, the first-home buyer's loan provision, which since February has resulted in about 30,000 such purchases, about 1,000 in Nova Scotia and about 800 in the province of New Brunswick. The encouraging thing is that a survey done by Canada Mortgage and Housing shows that about 75 per cent of these transactions would not have occurred without this program.

Another thing that is encouraging is the budgetary measure involving the RRSPs which also has been positive but which is not as easy to quantify.

Of course the most beneficial policy of all, as the House knows, has been the unprecedented low rate of inflation and interest rates which have contributed greatly to housing in this country and have made homes much more affordable.

FISHERIES

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

On May 4 at the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans the minister stated a number of times that the safety and effectiveness of wharfs was his top priority. Since that time little has been done in my riding of Egmont or, indeed, in Prince Edward Island.

Given the serious state of disrepair of wharfs like Tignish Run and Miminigash and the need for dredging at wharfs like Howards Cove and Milligan's Shore, can the minister assure the fishermen at these ports that emergency work will be carried out immediately?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman's question sounded like a line from an Irish Rover song. Luckily I happen to have on hand a report on the Howards Cove, Miminigash, Milligan's Shore, and Tignish wharfs. I must be psychic.

We have 90 projects at over 50 harbours in P.E.I. and we will spend in excess of $2.6 million. I do not have much time. At Howards Cove the harbour basin dredging has begun. At Miminigash the breakwater reconstruction project is in the engineering stage. A public tender should be called in August.

Your colleagues are shouting me down so I have to stop.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I probably should insist on this going on the Order Paper but the hon. member has a very short supplemental.

• (1500)

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the very generous leprechaun, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I am sure he is aware that a few years ago a number of fishermen lost their lives at Alberton because of the lack of dredging and the lack of response to requests to have dredging done. I am sure like myself the minister would not like to see that action recur.

Can the minister say today before the House rises—he can give me the date after Question Period—when this work will be done?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, with reference to Milligan's Shore, we are hoping to fund the dredging required there within the budget of the region. We will have a survey of the required dredging available by the end of June.

A reconstruction project at the Tignish co-op wharf would cost in excess of $2 million and there is little probability I can fund it in the near future, unless somebody provides me with more money than it looks at the moment they are going to provide me.

* * *

SENIORS INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In February 1988 the government made a commitment to spend $120 million over five years on seniors independence programs. After five years we see the government has spent just over half of what it had promised.

Why has the government cut back on these independence programs? I ask the minister if the programs will be continued and if the funding will be continued.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, our government respects its commitments. This independence program for seniors has been supported for nearly five years. So that groups could present projects that could be spread over two or three years, I asked Treasury Board to carry forward $3.5 million until 1993-94. There have been no cuts in program funding. We have wonderful programs and projects and we will always continue to support the energy, assertiveness and will to act of Canada's seniors.

[*English*]

CREDIT CARDS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The bank rate now stands at 5.91 per cent.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rodriguez: The average credit card interest rate is 17.5 per cent, more than three times the bank rate.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Rodriguez: Is the minister prepared to call in the heads of Canada's largest financial institutions and instruct them to lower the interest rates on credit cards, or is he prepared to let them enjoy the music of: "Oh, what a friend we have in Pierre"?

Mr. Shields: Don't borrow on your credit card.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, although the hon. member did not mention it, I think that the committee on consumer and corporate affairs will table its report on credit cards today. I received a preliminary copy of this document.

I find it too bad that my colleague from Nickel Belt again wanted to be the black sheep by not signing the report, which could have been unanimous. I will have to study both reports, the one from the committee and the one from the hon. member for Nickel Belt. I will soon have the time to examine the recommendations made to the government. I think that the committee did an excellent job and we will be back shortly to respond to its recommendations.

* * *

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. John Burdett, member of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of South Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

POINT OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to ask leave of the House. During Question Period the minister said that he had tabled all documentation regarding breast implants.

I believe the document that I referred to has not been tabled and I would ask for leave or unanimous consent to table it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): I do not have any problem with that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There seems to be consent for the document to be tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

COPYRIGHT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Frank Oberle (for the Minister of Communications) moved that Bill C-88, an Act to amend the Copyright Act, be now read the second time and referred to a legislative committee of the Departmental envelope.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon on this bill to amend the Copyright Act. You know that my colleague, the Minister of Communications and myself share different responsibilities regarding intellectual property and I follow very closely this whole issue of copyright and this legislation at second reading today.

However, before discussing this bill in detail I would like to say a word about the context of this bill. Four years ago the members of this House passed a reform of the Copyright Act which had not been amended in any significant way since 1921. In so doing we confirmed the judicial recognition of the exclusive right of the author to authorize the use of his work and to profit from it, as is fitting, since the very object of the legislation is to protect creative activities.

Evidently the copyright concept has changed considerably in the last 20 years. Originally it only included printed works but technology largely contributed to expand this concept. However, technical progress has not only changed the concept and the scope of copyright but also the relation between the creator and the user. It is with this reality in mind that our government undertook to revise the Copyright Act. So while having the fundamental objective of protecting creators the legislation also tries to create a fair balance between the parties.

The bill that will be read for the second time today reflects the efforts made by this government to ensure that the importance of copyright and intellectual property in general be adequately recognized. Among other things this bill changes the definition of musical work.

Under this technical change, any work of music or musical composition, with or without words, is musical work.

[*English*]

As previously defined a musical work consisted of any combination of melody and harmony, or either of them, printed, reduced to writing or otherwise graphically produced or reproduced.

This definition has a very limited scope as it could effectively reduce a musical work to a simple piece of paper. This purely technical amendment is necessary to clarify a situation that has proven to be unfair to authors and composers of musical works.

[*Translation*]

In this sense the amendments tabled by the government this morning complement the ones that were made following the signature of the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States on February 13, 1989.

• (1510)

Indeed, I remind the hon. members that under article 2006 both countries had to amend their Copyright Act regarding cable systems. This provision, as you will recall, provided for a right of remuneration for any retransmission of distant radio or television signals. This right came into effect in Canada in January 1990.

At the same time, Canada made other amendments to the Copyright Act which include substituting the right to broadcast for the right to communicate with the public through telecommunication. Indeed, it had become urgent and essential to redefine musical work. Thanks to this new definition, SOCAN will be better able to collect on behalf of authors and composers royalties for performance and communication of their musical work.

[*English*]

The tabling of this technical amendment demonstrates the commitment of the Government of Canada to ensure, with the least possible delay, fair and equitable compensation to song writers and composers for the use of their musical works.

[*Translation*]

Consequently, cable system companies will have to pay SOCAN retransmission rights for specialized and payable services such as Much Music, First Choice, Family Channel and others.

[*English*]

As for other kinds of uses, it is the Copyright Board that will decide the amount of money to be paid after full and open hearings in which the users, as well as creators, have the chance to explain their points of view.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, this bill reflects through various provisions the distinction made in the act between the right for the performance in public of works as well as the communication to the public by telecommunication of works. These new provisions will only take effect once the bill receives royal proclamation.

[*English*]

In conclusion, this amendment is designed to bring immediate benefit to Canadian authors and composers. I would also point out that proceeding with this amendment now will in no way delay this government's commitment to bringing forward the proposed phase 2 amendments to the Copyright Act.

Phase 2 drafting is proceeding as planned and the consultative committee that I announced with the Minister of Communications on March 27, 1991 will start working as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

This is a technical bill which will enable us to regulate a situation which is often referred to as a hole in the legislation. It will enable authors and composers to get a fair treatment before we get to all the details contained in the amendments to the Copyright Act.

I therefore ask my colleagues from both sides of this House to pass this legislation quickly which I think is only fair and reasonable. It will not deprive anybody of any right, but will rather regulate a situation that was deplorable.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I want to say to the minister opposite who has just deposited the bill, along with his colleague the Minister of Communications, that he gave a very clear and succinct perspective to a drafting error that was committed.

There are not many people out there who are interested in copyright. In any event, the assistant House leader knows all about copyright, but I can tell him that there are not a great number of people out there who are totally interested in intellectual property in this refined small sector although it is a vital and important sector. As a matter of fact I think it brings in about $8 million at this moment. It is of importance to a small and select and very important sector of our society.

I am really very pleased to speak to this bill and support the amendment that is being proposed after we have had hearings. I was most pleased to hear the minister say, right up front and very straightforwardly, that this technical error that was committed will be addressed in committee with a full hearing of interested and involved parties. This will include restaurants and cable people and I believe a whole series of bars, et cetera, which are concerned with the economic impact of this bill. As well, there is the effect that it might have on some legal proceedings that we have been told are a paragon of neutrality in terms of the way this bill has been written. That comes from the department staff and I would believe that they would not mislead us with respect to the concerns of the television people about their proceedings before the court.

It is a very short bill. It is not going to answer the huge second phase that so many people have been waiting for since 1987. This is not part of the exemption section that we need for many other aspects of copyright or intellectual property.

As I said, the bill is to correct a drafting error or an omission that was made when amendments to the implementation of retransmission rights were before the House as part of changes made after the 1988 free trade agreement. This technical drafting error has to do with the redefinition of a musical work. It changes the 1924 definition that did not include the transmission right itself, only what you printed on paper, in essence.

So unfortunately we have been penalizing copyright owners and creators. They have not been able to earn royalties on some of their songs that are carried by cable systems because they are linked to satellites or to other delivery systems into our homes, as different from off-air or non-broadcast things.

To give an example, composer Hagood Hardy's work, *The Homecoming* or Luc Plamondon's songs which are carried on CTV or *Quatre Saisons* and are very popular, receive a performance royalty. Bryan Adams, who is a popular English-speaking song writer, if you look at what happens to his works with Rogers Cable or Videotron, on the one hand, versus PBS and NBC on the other, he earns a royalty on a cable retransmitted distant signal, and for those in copyright land they know that as a retransmission right. So that seems to be okay.

However, Roch Voisine, who is, by the way, at the top of the charts in France, an incredible earner for Canada and a very productive song writer as well as performer, if you look at his *Héléne* and *Pourtant* and *Avant de partir* which are carried on Videotron by Musiqueplus or on CF-Cable by Much Music, earns no royalties. I think anyone who listens to music and appreciates the intellectual vigour and the competence that is displayed in this intellectual property, would understand that this is not fair. They would expect this artist to earn a decent living out of the creative works that are appreciated by so many people.

The reason he is not collecting royalties is because of the unclear wording that is in the Copyright Act, and so this is why this small minor amendment has been brought in.

There are cable companies that are arguing that they are following the Copyright Act which defines musical works as "those printed, reduced to printing or otherwise graphically produced or reproduced". It is sound on the telecommunications aspect. Well, you and I know that telecommunications today is the most pervasive force in our society and that is how it is transmitted, and it's only fair that we should make that correction.

I support what we are doing here and hope that this omission that will be addressed here in this Bill C-88 is favourably received and will move forward so that non-broadcasting services or satellite-to-cable services, which are being carried presently by Much Music, Musiqueplus, First Choice, Premier Choix YTV, Le Canal Famille, Super Channel and Super Écran will now have to pay copyright royalties to the rightful copyright owner, be it the composer, the author or the music publisher.

• (1520)

The position of our party is that we give serious and positive consideration to this bill and that it be referred to committee; that we hear from all of those who are impacted upon by this bill. We believe that because of past drafting errors that this committee study is key. It would be our hope that there will not have any further errors of this nature.

There are retail stores, restaurants, bars and the CCTA so I would suggest that when we are looking at the use of radio and big screen TV videos we will hear from them and know what the issues are so that we can come back and perhaps make any types of changes that will be required and then pass this bill.

In the interests of immediate benefits to those artists, we are told that if this bill goes through on time they would start at the beginning of September to place their requests before the Copyright Board and that payments could start as early as January 1993.

With that, I hope we will have these hearings soon so that we can be finished with this error that was committed and has caused undue hardship.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, I rise to indicate to the House our support of Bill C–88 in the second reading stage and to urge speedy passage by the House so that this bill can go to committee and be properly examined.

I would indicate that the bill before us is to some measure a compliment to the parliamentary co-operation that has occurred on all sides of the House.

A few months ago when the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture were meeting we had representations from SOCAN, the organization representing composers. The technical fault in the copyright legislation of 1987–88 was pointed out to us. At that stage I said: "Well why do we not try for a quick little amendment? I am sure we can get all–party approval". All of us at the committee thought at that time that it was obviously a mistake or an oversight by those who had drafted the copyright legislation in 1987 and that with the full agreement and co–operation of all parties in the House we could quickly change it.

We have all worked together on this to ensure that the bill before us is brought to the House so that we could correct this mistake in the copyright legislation. However, things are not always that simple and the amendments that we saw seemed to suggest that it has opened the field to other areas that we did not anticipate when we originally looked at this and heard testimony earlier this year.

Concern has been expressed to us and I am sure to many members of the House regardless of what side they sit on, about the attempt by the composers association at one stage to collect fees from little town fairs. We have had letters from little restaurateurs expressing their concern that they would have to pay copyright fees because they happened to have a radio on and the restaurant is open to the public.

We all agreed that while this flaw in the copyright legislation had to be corrected, we also should listen to the various parties affected by this amendment. Instead of giving it the speedy passage in the House in all stages, all parties agreed that we should have some committee hearings on this and try to straighten out some of the conceptions and perhaps some misconceptions there might be about this bill. For example, we are all happy to note that the organization involved with the country fairs and exhibitions have reached an agreement with SOCAN and that is no longer an issue.

It is important that we attempt to straighten this out in committee and that the report of the committee comes to the House as soon as possible, hopefully for final passage, so that this basic flaw in our copyright legislation can be corrected.

I think this House is in agreement that artists should be remunerated for their intellectual and artistic work.

The copyright legislation had a serious flaw that the cable companies took advantage of. We might add that most broadcasters, in terms of the regular television and radio services, did not take advantage of this loophole and have been paying the royalties.

It was the cable companies that decided to stick to the legal meaning of the law rather than the intent. Therefore, they have escaped paying royalties.

They are making money on other people's work and artistic talents. Those artists, the creators of the compositions, should be remunerated.

What we are doing is correcting this situation to ensure that the artists do have a proper return on their work.

I urge the House to pass Bill C–88 so it will come to committee very quickly so that we can give it serious and in–depth consideration. Then it would come back to the House for third reading. Hopefully, the bill, after committee, will be such that all members of this House can agree to it and therefore give it speedy passage.

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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I think you would find that there would be unanimous consent to admit some travel motions at this time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That five members and one staff of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick, from July 5 to July 8, 1992 to attend the 14th annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees;

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That three members and two staff of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries be authorized to travel to Gaspé, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Moncton and Prince Edward Island during the adjournment of the House between July 15 and August 28, 1992, in order to conduct an evaluation of programs and activities funded under the Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program and the Federal Program for Quebec Fisheries Development.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Further, that five MPs and three staff of the subcommittee on the St. Lawrence Seaway be authorized to travel to Thunder Bay, St. Catharines and Montreal, to hold meetings concerning the competitiveness of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system for a period not exceeding six days while the House is not sitting between June 23 and September 30, 1992.

That notwithstanding any Standing Order of this House, the Chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions for that travel from any envelopes, by filing notice thereof with the Clerk of the Committee, and such substitutions shall be effective for the entire period of travel and should be effective immediately when they are received by the Clerk of the Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Finally, that three members and three staff of the subcommittee on the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General on the recodification of the general part of the Criminal Code be authorized to travel to Canberra, Australia and to Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand from September 8 to September 20, 1992, in order to participate at the 4th International Congress on Criminal Law to be held on recodification of general parts of the Criminal Code as well as to participate in working sessions with the Australian and New Zealand parliamentarians and senior officials.

• (1530)

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I have some concern with reference to what the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader just introduced. I certainly have no difficulty with the travel for examination of the St. Lawrence Seaway as well as the travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick.

I must say that the matter of travelling to Australia and New Zealand to the tune of $54,000 is news to me. This was just handed to me. That seems to be an awful lot of money for a trip that I have no background information on.

With all generosity to my hon. friend, I want to say that I have no difficulty with the three trips in Canada at all. However, before I can give my support to spending $54,492 to go to Australia and New Zealand, I need some information. I do not know what kind of a trip this is. There has been no consultation and for that reason I support the three trips but not the fourth one to Australia.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Maybe I can help the House. Maybe there could be more consultations on the fourth one and the hon. parliamentary secretary could come back to the House.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I concur with the first three motions that have been put to the House. I want to indicate our willingness to co-operate in expediting these motions to see that they are passed immediately this afternoon.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada, as reported (with amendments) by a legislative committee; and on Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When the House started statements by members, there were two minutes left for the hon. member for Surrey North. Does he intend to use them?

Mr. Karpoff: No.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to continue debate on Bill C-26 which is a bill to supposedly improve the Public Service Commission of Canada. It is to be an example to the world and to be an example to other provinces to make sure that the rules of the game are applied properly within the Public Service.

I have great pride in telling you that in my particular riding of Carleton—Gloucester, which is in the national capital region, I would estimate that at least 80 to 90 per cent of the people who work there work either directly or indirectly for the federal government or its agencies. If they do not, they then work for other institutions such as school boards, the provincial government and municipal governments. Therefore, it is a Public Service town. It is rather important that the rules of employment be applied in a proper and correct fashion.

I had the honour to represent the Liberal Party along with my colleague from Ottawa West on the legislative committee that studied the proposed bill of the government. I do commend the government for, after a quarter of a century, addressing the question of Public Service 2000 and looking at a renewal or a rebirth of the Public Service bill. However, I did observe that during the deliberations of the legislative committee there was a rather great amount of impatience on the part of government members to have this bill passed as quickly as possible. This impatience certainly tickled my curiosity, but in a negative fashion. I wondered, since we were all employers, whether we are really thinking of our employees. We have after all a quarter of a million employees spread out across Canada.

We create and make laws here in Parliament but it is up to the employees to make sure these laws are implemented across the country. Some of these laws are policing laws for example. Some of these laws are to gather income tax.

Some of these laws are to inspect food for example. They are made to inspect flights and airplanes to make sure that the Canadian community feels secure in what it eats and consumes and when flying or travelling either on the railway or in vehicles.

The application of these rules falls on the Public Service. These public servants staff our immigration offices and customs offices to make sure that we have an orderly country. We also provide services in the health field, the multiculturalism field or a variety of other fields.

This large group of employees that is providing services to the community or helping us in making sure that this is a safe and secure country, obviously wants to make a profession of being a public employee. Many of them take adult education programs and pursue courses to get better and better in the work they do. Some work their way right up to the Ph.D. level. Many of them, certainly in the science field, we rely a great deal on for research.

In order to pursue education for your profession you must have a future. There must be something for all the time you are going to be putting in for the government that would help you and stimulate you to always want to do better and to improve what you do in your environment.

This is why it is rather important that we do the correct and proper thing. This is the reason why I believe that we should listen to our employees. I am sad to say that my observation of the legislative committee was that it was ramming through a new law with great impatience.

We are going away from modern management to the old management philosophy of "the boss runs the shop and if you do not like it as an employee then you leave the shop". The boss runs the shop and there is the employee who is treated practically like a slave and is always threatened to be let go.

This particular bill is this in essence. It says the manager will manage because the manager is impatient. Yes, we do need to have changes in our Public Service Act. Yes, in the past and right up to now, a great number of the decisions regarding employment, staffing, transfers and even the motions, were rather a long, arduous and difficult task.

Now we have swung the pendulum completely. We are about to give the authority to the manager to manage in his or her way with his or her attitude which could be tyrannical.

• (1540)

The Liberal Party, along with the NDP, has proposed quite a variety of amendments. I would say that 90 to 95 per cent of the amendments came from the Liberal Party. I was amazed at the reaction, the chuckling and the giggling on the government side. I was amazed at the impatience, the deaf ears, the lack of attention, the lack of compassion and the failure to really understand what a large work force should be and could be in 2000 and beyond.

[*Translation*]

We have proposed amendments and I have the pleasure to comment further on these amendments. Since PS 2000 gives a substantial amount of power to the manager, it is only normal that several unions and organizations be concerned this will create an environment where such authority over the employees' careers, especially women and minorities, could be abused.

While the Public Service Commission is currently investigating complaints of abuse of authority, nothing in this bill requires the commission to conduct such investigations. Employees' representatives have expressed concern about what could happen if the commission as a third party, were not officially recognized the power to investigate complaints. The worst case scenario would be that the head of the department that you complained about would be designated to investigate. Can you imagine that, Madam Speaker? This is certainly an unacceptable scenario. This amendment is only making official what the Public Service Commission has been doing for ages. It ensures a fair and just investigation.

Another advantage of these amendments is to ensure that the Public Service Commission not only may, but shall, take action against abuse of authority. There is also a possibility that certain instances of harassment could be tied directly to the merit principle. As the so-called keeper of this merit principle, it stands to reason that the commission be officially recognized as having the power to investigate complaints in that area.

Another proposed amendment to clause 10 of Bill C-26 is designed to make it clear that the merit principle will generally be based on competence, so that the best qualified—I repeat, best qualified—candidate will be selected for the job. We want to make sure that this idea of competence will prevail in the definition of merit and that the notion of "competence measured by such standard as the commission may establish" be the exception to the rule.

When government developed this new definition of merit in clause 10 it did not stop to think that this could be setting a dangerous precedent. It will make it difficult for the court to interpret the traditional definition of merit which ensured that the best qualified person—I repeat, best qualified—gets the job. The norm could well become "selection based on competence, as measured by such standard of competence as the commission may establish".

The other element of these amendments backs up the preceding amendments on employment equity. The idea is to ensure that the Public Service Commission will take into consideration minority groups in our society before establishing standards for competitions and personnel selection.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct some drivel that I heard in an earlier speech in this debate. It was from this side of the House but it was from down there, from the New Democrats.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River made a speech earlier today that was absolute drivel. I know that the hon. member who is paying such close attention will agree with me when she hears the facts and figures that I have to relate.

An hon. member: I can hardly wait.

Mr. Milliken: She can hardly wait. I am glad to hear it because she is going to get it.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River tried to suggest that somehow this government in adopting time allocation techniques and applying them to this debate today was acting in the same way that Liberal governments have in the past. I want to correct that record. I have some figures here to help me. Perhaps the member for North Island—Powell River will recant such heresy.

The facts are that in the period from 1913 to 1981, which was the last time closure was used before this government took office, closure was used a total of 22 times.

Since this government took office closure has been used over 16 times. In fact, closure has been used almost as much in the eight years that this disastrous government has occupied the Treasury benches as it had been in something like 48 years before that. It gives some indication of the depravity of the current government in its constant abuse of the rules and procedures of this House.

I could go on. I could cite the figures for use of time allocation, under which we are labouring today, not closure, and the government has used it more often than it has closure.

To suggest that somehow this pattern reflects previous government patterns is false. The hon. member for North Island—Powell River should check his facts before he spouts such drivel and nonsense in the House.

I want to urge him to take some care because we all know what is going on in the Ontario legislature these days.

Ms. Langan: Look at them, not us.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam says: "Look at them, not us". Her colleagues in the Ontario legislature have introduced a whole bunch of new rules that will gag the Ontario legislature and silence the opposition, the very effective opposition being offered there by my colleagues in the Liberal Party.

In fact there was a picture the other day on the front page of *The Ottawa Citizen* of her leader in this House holding up the hand of the premier of Ontario supporting—

Ms. Langan: She is proud to do it.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam says: "She is proud to do it". She and her colleagues in this House condemned this government for using closure and gagging the House when her colleague, the premier of Ontario, is doing exactly the same thing in the Ontario legislature.

I really find it quite shameful and disgraceful. There is a lot of hypocrisy in this action.

Mr. Angus: What are they doing?

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who is joining his soul mates on the Tory benches for the time being, is yelling at me to tell them what they are doing. I am telling them what they are doing. They are introducing a series of rule changes that will gag the opposition. They are threatening to use closure and they are telling the members of the opposition they are going to have to sit all summer to pass very unpalatable and unpopular legislation.

Had the hon. member tried the same thing here in the course of the GST debate we would still be here. The New Democratic Party pandered to the wishes of the Conservative majority, urged the government to use closure by using stalling techniques in the House, minimizing debate on the bill and preventing us in the Liberal opposition from presenting the arguments and concerns of Canadians against that bill in this House.

That is the way the New Democratic Party and the Tories get into bed together. That is the way they get into bed together, and that is what they are doing in the Ontario legislature. They are trying to gag the Official Opposition, and that is exactly what is going on here today.

The New Democrats pretend outrage at the use of closure then they say it is the Liberals and Conservatives that are doing it, when all the time it is the New Democrats that jump at the chance to silence intelligent capable opposition offered by the Liberal Party when they get into office.

Ms. Langan: Just like you are doing right now.

Mr. Milliken: Exactly. As the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam says, much like I am putting forward right now.

I am glad she is enjoying my speech.

I want to turn to the bill before us and discuss the amendments. The hon. member seems relieved that I have got off the subject of her party's duplicity with the Conservative Party. I can understand that. It must be very embarrassing.

• (1550)

The bill before us has some amendments moved to it by the hon. member for Ottawa West that I wanted to talk about. The amendments she has moved deal with complaints alleging sexual or personal harassment or abuse of authority.

What the member from Ottawa West is trying to do through these amendments is stiffen the government's resolve to deal with these issues when complaints are made in the work place.

This bill is deficient in that it fails to provide for corrective action in the case of these complaints. The hon. member for Ottawa West has urged very reasonable and sensible amendments. There is nothing wild-eyed, there is nothing that smacks of the NDP government in Ontario in these amendments.

These are sensible amendments. These are reasonable amendments. These are competent amendments and they are straightforward amendments. They are amendments, that must commend themselves to all members of the House, including any right-thinking member on the government side. I urge the members of the government to look at these amendments and to not blindly vote them down, as it seems to be doing with every other amendment we have considered so far. Look to the protection of people who suffer from these kinds of complaints and offer them some protection in the law so that instead of allowing the Public Service Commission possibly to make recommendations and possibly issue directives it will require the Public Service Commission to issue directives and take steps to deal with the complaint when it comes before us.

That is all the amendments are asking for. That is all the amendments propose. It is not too much to ask in this day and age. I urge the government to look again before it votes these amendments down and accept them.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on Bill C-26, sometimes referred to as Bill PS 2000, and probably more appropriately referred to as BS 2000.

It is amazing how we go through these management fads, but it dismays me to see what the government has done in relation to the changes it wishes to impose upon its employees.

One of my colleagues from the Liberal Party previously spoke in as eloquent terms as I have ever heard anyone speak with respect to the civil servants, most of whom are within his constituency and he therefore represents them. I am not surprised that he speaks so eloquently on their behalf and as knowledgeably about them as he does.

We all have many of these civil servants in our constituencies however, and I certainly would like to put on the public record that the amount of support they have given to my office, and I know to the offices of other members of Parliament as well, is valued beyond measure. Some of the things proposed in Bill C-26 really work against that and mitigate against the excellent work that these people do.

With reference to the previous Motions Nos. 5 and 7, they would bring the Public Service Employment Act in line with the federal Employment Equity Act.

I am not so sure that is necessarily an exemplary recommendation. As a matter of fact it has certainly come to my attention that the federal Employee Equity Act is tremendously deficient.

I have had the misfortune of having people in the federal civil service come to me having exhausted the process in so far as standing up for their rights within the federal Employment Equity Act and having gone to the Human Rights Commission, which is a body put in place to protect federal employees even beyond what the equity act does. I must say that I have found both to be deficient. Tragedy has befallen people who have stood up for their rights. The particular motions refer to sexual harassment. Some of the people who have come to me have suffered under that category as well. I can only say that in all categories, whether it is the Human Rights Act or the federal Employment Equity Act, the government, the prime employer in this nation, has come up far short.

The amount of tragedy that has befallen these people is beyond description. I have to repeat something that has already been referred to by me today. I think it is worth while referring to it again. It was also referred to by one of my colleagues on this side of the House. Imminently a female of the Armed Forces is about to be court-martialled because circumstances surrounding her appeal before the military tribunal, circumstances sur-

rounding the charge of sexual harassment within the Armed Forces, became public.

It was not even she who made those details public, yet this person is suffering the indignity of a court-martial. In the initial phase of this whole thing it is not even she who is to blame. As with so many of these cases, whether it is sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, colour or religion, the victim is the one who suffers and the perpetrators get away scot-free and often are found to have been promoted or transferred to more favourable jobs, or perhaps more favourable geographic locations within the federal Public Service.

I commend the member for having brought forward this excellent amendment to Bill C-26. I cannot for the life of me understand why on earth the government would not take cognizance of the excellent recommendation within this amendment, other than to conclude that it does not really have the interests of its employees as the prime motive for making these changes.

I guess we really must come back to a reference that was made earlier today as well and conclude that it is a desire to preserve the old boy's network. I guess that is the best description of it, because sure as heck they would not want any uppity women or any uppity people of another race or colour or religion to gain some kind of an advantage within the elite of our wonderful Public Service.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this matter. I trust the government will take this recommendation to heart and adopt it as its own.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will recognize the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam in a second.

I just wanted to let the House know that in keeping with tradition, as of four o'clock the Speaker will be delighted to receive members in Room 216, as is the habit of the Speaker every year on the last day before we all go home for the summer.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, while some may be visiting the Speaker's offices, others of us will be here labouring in the House, including you.

I rise in support of the amendments put forward, Motions Nos. 9, 11 and 13. When we talk about these motions I think it is important to put them in the context of the concept put forward by PS 2000, the bumph that referred to PS 2000 as being very, very progressive and forward thinking and even the title, Public Service 2000, taking us into the next century.

• (1600)

Having sat along with other members of this House for weeks on end listening to the Public Service justify Bill C-26, I am sad to report to the House that we are talking about dragging the Public Service, kicking and screaming, into the last century.

This bill is not a progressive piece of legislation. It is drafted by people who 30 years ago in their early days in the Public Service might have had a vision, but that vision has not moved forward in the last 30 years. Now their 30-year old vision is being presented before this House, wrapped up and packaged as something to take us into the next century.

The best the opposition can do with this legislation at this time—we can hope that maybe there will be an election call in the fall and it will not in fact pass in the House—is support amendments that would at the very least bring this legislation a little closer to 1992.

Motion No. 9 adds a provision that the commission shall investigate complaints of personal or sexual harassment, report its findings and corrective action taken to the worker involved. It is important we think about the fact that without this amendment we were in a situation where the commission may investigate complaints but in fact could have abrogated its responsibility and given the responsibility to department heads.

Let us think about this. We looked at the bill. We looked at the reality of the work place. We had the Public Service Commission telling us that employers in the public sector are good people and would never ever harass someone and would never ever certainly be involved in sexual harassment. It essentially said: "Trust

us". There is a long list of complaints filed by unions on this issue but there certainly have been complaints on these issues that have been spoken about publicly.

The vast majority of managers and employers in the public sector are good, decent, hard-working people. But there is an old saying, and I will probably get it wrong, that absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is important we have checks and balances in the legislation to ensure that the power is not absolute, to ensure that there is a process by which redress can be sought by workers in the public sector, to ensure that these people can not only be protected but that there is a bit of distance between the person who is the complainant and the person who makes the decision about the propriety of the complaint. To have the very people whom the complaint was against make any kind of a determination about whether it is a valid complaint is hardly appropriate.

Therefore we very strongly feel that anything that can be done to improve the wording of the legislation by these kinds of amendments, or indeed by other amendments that were unfortunately found to be inappropriate to fit the parameters of the legislation, should in fact go into it.

Another problem is that in the whole context of the merit principle harassment can clearly be an interference in the process and the confines of the merit principle as the Public Service Commission has outlined.

We are also concerned that the employer now has the right to deploy people hither and yon. It is particularly important, given these new powers, that these amendments be in place.

We also have to be cognizant that without these kinds of checks and balances these amendments would bring we could very well find workers in the public sector victimized by the very Public Service Commission that purports to be the protector of these workers.

It is absolutely critical. I would plead with hon. members on the government side of the House to give us good, solid reasons why these amendments would not be appropriate and could not be accepted by the government. We have not heard one word on these particular amendments from the government, either in the committee or here in the House.

I think it is time. My goodness, I am sure hon. members on the government side of the House have the independent thought and ability to put words together and give us rational explanations for why the government cannot accept these kinds of amendments.

I would urge that the parliamentary secretary who is responsible in the House and his colleagues get up and tell us why we are wrong and why these amendments should not be supported.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 9. 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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 11. 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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 13. 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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Fisher: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of information, actually. I am wondering if when one votes in a situation such as this it is imperative to be in one's seat.

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is not like when each member is called by his or her name. It is as long as there are five members in the House. I think the hon. member would understand this.

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 Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—

Ms. Langan: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I was otherwise occupied informing the House. The hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam, I am sorry.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, it would seem to me with all due respect that having to prompt the government side on how to stand on these motions, we have always been under instruction that to speak in the House or to undertake activity in the House we must in fact be in our places. Could Your Honour give us a clear ruling on that, please?

Madam Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member will allow me I will verify the Standing Orders. Certainly to be recognized to speak the member must be in his or her place in the House. It is the first time I have had to face that. I will certainly look again in the Standing Orders and I will come back to the hon. member.

• (1610)

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 Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Employment; the hon. member for London—Middlesex—Pearson International Airport; the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie—Trade; the hon. member for Ottawa Centre—Children.

The first motion is Motion No. 15 which stands in the name of Mr. Riis who is not in the House. Is there unanimous consent for somebody else to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, there was discussion with all three parties that the motions put in the name of Mr. Riis would be put in my name tonight. There was agreement on that because I had been a member on the committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I had not been advised. I asked the question and consent was given. You understand I could not put the motion to the House without asking consent. I thank the hon. member.

Ms. Joy Langan (for Mr. Riis) moved:

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-26 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 10 by striking out lines 22 to 30 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), selection according to merit shall, except in particular prescribed circumstances, be based on the competence of each person being considered in a competition for appointment as measured against the competence of the other person or persons also being considered in the competition, except that the Commission may prescribe by regulation circumstances in which selection according to merit would be inappropriate in view of the nature of the responsibilities of the position to which the person is to be appointed and in which selection may be based on the competence of a person being considered for appointment as measured by such standard of competence as the Commission may establish without being measured against the competence of other persons."

Ms. Joy Langan (for Mr. Riis) moved:

Motion No. 18.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 10 by striking out lines 23 and 24 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"selection according to merit may, in such instances as apprenticeship or occupational training programs, reclassification actions, or promotion within certain occupational groups as designated by the Commission, and with respect to the regulations of".

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 19.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 11 by striking out lines 5 to 9 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"shall not

(*a*) discriminate against any person by reason of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted; or

(*b*) prescribe or apply any standard that represents an employment barrier to women, aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities or persons who, because of their race or colour, are in a visible minority in Canada."

Motion No. 21.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out lines 40 to 43 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) In establishing criteria under subsection (1), the Commission shall not establish criteria that present an employment barrier to women, aboriginal".

Motion No. 23.

That Bill C-26 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out line 41 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"tion (1) the Commission shall not establish criteria that present an employment barrier to groups of persons that are disadvantaged, including women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are because of their race or colour in a visible minority in Canada.

(3) In establishing criteria under subsection (1), the Commission may establish dif-".

She said: Madam Speaker, on the group of motions you have just read, I will not be moving Motion No. 21. The content is duplicated in fact by Motion No. 23 which has a better wording and accomplishes more clearly what I wish to accomplish in the motion.

At this time, I would also like to request unanimous consent of the House to substitute a different wording for Motion No. 16 and I will briefly explain why.

Motion No. 16 as it is in the Order Paper was prepared by legal counsel at my request and submitted. In subsequent discussions with legal counsel we provided an alternative wording and asked to have it translated and put on the Order Paper in lieu of Motion No. 16.

That was not done and I take full responsibility for not having verified that it had been done. If I could read the alternate wording its intention is to accomplish the same thing but in a manner that is more correct and more appropriate to the legislation than Motion No. 16 as now worded. If I could just read the alternate wording, it is in the hands of the Table officers in both official languages and has been provided to the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board as well as to the NDP critic on this issue.

It reads:

"That clause 10 be amended by striking out lines 22 to 30 on page 5 and substituting the following:

For the purposes of subsection (1), selection according to merit shall, except in particular prescribed circumstances, be based on the competence of each person being considered for appointment as measured against the competence of other persons; except that the Commission may prescribe by regulation, circumstances in which selection according to merit would be inappropriate and which selection may be based on the competence of a person being considered for appointment as measured by such standard as competence as the Commission may establish rather than is measured against the competence of other persons."

Madam Speaker, I do not expect the government will agree with this amendment. I simply want the opportunity to present the motion as I drafted it and have a more correct wording before the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will start by Motion No. 21 being withdrawn as it is actually in Motion No. 23.

Motion No. 21 withdrawn.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As far as Motion No. 16 is concerned, is there unanimous consent for the wording to be changed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent is not given. On a point of order, the hon. member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I ask the hon. member who said no to reconsider. The hon. member for Ottawa West has put forward a very reasonable explanation as to why the wording of her motion is incorrect. She has asked to put another motion before the House. Apparently it is in order. Notice has been given. It is an unusual request but there has been a reasonable explanation offered. I would have thought that the hon. member might reconsider and allow this to proceed.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent is not given.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I guess I am quite concerned because it was through no fault of the hon. member that the incorrect wording appeared before the House in the first place.

It would seem to me to be a little bit mean-spirited in view of the fact that the hon. member had made every effort to have the correct wording before this House and is now seeking leave to ensure that it is correct.

I would urge as well that the hon. member from the government side of the House reconsider and allow this wording to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Am I to understand that there is a change of heart?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I wonder if we could get an explanation from the hon. member for Burlington why he will not agree to this particular motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When unanimous consent is sought members who do not give consent do not have to give reasons. Sometimes they do and sometimes they do not.

I am in a situation now where the motion that will be debated by the House is as written on the Order Paper.

I would like to answer an earlier question by the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. Upon a division, the yeas and the nays shall not be entered upon the minutes unless demanded by five members. It is Standing Order 45. Nowhere does it say that five members must be sitting in their places when they are asking for a vote to be taken.

• (1620)

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I would like to have clarification at this point with what has just taken place. Are we now debating Motions Nos. 15 and 18?

Madam Deputy Speaker: We are debating Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18, 19, and 23.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): I would like to rise particularly on Motions Nos. 15 and 18 which I have presented. These motions are central to the bill as we have it before us.

This bill and the vision of Public Service reform put forward by the Public Service 2000 report is very complex. It modifies the existing definition of the use of the merit principle. It modifies it in the appointment or promotion of workers in the Public Service.

Representatives of the vast majority of the workers who appeared before the committee—and we had a long list of people who presented, including the Public Service Alliance of Canada; the Professional Institute of the Public Service; and the Economists, Sociologists and Statisticians Association. Those three major unions, among others, all condemned this edition, the edition that is found in this section of the bill, as an attack on the merit principle.

The clause we are talking about modifies the traditional definition of merit and that is the best qualified as compared to all others. It modifies it by allowing the Public Service Commission to appoint persons based on the competence of a person as measured by such standards of competence as the commission may establish.

We believe that in fact the measure of competence, the best qualified person as compared to all others, is a principle that should remain entrenched in this legislation.

We would ask that the government support our Motions Nos. 15 and 18. In fact we would bring out this legislation with these amendments intact.

Hugh Winsor said in *The Globe and Mail* of May 23 that: "This clause opens a loophole that will give civil service managers a major new opportunity to play favourites and dispense their own form of patronage".

We are painfully aware of patronage run amok in some departments of the Public Service. It would be tremendously unfortunate to enshrine in a brand new piece of legislation, albeit flawed in many parts, the kinds of clauses that would open a loophole giving Public Service managers a major new opportunity to play favourites and dispense their own form of patronage.

Canadian people have told us very clearly, have told this House, have told this government, have told opposition members, their opinion of blatant patronage. I would suggest their opinion of blatant patronage does not diminish if it is being dispensed either by mandarins or Public Service Commission corporate managers. It is no less distasteful than if it is being put forward by the government itself.

We then have a situation where the department can make appointments, can deploy, can put people into positions without consideration under this new broadened description of competence of a person. What we find is the ability for a manger to end-run the process of merit and appoint by favouritism, by special favours from whomever is seeking the appointment. Possibly the debate on that point was more relevant in the last clause we discussed, sexual harassment. However, we have a situation where managers have wide discretion on who should get appointed to a new position. Again, the Public Service Commission, in presenting to us in committee, very clearly said two things.

First it said, trust us, and second it said that the calibre of manager in the Public Service is tremendously high and they would not see this right misused. I would not suggest that any manger in the Public Service is not of high calibre or is not a fair-minded, good-hearted man or woman. I would suggest that when one is faced with opportunities to show favouritism to someone they like over someone who is qualified for the job, sometimes that opportunity is tough to ignore and overcome.

When one is faced with an opportunity to let a little bit of racial discrimination sneak into the decision or not wanting to be bothered with someone who may have a disability because it means a little extra work on the part of the manager, it is very possible we could find ourselves with a manager who would not deliberately make mistakes because of the broadened parameters of this definition of the merit principle.

If the House does not like the reference to Mr. Winsor and his suggestion that this opens a loophole that will give civil service managers a major new opportunity to play favourites, then maybe we could make reference to the head of the PS 2000 exercise, Mr. John Edwards, who said: "Bill C-26 gives managers the authority to appoint and by-pass the system". This was reported in *The Globe and Mail* on June 20, just a couple of days ago. When bureaucrats were briefed by the Public Service Commission in response to a question he said: "This section gives managers the authority to appoint and by-pass the merit system".

It is passing strange that we got one story at the committee about how committed the government service is to the merit principle and that this clause makes no difference and that managers in the Public Service would never dream of doing something like that and then we have reported in the minutes of a meeting with bureaucrats, with the very same person who gave us those assurances, that managers could now by-pass the system.

We think it is absolutely critical that these amendments be included in the legislation. Even the Public Service Commission has admitted in its most recent annual report that there has been too much abuse of the merit system by senior managers who have been appointing their friends and redeploying those they do not like.

Now we have legislation that allows those managers to redeploy people they do not like, redeploy people who do not share their views or redeploy people whose hair cut they do not like, or whatever. We also have in this legislation a provision that would allow, not only redeployment but by-passing of the merit system which we were all told by the head of the Public Service Commis-

sion, was very much sacred. We are very concerned about this section of the bill.

The addition of this clause to the Public Service Employment Act will allow the government and managers to circumvent the merit principle I have talked about. The result will be a less competent Public Service, more and more dependent on political favouritism. Surely as we move toward the year 2000 we do not want to find a Public Service that is more dependent on political favouritism.

• (1630)

In committee, the government and the Public Service Commission argued that it needed this clause to deal with special circumstances, circumstances that were defined in regulations. But regulations do not receive the kind of scrutiny that a bill does in this Parliament, and so we asked why cannot the government make specific those circumstances where the principle of relative merit would not apply? Why can that not be in this bill? Why give such far-ranging powers to an agency that has demonstrated it is incapable of protecting the merit principle and safeguarding the Public Service from patronage, nepotism and political whim?

Motion No. 15 seeks to eliminate the addition of this concept to the application of the merit principle. The reason to eliminate it is very simple: the government and witnesses before the legislative committee could not come up with anything other than "trust us, we need this flexibility", but only hinted to us how this provision would actually be applied.

In light of such vagueness, this House should not be prepared to grant the government or the Public Service Commission *carte blanche* to erode the merit principle.

I would ask that Motion No. 15 be supported as well as Motion No. 18, which seeks to clarify the circumstances in which the commission may ignore the principle of relative merit. If there is a need to use the principle of standard of competence, then this need should be spelled out in the legislation if abuse of the system is to be avoided.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, I support most of the amendments introduced by my colleague from Ottawa West because they are fair amendments. We make no bones about it as the majority of public servants live in the national capital region and we know them because we work with them. I think every member of Parliament also deals on a daily basis with members of the Public Service and they know the high calibre of the service they receive. I would say without hesitation that we have one of the finest Public Services anywhere in the world.

These motions call on the government not to abandon the merit principle. It means that we are urging the government not to open the door to patronage. We call on the government to not proceed with the deployment of public servants without any kind of safeguard because we know that would not be in the best interests of the public servant, nor in the best interests of the government itself.

When we speak out against contracting out without adequate accountability, it is because we want to make sure that the government as well as the country gets a good return on its investment. We do not want to end up contracting out a job which in the end will have to be done over once the contract has been completed. So we need some sort of cost analysis.

When we talk about the excessive use of regulation, simply put it is because we want to see a streamlined Public Service without too much complication, without too much regulation. We want to see more flexibility in the hands of management as well as in the hands of the public servants themselves.

When we talk about accountability, it is simply that we believe accountability would increase flexibility within the public service.

When we talk about collective bargaining we are talking about a partnership between the public servant and their employers.

I do not see that any of the amendments which my colleague from Ottawa West has introduced in the House are done in bad faith; in fact, they were done in order to improve the Public Service, in order to streamline many of the complications that exist within the Public Service.

One segment in one of the amendments deals with the question of casuals. As the House probably knows, the government has gone on a rampage hiring casuals. Many of my constituents are thankful to have jobs, even though many of these are short-term positions. I want the government to know that by its actions it is creating nightmares for families in my constituency.

About a week and a half ago, one of my constituents told me that he would have to sell his truck because he could not pay his rent. He said that he needed a job even if it paid $3 because the day care centre would not keep his child any more if he was not working. When I asked him why, he told me that he was a casual with the federal government and as part of his agreement after six months he has to be out of work for a week or two and then he can apply all over again.

While we are helping these individuals in a way during those six-month periods, we are creating a chaotic situation for many of the families that we represent. The government has to put some sanity into the system. It either needs those workers on a full-time basis or it does not.

I know why the government is using casuals. Somehow casuals do not show up in the person-years. The government, in its wisdom, has decided on downsizing, thinking that by simply letting all employees go, the problem will go, not knowing that there is a tremendous amount of work out there that needs to be done and that management in the departments all across the land would have to look for manpower in order to do these jobs.

I do not understand why the government is proceeding with contracting out in a massive way without proper accountability, without proper analysis, hiring casuals left and right. I am not complaining about the fact that we should be hiring people, but never yet has the government taken the time to do a proper analysis to find out whether in fact we do have a surplus of public servants or whether we have a shortage.

Do we have a surplus or do we have a shortage? My view is that we have a shortage. If we did not have a shortage of public servants then we would not be hiring casuals and we would not be contracting out.

I am not against contracting out nor am I opposed to hiring casuals. But we need a proper assessment to see whether in fact what we are doing is the right thing, whether we are getting the return on the investment we are putting, yes or no. The challenge for the government is to do that particular assessment and that particular analysis.

Many of the amendments that my colleague from Ottawa West has introduced puts some sanity into the system. We have called on the government to create and establish a partnership with its workers. What we have seen is a walk out by the Public Service that the country, in its history, never saw before.

We call on the government to make a proper assessment so it would deal with question of promotion in the Public Service. There is no opportunity for public servants to get promotions. Look at the morale in the Public Service, look at the uncertainty in the Public Service. Look at all of those issues, and you come to one conclusion every time, we have a problem and it is that public servants have lost faith in their employer, the Treasury Board, the government as a whole.

To put sanity back into the system, an element of trust has to be created. We have to re-establish that partnership and go back to those who are building the infrastructure of this country, those who are providing service to the people, and seek their views and their opinions. They are telling us: "No, we are not happy with Bill C-26. It does not meet the purpose". The Minister of National Health and Welfare agrees with me because his department is one of those departments that needs every bit of help, as well as the immigration department.

• (1640)

We need sanity and this government does not seem to care. I know we are at the stage of no return because the government is stubborn. It is proceeding on it with or without the concurrence and approval of the public servants. The last call is to get out and speak with those who are affected, look at their concerns and address many of those amendments, which are all fair amendments and, if anything, will improve the system. None of these amendments was done in bad faith and none of them will create any kind of problem for the public servant, for the government itself, or for the people of Canada. Why do we not proceed with them?

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I too am very pleased to stand here in the House and speak on Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada.

I wish to speak to one section of the amendments before us today, and that is the merit principle. I have risen before in this House to speak to this bill and I am rising again mainly to express in the strongest terms my opposition to the proposed changes to the merit principle of the Public Service act.

As a member for Parliament for a constituency that has a large number of public servants I obviously have received many telephone calls and many letters expressing concerns to me. There is a deep sense of despair among public servants in Canada. There are so many problems with Bill C–26 that it strikes at the very fundamental principles of our Public Service. The merit principle probably is foremost in the minds of those who oppose the bill.

Bill C–26 erodes the merit principle. It would do away with the principle that was established to stop rampant political administrative patronage and assure Canadians of a non–partisan Public Service in which employment and opportunities were open to all, based on competence, not favouritism. The merit principle also ensured that only the best qualified and most competent persons would get appointed to positions within the Public Service.

This has been the cornerstone of the Public Service for many years. Scholars have talked of the benefits credited to the merit principle. It is a principle that has been awarded with high praise. It has become a sacred institution within Canada, admired both at home and abroad. Yet this bill would change this principle from a sacred cow to a sacrificial lamb.

What is at stake here is the quality and efficiency of our Public Service. No longer will the Public Service settle for the best qualified person to fill a position, instead a minimum set of standards or qualifications can be set, and all a person needs to do is meet those minimum qualifications.

What sort of standards are we setting to do this? What sort of people are we going to attract to the Public Service? With this new bill we will cease to have the very best representing us and caring for our country here in Canada. Our Public Service is still recovering from its first strike in Canadian history. Morale is low within the Public Service right now. Imagine how low it will be once its employees have to work with or under people who are only second or third best for that position.

In fact, Bill C–26 will act as a deterrent to the best qualified people, the cream of the crop. It certainly was the cream of the crop that we have been able to get for this good many years. Why would the best want to work in an organization in which mediocrity was promoted.

Bill C–26 opens up the opportunity for political patronage. I can see no other reason for it. Why else would the federal government want to do away with the merit principle? Does the federal government place such little faith and importance in the Public Service? Does it really want to put all its friends and cronies into the Public Service for the little favours they have done? Does the present government plan to be around long enough to implement the patronage plans? I certainly hope not.

Bill C–26 leaves all but the original hiring and limited promotions to the discretion of managers who set those minimum standards. Hiring and promotions therefore are open to the whims, likes, dislikes, favouritism and personal biases of the manager. This creates a dangerous potential barrier for women in the Public Service in particular. It is human nature for the person doing the hiring to look for similar characteristics in the potential employee.

This fact, along with the fact that most managers are men, allows for the likelihood that women will find it even tougher to find promotion within the Public Service.

Beneath the Veneer, the report on the task force on barriers to women in the Public Service, documented that attitudes are the main barrier to equality of opportunity. These attitudes often unconsciously keep women, as well as visible minorities, persons with disabilities and aboriginal Canadians, at the lower echelons of the Public Service. Is the federal government prepared to add to this problem? It sure looks that way to me.

Further to the merit issue is the issue of deployment. Clause 22 of this bill gives deputy heads the exclusive right to permanently transfer staff without competition. This transfer or deployment cannot be appealed. The only recourse is to complain to the same deputy head, and ask for an investigation, making that person both the judge and the jury.

On January 30, 1992 the Federal Court of Canada struck down an Order in Council giving deputy ministers the freedom to transfer any employee because "it departs substantially from the merit principle".

The judge said: "I would be defeating the whole purpose of the Public Service Employment Act, which is to ensure that appointments to the Public Service are made on the basis of merit".

The government is deviating substantially from the merit principle once again.

Members of the Public Service entered it to carry out a career in a position in which they could contribute to their country. This legislation leaves them little choice in terms of the direction in which they can move as they follow their career. For many it prohibits career development.

Before closing I want to state that I, and I think the members on this side of the House, continue to support the clauses within the bill that continue to contribute to the strengthening of the Public Service and its ability to serve the public, and improve labour relations.

We on this side of the House continue to oppose clauses of the bill that undermine the merit principle without adequate safeguards, that destabilize the Public Service, that discourage the hiring and retention of highly qualified individuals, and that reduce accountability.

We on this side of the House also propose further substantive amendments to this bill at the report stage, which is what my colleague from Ottawa West has certainly done.

In closing, the merit principle has always guaranteed that the best can move up the ladder. This legislation literally puts an end to that. I cannot support a bill that embraces mediocrity. Obviously this government can.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, again it gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on Bill C-26, the amendments to the relationships which the government is going to have, for the most part unfortunately, with its employees.

The merit principle has been the cornerstone of what has undoubtedly been a magnificent civil service in this country and one that has certainly been exemplary in relation to other civil services around the world.

This morning my colleague from Mission—Coquitlam asked what the government could possibly say in relation to the changes it was proposing in another context. To put it in the context of this and the whole bill itself I can just imagine the government standing up and saying: "We have the best civil service in the world. We are going to have the best civil service in the world". They have already said this is going to bring Canada's civil service in line with the 21st century.

As has been pointed out, that is certainly not the case. This is another management fad. Many management fads in the past have usually proven after a short period of time to be fallacious, to be ineffective, inefficient, and certainly unable to accomplish what the perpetrators of it wanted it to accomplish. I guess "perpetrators" is the best word. Then it is only to be supplanted by some other form of management fad. One shudders to think what the next round of changes to this particular aspect of our Canadian society may bring forth.

• (1650)

It was pointed out previously in relation to the whole concept of Bill C-26 that John Edwards, who heads the PS 2000 exercise, when asked in private what effect it would have, replied essentially that it would not have any effect at all because it does give the managers the authority to appoint and to bypass the system, whether it refers to sexual harassment or to the merit principle, a fair system of promotion within the civil service.

I refer to that incident again because it epitomizes, it underscores, it highlights the government's philosophy and the government's purpose in what it is doing in bringing forth these changes, a management fad which will disappear and prove to be ineffective. It will also show itself to be disastrous as far as the people are concerned within the civil service because it will show itself to be a betrayal of them by their employer.

This is not the only incident that makes reference to these changes. Hugh Winsor in *The Globe and Mail* on May 23 said that this clause opens a loophole that will give civil service managers a major new opportunity to play favourites and dispense their own form of political patronage.

Whether we are dealing with standards of promotion or standards of hiring based on the merit principle or the standards principle the fact of the matter is that the people who are going to be administering this act are prepared to circumvent it in any way that suits them.

I would suspect that if at a point in time it was decided that they would not go by the merit principle but by the standards principle, which this portion of the legislation allows, it would be no time at all before a hiring situation would open up in which they would ignore their own principle of doing it on the basis of standards and revert to the merit principle on the basis that the person who was being hired was a friend of the manager, or maybe a relative of the manager. Certainly, the potential for nepotism is ripe within these changes and on political whim, which is something that is to be abhorred in the extreme.

To reiterate, the merit principle has demonstrated itself to be the very best method of determining the qualifications of someone when it comes time for hiring or promotion. We cannot help but think that if the government was to adopt the amendment as put forth here many of the abuses that are anticipated and predicted to occur within this legislation would be averted.

To my sorrow, I am sure the government will not be taking into account amendments put forth by both the opposition parties in this debate. That is much to the disgrace of the government and to the loss of the civil service and the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I want to comment briefly on the amendments to clauses 15, 16, 22 and 23.

The amendment restores the definition of "eligibility list" as it appears in the current legislation.

If we approved the government proposal which allows the Public Service Commission to make regulations on how the eligibility list is established it would be possible to change this list at any time. The obvious effect would be to make it extremely difficult for employees or potential candidates to know what their rights are. Moreover, abuse would again be possible with regard to the merit principle.

As for the restrictions put on the right of appeal in Clause 16 and subcontracting *vis-à-vis* term employees, this amendment is designed to change subsection 21(4), in clause 16, which would impose serious restrictions to employees who would want to exercise their right to appeal if they felt that an appointment has been made without due consideration to the merit principle.

This clause seems to be further emphasizing the problems we have uncovered with the new wording of clause 10 which deals with the merit principle. We have great difficulty with clause 16 as it stands, because it enables the commission to interpret the merit principle as they please. Without the proposed amendment the clause could give the commission the power to decide whether the appeal board is required or not in a particular case provided it is of the opinion that the merit principle was respected.

The amendment to clause 19 gives certain rights to term employees under the workforce adjustment policy.

As regards transfers in clause 22 the bill as it is presently worded is not subject to the provisions of the Public Service Employment Act dealing with eligibility criteria, qualifications, bilingualism and merit as they apply to transfer. None of the principles that ensure fair treatment at the time of hiring apply to transfers. The results are obvious.

Motion No. 43 strived to at least have merit and bilingualism included as eligibility criteria for transfers.

Finally, as regards appeal regulations in Clause 23 this amendment forces the Public Service Commission to make regulations ensuring that appeals are duly carried out.

The essence of this amendment was the subject of three reports from the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations. The Public Service Commission constantly refused to make such regulations.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I wish to address some remarks to the government's abandonment of the merit principle contained in this bill. This is really one of the most shocking amendments that the government has put forward in the whole legislation.

Now we are to have a civil service based not on merit—promotions and so on—but on competence and the standards of competence are now to be set by some other person. The Public Service Commission apparently is to set standards of competence which are to be measured, according to the government's definition, not against the confidence of other persons, but on the basis of standards set by the commission. I will read the section:

> For the purpose of subsection 1, selection according to merit may in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations of the commission be based on the competence of a person being considered for appointment as measured by such standard of competence as the commission may establish, rather than as measured against the competence of other persons.

The hon. member for Ottawa West has proposed a very reasonable amendment. In fact, the amendment that the member for Kamloops has proposed is also reasonable. It gets rid of this offending clause.

I have some material I think I should draw to the House's attention concerning this amendment that may be of interest to the hon. member for Burlington who has been following this debate so closely.

There is apparently some official called John Edwards. He is a sycophant of the government who has been pushing Public Service 2000 down the throats of unwilling workers in the Public Service. It is not clear whether or not this man is a liar. He has given contradictory statements to the press. I would like to refer to those statements as quoted in *The Globe and Mail* in an article by that very distinguished journalist, Mr. Hugh Winsor.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock, unfortunately, I will have to interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that, under the terms of the motion passed this morning, the four hours provided for the consideration of Bill C–26 have expired.

It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Private Members' Business

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE SEA

RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport) moved:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should, for the benefit of Canadian fisheries, urgently take the necessary steps to ratify the International Law of the Sea, and urge other nations to do so in order to reach the 60 signatures required for the Law of the Sea to come into force.

He said: Madam Speaker, it has been seven years since this government was elected to power by the Canadian people. In connection with this issue related to the Law of the Sea, it has been seven years of dilly–dallying and lost opportunities in providing leadership while this nation, as you well know, is surrounded by three oceans.

It has also been, unfortunately, seven years of piggy-backing on the Law of the Sea and using the best features of that convention without taking the responsibility for it in the international community.

It has been seven years of yielding to pressure by international and national corporate interests at the expense of the common good, namely the fisheries and the communities that derive their living from the oceans.

In a way it has been a way of allowing Wall Street and Bay Street to determine government policy on the management of the oceans. In a way, it has brought about an unfortunate development, which is the compromising of Canada's international credibility.

It has also been five years of prime ministerial high rhetoric, both at home and abroad, on sustainable development. This has created the impression that Canada is, as it should be, committed to the implementation of the principles of sustainable development.

In the light of this quick sketch that I just gave you, the question arises as to why Canada is afraid to ratify the Law of the Sea.

One may recall, that it was given a signature by 119 countries, including Canada, in Jamaica, roughly at the end of 1982. However, the signatures are not enough for an international document to become operative. It requires ratification. It is a two–step process. The signature is first and the ratification is the second.

Canada has taken the first step. Not only that, but Canada was extremely active in promoting the text of this convention. It had a full-time ambassador involved in it and received a lot of political support in the years that led to its conception and finalization. Today, as we speak in this House, 53 nations have ratified the Law of the Sea treaty. Canada, unfortunately, is not among them. With the exception of Iceland, all the countries that have ratified it are from the developing world. They include Mexico, Brazil and India.

In order to become effective, the Law of the Sea Convention requires 60 nations for ratification. That means that we are short seven nations to make this convention operative and to trigger it into effect. Once the 60 nations have ratified it, then the provisions of the convention come into force.

The reluctance of industrialized nations to ratify the accord revolves apparently around concerns on section 11 which deals with the mining of the sea bed. Yet, it is increasingly evident that the commercial prospects for viable sea bed mining are way down the road, maybe 20 years or more, if it is viable at all.

What is happening is this. Canada has benefited directly and indirectly in many ways from the provision of this Law of the Sea without however carrying its burden and doing its share. For instance, Canada has now in place a 12-mile territorial zone around our coast. That, is a big plus.

Second, the 200-mile limit, called the exclusive economic zone, gives Canada the right to declare sovereignty over 1.3 million square nautical miles off of Canada's coast. This also gives Canada control over fishing and oil and mineral exploration in such areas.

Third, Canada has the right, as a result of this convention, to regulate fisheries in the exclusive economic zone by determining the total catch allowed and its optimal use.

Fourth, there is article 66 of the Law of the Sea Convention which has the effect of protecting Canada's salmon stocks. This article gives those states which ratify the convention the primary responsibility on river fishing stocks which originate in the signatory and ratifying country.

Fifth, in the Law of the Sea Convention there are articles 63 and 64 which are very important because they address the issue of management and conservation of straddling stocks and migratory species. All of us in this House have heard a lot in recent months about straddling stocks in connection with the northern cod. We heard about their importance and the importance of protecting it. That matter is recognized and is embedded in the Law of the Sea Convention.

• (1710)

Sixth, the convention gives Canada enhanced jurisdiction for the prevention of marine pollution and also special provisions for Arctic waters.

Seventh, the Law of the Sea Convention maintains Canada's right to complete sovereignty over the Northwest Passage, a matter of enormous importance to the pride of Canadians, a matter that has been debated in this House, particularly in the 1970s at the time of the *Manhattan*. I am sure you will agree, Madam Speaker, that matter is very close to the heart of our nation.

Finally the convention represents a precedent-setting international convention which seeks to protect our environment and which promotes sustainable development of fisheries, of fishery stocks, and of other marine resources.

What more could we ask from a convention? It seems to have been written by a Canadian for Canadians of this generation and generations to come.

By ratifying the Law of the Sea, Canada would strengthen the sustainable development of the high seas and straddling stock fisheries, as is clearly pointed out in the Brundtland report, *Our Common Future*. In that connection I just want to quote briefly what *Our Common Future* says at page 273:

> The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea is the most ambitious attempt ever to provide an internationally agreed regime for the management of the oceans. The resulting convention represents a major step toward an integrated management regime for the oceans. It has already encouraged national and international action to manage the oceans.
>
> The convention reconciled widely divergent interests of states and establishes the basis for a new equity in the use of the oceans and their resources.

And so on and so forth. Time precludes me from quoting any further but we can see the thrust of how the Brundtland commission, the global commission on environment and development, assesses the importance of the Law of the Sea, and this was five years ago.

The ratification would obviously help Canada. It would be good for Canada in a number of ways.

First, it would ensure that high sea fisheries would pursue ecologically sound practices, including deploring the use of drift net catching practices and others.

Second, it would enhance the maintenance of ecological marine systems in the oceans.

Third, it would complete the protection of fish stocks within the 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

Fourth, the Law of the Sea provides the signatories with the appropriate mechanism, so to say, to implement these principles at the earliest possible opportunity. This is why it is so important to reach the magic number of 60 nations. As I mentioned earlier, we only have 53 nations ratifying it.

Finally it would also provide momentum to the implementation of the recommendations of the Harris report which include, and I quote from it, "the management of all fish stocks indigenous to the Canadian continental shelf that extends beyond the 200-mile limit and the right of Canada to deny authorization for foreign fishing fleets to fish within its exclusive economic zone".

What more do we need? What more do we want? These are clear benefits that are lost to Canada, that are lost to our fishermen. Therefore the question that one inevitably must ask is: Why has Canada not ratified the Law of the Sea? Why does it seem to be afraid to do so?

The government has admitted that provisions in the Law of the Sea Convention would be able to aid Canada in its attempt to protect cod stocks off the coast of Newfoundland.

There was a statement made in Cancun on May 6 of this year by the minister of fisheries himself. It is on the record. There was a statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, whose parliamentary secretary I suppose will reply, in *Hansard* of February 25 of this year. Yet the government is dragging its feet and refusing somehow to sign the pact. It seems to be waiting for other nations to come forward before we will ratify it.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, at the preparatory committee meeting in New York last March, Canada submitted, along with 40 other nations all of which except one, New Zealand I believe, ratified the Law of the Sea, resolution 16 for the protection of the oceans and all kinds of seas. It included enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, the gulf we were debating last night, coastal areas, and the protection, rational use and development of living resources. It called for, and I quote, "the establishment of principles and measures for an effective regime based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea".

Canada supported this measure. It is a good measure. It is a very good document because it is intended to strengthen the provisions in the Law of the Sea. We did this last March or May. I am not sure of the date exactly, but it is a very recent initiative and a good initiative for that matter, particularly with reference to the articles 63 and 64 I mentioned a moment ago regarding the management and the protection of straddling stocks beyond the 200-mile limit.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs also stated that the government was working on a number of other international initiatives intended to establish regimes for our oceans and its resources. This is what she said on February 25, 1992 in the House of Commons, yet the step of ratifying the Law of the Sea Convention is not being taken.

In Cancun the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said: "This resolution outlines principles and measures that will give proper effect to the provision of the Law of the Sea Convention". This was the measure supported there. Therefore, how can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans talk about clarifying and strengthening provisions in the Law of the Sea Convention, supporting the convention itself, giving it momentum and giving it his endorsement when the government has yet to ratify it? This is the basic question.

Without being a signatory to the Law of the Sea, Canada's efforts to get nations on side, to understand our position of straddling stocks, for instance, are weakened. Our credibility is affected. It is as basic as that. To

take advantage of the convention without ratifying it shows that Canada tries to be self-serving with little regard for its international responsibility. It is a policy that is self-defeating. It would be very difficult to get other nations to agree to establishing principles of sustainable development in the fisheries and for the high seas when we act in such a short-sighted manner.

• (1720)

In conclusion I must say that although the government does not admit it, at least officially, it has been under pressure by some international and Canadian mining corporate interests not to agree to article XI of the treaty. I am told that Inco and Noranda are each involved in separate mining consortia headed by American firms. American lawyers representing this consortia have made representations to the Government of Canada pressing for revisions to the sea bed mining provisions and for Canada not to ratify the convention until those revisions are in place.

There is a public interest at stake that is much broader, much deeper and much more consequential in the long term than that of the mining industry and of the private sector. There is a public interest at stake.

One has to ask why the Government of Canada in the seven years since it has come to power has shown itself to be more sensitive to remote concerns than to present-day concerns of our fishermen and the long-term concerns of the communities that are affected.

There is no manner in which one can deny that the Law of the Sea Convention is helpful to the fisheries industry. The government has admitted this on more than one occasion.

The crisis of vanishing fish stocks off the Canadian coasts needs coherent action which includes the ratification of the Law of the Sea, a convention which I tried to demonstrate this afternoon only strengthens the sustainable development of marine resources along the coasts of our three oceans and globally in the interest of the global community.

I rest my case.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place to participate in this debate.

I congratulate the hon. member for Davenport on bringing forth this very important topic, though I must confess I do not entirely agree with the proposal he has put forward. I would like to respond to a number of the points he made.

Like myself he had the privilege of being part of the Canadian delegation at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Like me he was there when Canada really had a day of crowning glory. The proposal of the Santiago group, the 40 countries, relating to convening on an urgent basis an international conference on high seas fishing, the problem of overfishing and management of transboundary stocks, was really Canada's initiative. It was really a very great day for Canada and indeed for all Canadians.

When that proposal was incorporated into agenda 21 it became perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the Rio conference. I believe a great deal of credit is due. I would take this opportunity to give credit not only to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of the Environment who played such key roles at that conference and in achieving that very important development. I would also like to recognize the officials of the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans and External Affairs, Bob Applebaum and Serge Avril, who did such an outstanding job of putting forth the Canadian point of view.

With respect to the ratification issue, like so many things it seems to be not quite as simple an issue as is presented by my hon. friend opposite. As he indicated in his remarks, the main reason Canada and all other industrialized countries with the exception of Iceland have not as yet ratified the convention has nothing to do with the provisions relating to the extension of the 200-mile limit and the control of fisheries resources and so on. Rather it had to do with sea bed mining and the issue of undersea resources and minerals. All industrialized countries in the western world except for Iceland have concerns with respect to that. That is why they have not ratified it.

Notwithstanding that fact, the Law of the Sea has become customary international law so that Canadians already do benefit from the provisions of great significance such as the 200-mile economic zone.

I might say this is not really a partisan issue but I would remind my hon. friend that the government of which he was Minister of the Environment could very well have ratified the document if it had thought it an appropriate thing to do at the time.

In any event, it stands as it does and Canada stands with the other G-7 countries and most of the OECD countries in the position that it has taken. The significant point is the benefit is there because of the principle of customary international law so there is no loss.

Incidentally, my hon. friend indicated 53 countries had ratified it. It is the Government of Canada's understanding that only 51 of the 159 signatories have ratified at this time. Nevertheless, they are seven or eight countries short and even if Canada ratified it still would not constitute the 60. The issue in a sense is a moot one and I suspect when the issues relating to sea bed mining get sorted out then perhaps we will see a further development in that regard.

Regardless of that, with respect to the problem of foreign overfishing and overfishing in particular on the east coast, the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, the real problem we are faced with from an international point of view is something that happens outside 200 miles where we would not have control with or without the international Law of the Sea.

Our control extends only 200 miles and our control up to that 200 miles is fully recognized by foreign nations. No foreign nation has a quota to harvest within our 200 miles without our consent.

Under the Law of the Sea the agreement the nations adhere to is that the adjacent country has the right to control those resources, is expected to make surplus resources available, but only surplus resources. Licences are only issued with respect to stocks that Canadians do not have an interest in harvesting. Normally that is because they do not have a commercial viability. That has been the practice.

In the final analysis with respect to dealing with the problem of foreign overfishing off our coasts, it is an external problem that can only be solved through international co-operation.

That really has been the basis of the approach the Government of Canada has taken for the last several years to try to bring the countries which have been overfishing, such as Spain, Portugal, South Korea and some others to a more limited extent, to try to achieve through co-operation what in fact there is no basis in international law for us to oppose.

Much as it might be nice to say: "Let us just unilaterally extend the limit," there is no legal basis for doing so. Much as we might like to say: "Well, let us go out and blast them out of the water," that is hardly acceptable. I know all members of this House would be absolutely outraged if some other country took it upon itself in international waters to arrest or otherwise interfere with a Canadian vessel.

Really, the only approach we can take is the diplomatic one frustrating though it may be. It is important to note significant progress is being made, in no small measure I might say, as a result of the efforts not only by the Prime Minister of Canada, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, but also by industry representatives, members of Parliament, and many others who participated in a very extensive campaign of putting this issue on the public agenda in Europe and in other parts of the world.

The problem of overfishing on the high seas is increasingly being recognized by the international community as an important environmental issue. It was on the basis of the fact it was an environmental issue that we were able to get the whole issue brought into the Rio summit. Some would suggest we bootlegged the issue in late in the game, but the bottom line is that it was recognized there as an environmental problem which in the final analysis is what it is.

• (1730)

Increasingly over the past few years there has been international recognition of the gravity of this problem. For example in 1987 the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development warned of the threat to living marine resources posed by over-exploitation, pollution and land-based development.

In 1991, more recently the G-7 heads of government issued a declaration urging compliance with the regimes established by regional fisheries organizations through effective monitoring and enforcement measures.

A report released in 1991 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations underlined in eloquent terms the dimension of the problem of overfishing by distant water fishing fleets.

The United Nations General Assembly took up this issue for the first time in 1989 when in response to the problem of overfishing in the northwest Atlantic outside Canada's 200-mile zone it expressed concern regarding the use of fishing methods and practices on the high seas that can have an adverse impact on the conservation and management of the living resources of the marine environment. The concerns were elaborated on by the General Assembly in a resolution it adopted in 1990.

Canada and other like-minded countries built on these resolutions at the last session of the General Assembly. As a result of those efforts the General Assembly adopted a very significant resolution.

It is against this background of developing international concern with respect to the problem caused by overfishing Canada launched its legal initiative to resolve the problem of overfishing on the high seas.

The Canadian initiative sought to develop specific principles and measures consistent with the Law of the Sea Convention with a view to giving full implementation to the provisions of the Law of the Sea Convention, strengthening regional organizations and ensuring the recognition of special interest of coastal states with respect to straddling stocks. This would provide for an effective legal regime governing activities of the high seas.

The first steps in the elaboration of the principles and measures were taken at a conference held in St. John's, Newfoundland in September 1990.

The conference recognized the need for such measures and agreed on a set of conclusions reflecting an increasingly shared view of how the rules of international law should be interpreted and applied. This document was further developed at a meeting of Latin American states, New Zealand and Canada in May in Santiago, Chile. Hence, it is referred to as the Santiago paper or the Santiago document which was put forward earlier this year in a series of conferences.

The first was the International Conference on Responsible Fishing held in Cancun, Mexico in May. Of course, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans led the Canadian delegation at that conference at which 66 participants at the conference declared:

First, that states should co-operate on bilateral, regional and multinational levels to establish, reinforce and implement effective means and mechanisms to ensure responsible fishing on the high seas in accordance with relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea;

Second, that the freedom of states to fish on the high seas must be balanced with the obligation to co-operate with other states to ensure conservation and rational management of the living resources in accordance with relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea; and

Third, that states should take effective action consistent with international law to deter reflagging of vessels as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management rules for fishing activities on the high seas.

It is interesting to note following that, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans visited Panama and got the agreement of that government to discourage reflagging and the same proposal has now been made to Honduras, another country where there has been some progress.

I see I am getting the eye, Madam Speaker. I thought I had a couple of more minutes.

I will conclude by saying that all this led to the tremendously significant development at Rio. Early this fall Canada will be calling a conference of interested nations to come forward to St. John's, Newfoundland, to look ahead for that UN conference we hope will come early in 1993. We hope that will lead to the resolution of the problem and the establishment of a proper regime for the management of transboundary stocks on the basis of sustainable development.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills without any modification: Bill C-33, an act respecting the use of foreign ships and non-duty paid ships in the coasting trade; Bill C-82, an act to amend the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the National Housing Act and to amend another act in consequence thereof; Bill C-7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations be-

tween artists and producers in Canada; Bill C–45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods; Bill C–58, an act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other acts in consequence thereof; Bill C–41, an act respecting the energy efficiency of energy-using products and the use of alternative energy sources; Bill C–13, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process; Bill C–49, an act to amend the Criminal code (sexual assault); Bill 51, an act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories; Bill C–52, an act respecting water resources in the Yukon Territory, and Bill C–70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury).

* * *

[*English*]

THE ROYAL ASSENT

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Government House
Ottawa

June 23, 1992

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Gérard La Forest, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 23rd day of June, 1992, at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Judith A. LaRocque
Secretary to the Governor General

Mr. Milliken: Point of order, Madam Speaker. The list of bills you read is very impressive and I know there is a tremendous list already waiting for Royal Assent in the other place which of course have been passed in this House in the last few days.

I see the parliamentary secretary to the Government House leader is here. I wonder if he could explain why it is that time allocation is being used on government bills when such progress is being made.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE SEA

RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Caccia (p. 12693).

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I want to have an opportunity to make a few remarks before we adjourn to deal with the products of the Senate but I would like to share it with my colleague from Newfoundland if the time is short.

The motion before us today put forward by the hon. member for Davenport certainly is a very supportable and commendable proposal and I recommend it to the House.

I would also point out there are some serious problems in our attention paid to critical issues in the marine or oceanic environment. I would like to point out a couple of those. These are long historic problems that neither government, the previous Liberal government nor the government of the day, the Conservative government, has dealt with.

The first one is the Dixon Entrance problem, the boundary dispute with the United States in Dixon Entrance in which people who fish on the coast of British Columbia are constantly harassed by the Americans who had moved the AB line into the centre of the Dixon Entrance.

We see constant harassment by American coast guards, arrests, seizure of catches, seizure of vessels, and a completely intolerable response from the Government of Canada which turns around and allows this to happen.

Canadian maps show Canadian fishing territory. Canadian sovereignty should be exerted there and the Canadian law enforcement, the Canadian government, everyone allows them simply to be arrested in areas that we show on our maps as Canadian area. They are in that area harassed by the Americans, arrested, hauled to Ketchikan, their catch is seized, taken to court, fined,

and it is an absolutely intolerable situation that we as Canadians have to join together and say this is intolerable. It cannot continue.

The Americans simply move the AB line out of the treaty of 1903 or 1904 and say that they are going to allow petroleum drilling in an area that is shown on Canadian maps as Canadian territory. Absolutely unacceptable.

• (1740)

The Americans run nuclear submarines through there, and this government concedes to it. The previous government conceded to it. The government of British Columbia and most of the communities in the area have designated themselves as nuclear-free zones for the purpose of communicating more to the Canadian agencies than the Americans, that this is the desire of Canadians, to remove nuclear vessels and their threat from the area.

The Law of the Sea Conference was an area in which the Canadian government and the delegates acquitted themselves very well. The intent was to give sovereign states jurisdiction over the surrounding coasts and oceans. But we have seen the Canadian government renege on drift-net fishing and from 1980 till today, we have seen Liberal governments and Conservative governments ignore the issues of drift-net fishing.

One of the worst examples of our neglect of our marine environment, and the intent I think of the Law of the Sea Conference, was the efforts that Canada exerted to try and get national control of an anadromous species, the salmon of the west coast. We are now almost in a war with the United States over that species.

We began a long process under the Liberal government in the late seventies, early eighties, of negotiating an interception treaty on the west coast, the Salmon Interception Treaty. We felt that we were completely sold out by the Conservative government that needed some kind of throwaway for the first visit of Ronald Reagan to his corporate vice-president here in Canada and we wound up with a situation at Quebec City where that fishery was literally thrown away.

Today we are faced with a new fish war arising in the United States where the Americans are saying that the Fraser River stocks, which are part of the old Hell's Gate problem where the Canadians allowed the Americans to come in and build the fish ladders and claim half the stocks out of the Fraser River. That is absolutely intolerable.

Canadians who live on the west coast wonder where is their federal government. They are under the impression that the Pacific fisheries are a complete throwaway, that if there is a problem with an auto treaty or an auto agreement in central Canada, then elements of the Pacific coast fisheries can be thrown away.

In this House of Commons we need to see the government spend more attention and serious attention to those fisheries. They are worth a billion dollars a year. They are not throwaway items, they are absolutely critical to native people, to the people who live on the coast of British Columbia, and they need to be stood up for.

The Pacific coast fishery should be turned over to the province of British Columbia with the full cost from this federal government, probably in tax points, to cover the cost of the operation. British Columbians care about that resource, they care about the people who depend on the resource, their enhancement, survival and protection. The government in Ottawa over the years has demonstrated that it does not care for it.

I am just absolutely appalled about the Dixon Entrance issue, about the Pacific coast salmon interception. When we talk about the Law of the Sea we have to look at the total perspective.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I hope the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod will get lost in the halls of Parliament on his way here so that I may have at least a minute or two to make a few comments.

Let me say that the motion that is before us today calls on the Government of Canada to take the necessary steps to ratify the international Law of the Sea.

It should be noted that what Parliament is being asked to do, what the government is being asked to do, is to take the necessary steps to ratify an international convention that I think most Canadians thought had been ratified. The fact of the matter is that it has been nearly a decade, 10 years, since 119 nations, including Canada, signed the Law of the Sea.

I think most Canadians are unaware that even though it has been 10 years since the Law of the Sea was signed, with a great deal of fanfare, it has not been ratified. It has been ratified by 53 nations. It requires 60. Only one of the western industrialized nations has ratified it.

We must ask ourselves why have so many nations signed a document and then failed to ratify it?

I will tell you why, Madam Speaker, in very simple language: greed. It is the very same eyes wide open greed that led—and this is why it is criminal—to the wanton destruction of cod stocks, both northern cod and gulf cod, and the Pacific fishery stocks. It is the very same greed and lack of conviction and backbone on the part of regulators which is destroying a renewable resource and is now at work preventing the ratification of the Law of the Sea.

It is in Canada's interest. This House in an emergency debate last night and during the last week heard about the state of fish stocks, heard about a 500-year old industry that has supported a culture, a rural way of life, a value system that has been destroyed in the name of greed. We have not been able to restrain ourselves from squeezing every last convenient quick buck out of a renewable resource and treating Mother Nature like a convenient piece on a monopoly board instead of showing the ocean and the cod stock the respect we ought to have done.

Canadians are now ready to see our government move to ratify the Law of the Sea as another means of rebuilding the cod stocks.

We saw at the last Federation of Canadian Municipalities meeting a resolution supporting all the measures required to restore the cod stocks. That is a conference of every major municipality right across Canada.

Chuck Furey, the Minister of Development for Newfoundland, proposed before the Northern Ministers' Conference in Sudbury just last week a resolution calling on the five provinces attending to support the end of overfishing and the necessary measures to rebuild Canada's cod stocks. Those five ministers unanimously endorsed that position. It is another indication that Canadians are ready to take the tough decisions, the necessary measures to protect this nation's vital resources.

Canada has benefited immeasurably as a result of the Law of the Sea Convention. We have signed it. As a consequence of it, we have been able to declare sovereign rights over 1,290,000 square nautical miles of continental shelf. We have been able to claim the right to manage what is now, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, the largest marine nation in the world, bar none.

This country has the largest marine coastline on the planet earth. There is not even a close second any more with the break-up of the Soviet Union. Surely Canada should lead the charge to see that ratification of the Law of the Sea takes place. We cannot allow the interests of private concerns that want to ensure they continue to be unregulated in their desire to mine the sea bed to prevent this nation from being forward looking, confident and committed to protecting the sea resource.

This motion today is not a motion asking our government to blindly ratify the convention. It is not a motion that calls upon the Government of Canada to rush forward without any consultation with our partners in the G-7 or in the western industrialized world. It does not say that.

It says that in the opinion of this House the government should, for the benefit of Canadian fisheries, urgently take the necessary steps to ratify the international Law of the Sea, and urge other nations to do so in order to reach the 60 signatures required for the Law of the Sea to come into force.

That is what it says. It says Canada should show leadership. Canada, among western nations, should take a leading role and not leave it just to the Third World to ratify the Law of the Sea. It says Canada, which has benefited so immeasurably from this convention, ought now to give something back to the rest of the planet by urging that this convention be ratified.

• (1750)

It is a motion that does not condemn the Government of Canada. It does not call into question the commitment of the Government of Canada. It does not call into question the interests of the Government of Canada. It does not seek to convey one shred of partisan advantage by the proposer, the member for Davenport. It is a motion that is consistent with the integrity of this member who in all his years in this place and his many hours of debate and as many questions put on the floor

of the House of Commons has always stood on the side of sustainable development.

It is a motion by a member who has said a thousand times if we ever must err in this place in so far as the environment is concerned, let us err on the side of the environment, not on the side of the speculators who want to mine the bottom of the ocean as if it were an open pit mine.

Have we not done enough damage? Have we not destroyed enough of this planet with our eyes wide open? Have we not understood by going to the real conference. The real conference is the one that I and some of my colleagues held a week ago with 1,000 fishermen and plant workers on the great northern peninsula who have seen 500 years of history wiped out because of the wanton destruction of gulf cod stocks. That is the real conference.

That is the reality we must face. Those are the people whose eyes we must meet. It is to them, the builders of Canada, those who come from the primary resource sector in Canada, those fishermen together with farmers, together with the people in the mining section, the forestry section, it is to those people we owe a vote of confidence.

I conclude with this. Remember the words of the Haida Indians from the province of British Columbia. They said that we do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. The same is true of the sea. Let us leave it better than we found it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ROYAL ASSENT

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

> Madam Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Chamber of the honourable the Senate.

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

[*English*]

And being returned:

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following bills:

Bill C-48, an act to amend the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof—Chapter No. 26.

Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof—Chapter No. 27.

Bill C-74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act—Chapter No. 28.

Bill C-75, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act—Chapter No. 29.

Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada—Chapter No. 30.

Bill C-33, an act respecting the use of foreign ships and non-duty paid ships in the coasting trade—Chapter No. 31.

Bill C-82, an act to amend the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the National Housing Act and to amend another acts in consequence thereof—Chapter No. 32.

Bill C-7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada—Chapter No. 33.

Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods—Chapter No. 34.

Bill C-58, an act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other acts in consequence thereof—Chapter No. 35.

Bill C-41, an act respecting the energy efficiency of energy-using products and the use of alternative energy sources—Chapter No. 36.

Bill C-13, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process—Chapter No. 37.

Bill C-49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault)—Chapter No. 38.

Bill C-51, an act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories—Chapter No. 39.

Bill C-52, an act respecting water resources in the Yukon Territory—Chapter No. 40.

Bill C-70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury)—Chapter No. 41.

Bill S-11, an act to amend the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act—Chapter No. 42.

Bill S-9, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Northwest Canada Conference Evangelical Church.

Bill S-10, an act to incorporate Green Shield Canada.

Bill S-12, an act to amalgamate the Montreal Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal.

Bill C-87, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March 1993—Chapter No. 43.

[*Translation*]

The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the precedence list on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I hope it is an appropriate time to intervene on a point of order and to suggest that we call it 10 o'clock.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would there be unanimous consent to call it 10 o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think I had a smile thinking that the hon. member was calling it 10.30.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your sentiment and oh, that I could have agreed. However, under the circumstances I think you will appreciate that I would want to be heard on the adjournment debate. I will be as brief as I can.

I am speaking in amplification to a question I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration last Friday. There was a lot of concern for my riding shown by the response that the minister gave. I know that the minister really did not intend to be flippant. I understand. I have never been a minister but I do know they have fantastic responsibilities and to come to the House and answer questions for one hour a day is another part of their responsibilities and I know that tempers get short.

• (1810)

The minister did indicate that it took a demonstration to get this side of the House to ask questions on the desperate situation of those people who are without compensation in my riding and the six ridings in Newfoundland.

I want to keep this on as positive a note as I can. I know I have made 27 interventions on that specific subject in this House and I think the Speaker and the government have been pretty good about allowing us to air this issue.

We had an emergency debate on February 19, an opposition day on March 12, and last night from 10 p.m. until almost 1 a.m. this morning. We had an emergency debate on the plight of fishermen and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the dreadful condition of the northern cod and gulf cod stocks.

A number of points were made. The reduction in the cod catches and stocks both offshore and inshore is mind-boggling. It has resulted in two concerns. One is the concern for the likelihood of a moratorium which will affect the offshore and the inshore in the long term. However, the purpose of the debate last night and the focus of the debate was—and if it wandered off it should have been—on the short-term requirements for those people who have in a general sense been without compensation since May 15.

In my specific case I am on my feet this evening for 60 families that do not have compensation because they had not worked long enough in Port Union at a plant with 1,200 people, at the time employing 850, and 155 trawlermen.

I am pleased to report that today I received a letter from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and he did say he was taking a personal interest in the 60 people. I hope he is still considering some kind of compensation. However nothing has happened and it is a little bit wearisome to hear about, as much as we do appreciate it, the previous $584 million in 1990 and the $57 million the year before.

These are not normal times. These are times when people are required to take notice. Some things have happened that have never happened before. In 500 years there has never been a consideration, even a discussion, of a moratorium on any kind of fish stock.

There has never been a sea demonstration like there was on March 30 when 11 trawlers and 125 fishermen and other crew members sailed to demonstrate against foreign overfishing. We have had, in a relatively short time, two emergency debates and one opposition day on a subject that relates to this whole problem.

There is a message. We are as vocal as we can be on this side of the House, the NDP as well as the Liberals, on this subject and I know there are members on the government side who are concerned as well.

In the closing hours of the House somehow it has become a tradition. I have always managed to do this. It is not by intent. It is by accident. I want to stress to the government that as we close this House there are still people who do not have compensation in the short term, and in the long term those who will not have compensation if the fisheries are given a moratorium and who will expect some announcement from the government in the very near future.

I will certainly look forward to that, and hope that in the response there will be some indication given as to what is going to happen this summer.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I do want to answer on behalf of the government. I want to say that I am sure that all members of the House share the concerns raised by my hon. friend and none are more concerned about this problem than the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and the Prime Minister of Canada himself. All three have made it very clear that they will respond, as this government has indeed responded in the past, to this very serious problem. The minister spoke eloquently and passionately last evening on this subject. I spoke, as did my hon. friend for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

I want to make it perfectly clear that this government will respond. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has to make a decision with respect to whether that moratorium on the northern cod fishery should be extended. I am sure that he will want to announce the compensation package at that time.

I know my hon. friend would acknowledge that the references that have been made to the Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program and to last year's Catch Failure Program are simply there as testimony to the fact that this government is aware of the problem, is prepared to respond and will respond.

The minister has said he will be making his decision on northern cod in the near future and that accompanying that decision will be a program of assistance to help those affected. The government will assist these people, as we have done in the past, when it is needed and we will do it again.

The Prime Minister has stated his concern and commitment. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Employment and Immigration have stated their concerns.

I want to assure my hon. friend that the government's objectives are clear. The first is to ensure the conservation of the resource so that we do have a future in that very important fishery off the Grand Banks. The second objective is to assist fishermen, plant workers and families in communities.

The minister of fisheries was forced to lower the total allowable catch of northern cod from 185,000 tonnes to 120,000 tonnes this year. That was not an easy decision to make, but it was made. Earlier this month we learned that it appears the northern cod stock that once supported a total allowable catch of more than 250,000 tonnes is more depleted than what we know from last February. The definitive advice and the decision flowing from it will soon be in the public domain.

The government's record is exemplary and unprecedented. I want to assure my hon. friend that the support that is needed will be here. The Government of Canada, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Prime Minister of Canada hear the cries of the people of Atlantic Canada and they will respond with compassion, with generosity as appropriately as they have done in the past.

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity to expand on my question to the Minister of Transport with regard to the development of Terminals 1 and 2 at Toronto's Pearson airport.

I was assured that the project is on stream. I was told that the runways would be developed, but I then learned there has been an extension on it until July 13 with regard to the Terminals 1 and 2 project. I want to give the key reasons why this is important. The federal government can create up to 20,000 job-years of employment in

construction, service and related industries over the life of the project. The federal government can create up to 3,000 jobs this year when construction unemployment in Toronto is about 50 per cent. The redevelopment of Terminals 1 and 2 will be with private investment and absolutely no expenditure of public funds.

I think these are really important reasons and all of us who have gone through Pearson airport know that we do not want to wait until 1998 to do this project when there will be 28 million passengers per year and therefore completely overloaded. The idea is to do this project now when it is not at full capacity so that the airport can still work while this is going on.

There are tremendous benefits to Pearson airport. One per cent of all people employed in Ontario work at that airport. It is of big, big importance to all of us in Ontario. I must say, though, that the overwhelming reason why, at this point in time, the government should act is clearly this one. This is an opportunity for not just short-term economic impact, but really long-term prosperity. The development of Terminals 1 and 2 will give Canada—and a truly Canadian firm—the opportunity to reach out past the successful completion of Terminals 1 and 2 into the international marketplace. Canadian expertise used at Terminals 1 and 2 will able to be show-cased to the world. It will show that we are real leaders in this kind of technology of people and cargo moving and successfully running an airport. Canada has the capability. With Canadians working and making a show-case example of Terminals 1 and 2 we are going to have something for the world, which is our long-term prosperity. I think that is the key reason why we have to get on.

• (1820)

We had a big setback yesterday in Ontario when we were refused the 1998 world's fair. Big-scale economic projects come along very rarely. We cannot afford to let this one slip by. We need this and we need it now. We do not want to see any more delays after July 13.

Twenty months ago the federal government announced it was going to do something at Terminals 1 and 2. Southern Ontario is hurting economically along with everyone else. The government has an opportunity to create thousands of jobs at no cost to the taxpayer. This will be good news for Bob Rae because you do not have to, by creating all these jobs, drive up your deficit.

This is a new way of doing it. It is completely financed by the private sector. It is a good message not just for Ontario and Ontarians but indeed for all of Canada to do it this way. I think that with 3,000 jobs and up to half a million dollars of investment per day we cannot afford to be dragging our heels. We have to get this government acting as quickly as it can after July 13. It must ensure that the project, once it starts, is accelerated.

The development of Terminals 1 and 2 at Toronto's Pearson airport is important for everyone.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the government and compliment the hon. member for London—Middlesex for bringing forth this very important matter. I assure him that the Minister of Transport and the Government of Canada share his concerns with respect to this very important project.

On behalf of the minister, I would like to reaffirm the government's clear and firm commitment to the future of Lester B. Pearson International Airport. The Minister of Transport has initiated an impressive program for the restoration and modernization of Terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson airport.

In March 1992 a request for proposals was issued inviting the private sector to submit competitive proposals to undertake the project. We are now awaiting those proposals with considerable anticipation.

I am sure the House can appreciate the very fact that this is a very short time frame for such a complex project reinforces the minister's commitment to this valuable initiative. We believe it demonstrates the government's commitment to accelerating the front-end phases of the project so that the work could begin at the earliest possible date.

With regard to air-side development, in 1989, the Minister of Transport outlined the first phase of a development plan for southern Ontario. The detailed analysis of the capacity problems at Pearson revealed that two new east-west runways would provide an increase in hourly capacity from 96 to approximately 126 movements. A proposed third runway in the north-south

direction would increase hourly capacity from 50 movements to approximately 70.

The government believes that the runways would yield positive net benefits for the Canadian economy. The proposed development is of course subject to a full environmental review.

In early May 1991 a detailed environment impact statement describing the environmental and social consequences of the proposal was filed with the federal environmental review office panel. Recommendations by the panel are expected, and indeed eagerly waited, in the not too distant future. Rest assured that the report will be given every priority by the Minister of Transport.

Madam Speaker, before I sit down, may I wish you and your colleagues of the Chair who have served this House so well a very pleasant and happy summer. We hope it will be a long summer.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie.

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to elaborate on a question I posed to the Prime Minister on June 4 of this year.

It was with regard to pending trade actions by American steel producers against a whole host of countries. I believe it was 36 countries and Canada was included. This was just subsequent to a visit by our Prime Minister to the United States. He came back and said he was confident that frivolous and vexatious American trade actions would cease. We indeed hope that that is true.

Although we were wary, we felt that the Americans would lodge these actions on June 15. I am now told that they are expected on June 30.

We do not believe that the visit of the Prime Minister has changed anything in the United States with regard to protectionist sentiments toward Canadian steel producers. The Prime Minister in his response said that we were caught in a side-swipe from Korea. I suggest that we were not only side-swiped, but front-ended and back-ended and everything else.

We have been exempt from voluntary restraint agreements as other countries have received therefore supposedly striking up a special relationship with the United States.

That has not happened. Our market share of the United States has been consistent at 3 per cent to 3.5 per cent since 1988, whereas the American share of our market has risen from just over 7 per cent to about 16 per cent at this particular time.

There is no agreement on the definition of subsidies. The Americans say we are subsidized. We know that they are subsidized to the tune of several billions of dollars.

Certainly we have had some warning that this would happen when the visit of the Canadian steel producers to the United States was cancelled 24 hours prior to arriving there. The suggestion was that it was the Pennsylvania primaries that postponed the visit. I suggest they knew about this months in advance. Also we have been unable to schedule another session. We expect on June 30 that the shoe will drop.

Canadian steel producers and the United Steel Workers of America went to Washington. They told me: "Play this low key. We feel the Americans are very sensitive to the problems of Canadian steel. We will not involve you in any trade actions".

Those sensitivities have proven to be incorrect. I think they are going to be as sensitive as a sledge-hammer come June 30. I would hope the government would respond by indicating just exactly what it is doing to preclude us from being caught up in this unnecessary, unjust trade action against Canadian steel producers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to the 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, I am pleased to answer today the question the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie asked the Prime Minister of Canada on June 4 regarding the looming crisis in Canada-U.S. steel trade.

As the hon. member knows, it is anticipated that the U.S. steel industry will include Canada in its expected filing of unfair trade petitions against steel imports from a number of countries.

As he may also know, both the government and the Canadian industry have been expressing to the U.S. administration and the U.S. industry our strong view that including imports from Canada in these petitions is unnecessary and potentially destructive to the mutually beneficial trade in steel between our two countries and would likely precipitate a major bilateral trade dispute between Canada and the United States.

We have emphasized to the U.S. administration, most recently during the June 9 meeting between the hon. minister for International Trade and U.S. trade representative Hills, that while U.S. steel imports from Canada have remained stable, Canadian steel imports from the United States have tripled in recent years.

In 1991 imports from the United States accounted for over 16 percent of our market as compared to the 3.3 percent of the U.S. market accounted for by Canada.

The government has also emphasized that if included in the U.S. petitions, the Canadian steel industry would have no choice but to include imports from the United States in unfair trade cases that they are preparing against imports into Canada.

On the latter point, the Canadian steel industry is committed to taking action against imports of steel from the United States should their exports be targeted by the U.S. industry. The government stands ready to initiate investigations based on complaints filed by the Canadian industry.

We are extremely disappointed in the response of the U.S. administration to our message and would deeply regret it if the U.S. industry chose to include Canada in its petitions.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion I would like to join my hon. colleague from South Shore in wishing a happy holiday to you and to the staff who assist you in carrying out your duties, and to all the Canadians who are listening to us.

[*English*]

CHILDREN

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, on June 12, I asked the minister of state a question concerning the full indexation of the child tax credit so that it would be tied to inflation. She answered by referring to the deficit as a reason why we have child poverty. I am not sure the minister knew at the time about the magnitude of the problem in my region of Ottawa—Carleton.

I want to elaborate on my question in order to make the point that child poverty is a major national issue that needs the attention of everyone. In our region the number of children who are poor is really alarmingly high. Fourteen per cent of all children under 18 years of age are poor. That is approximately 19,000 children who are living in poverty.

• (1830)

Poor children normally live in poor families. Children are poor because their families are poor. Their parent or parents do not earn enough income to provide for the basic physical and social necessities of life. For example, in excess of 12,000 families with children are living in poverty in my region of Ottawa—Carleton. Also the number of poor two-parent families is almost equal to the number of single-parent families living in poverty.

Young families are extremely poor. Fifty-five per cent of families living in this region with children where the household maintainer is under the age of 25 are living in poverty. The situation improves somewhat for a family with children where the household maintainer is between the ages of 25 and 34, but one out of five of these families is also poor.

Also, Madam Speaker, you will be very sad to learn that 93 per cent of all single parent families living in poverty in our region are headed by women. The poverty rate for single mothers is 33 per cent and 12 per cent for single fathers. That translates into 5,725 single mothers who are living in poverty and 455 single fathers are poor in my region.

The poverty rate for single mothers increases with the number of children. For example, 29 per cent of single mothers with one child are poor and 56 per cent of single mothers with four or more children are poor.

This has a tremendous impact on the education of children. Approximately one out of three students in Ontario, as a whole, drops out before completing grade 12, and it is no different for this region. Nearly one out of four families with children where the household maintainer has not completed high school is living in poverty.

Finally, almost half of all poor families in this region has a household maintainer who has not completed high school.

That is why I wanted to bring this issue to the attention of the government so that we can implement some action plan by the year 2000 to eliminate child poverty.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre has suggested that the proposed child tax benefit will make families on welfare worse off. This is not true.

In addition to thousands of dollars per child in social assistance benefits, families on welfare will continue to receive at least the same level of federal child benefits under the child tax benefit as they are now receiving under the current system.

Some families on social assistance will receive higher benefits if they have three or more children, or more than $3,750 in annual earnings.

Families on welfare will also gain from having their full child benefits paid monthly. For example, in January 1993 their monthly child benefit payments will more than double from the current $35 per child to at least $85 per child. Since the child tax benefit will be paid in a timely matter, welfare mothers will no longer need to sacrifice benefits to tax discounters.

The hon. member has also suggested that the government does not care about child poverty because the child tax benefit is indexed to changes in prices in excess of 3 per cent.

The child tax benefit is being automatically indexed in the same way as the rest of the tax system. I would like to point out that this new benefit will automatically increase total federal assistance to children by $2.1 billion over the next five years. In addition to this automatic increase of $2.1 billion in child assistance, the government is committed to reviewing child benefits over time and further increasing payments as fiscal conditions permit.

The hon. member conveniently ignores the fact that since 1985 the government has demonstrated its commitment to helping children by enriching the refundable child tax credit five times. These enrichments have ensured that the average level of federal child benefits paid to low-income families has more than kept pace with inflation.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, in conclusion I would like to associate myself with the salutations to yourself, to the Table Officers, and to the pages who have served us so well this season.

Mr. Harb: Madam Speaker, having listened to my colleague with his eloquent French I would like to take such an—

[*Translation*]

—opportunity to congratulate him for his very good French. This is extraordinary.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish you a good holiday. I congratulate you, as well as all the people who have helped you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion that this House do now adjourn is deemed adopted.

However, I would also like to thank all those who are with us here, and particularly the young people who may be spending their last day in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Despite all the work you had to do while studying and having exams and so on I do hope that you enjoyed your stay in the House of Commons as much as I and each and everyone of my colleagues appreciated your work at each and every moment.

Have a nice summer and good luck in your careers, whatever you choose to be. Hopefully, one or two of you may come back to the House. I hope you did not find it that bad after all.

[*Translation*]

Since this is June 23, I want to take this opportunity to wish all Quebecers a happy Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, and Canadians from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic, a happy Canada Day.

It being 6.37 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, September 21, 1992, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1) and 28(2). I wish a good summer to everyone.

The House adjourned at 6.37 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 8, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

RECALL OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 28(3), I gave notice that the House should meet today. On Friday, September 4, 1992, I sent electronic mail to each member explaining the reasons for the recall of the House.

[*English*]

I also wish to inform the House that in accordance with the representation made by the government under the provisions of Standing Order 55(1) I have caused to be published a special Order Paper giving notice of a government motion. I now lay upon the table the relevant documents.

I am also tabling today documentation relating to the request by the government to recall the House for July 15, 1992 as well as documentation which resulted in my decision to rescind the recall of the House scheduled for that day.

On June 26, 1992, after consultation with the government under the provisions of Standing Order 28(3) and being satisfied that the public interest required that the House be recalled in order to consider the constitutional situation, I gave notice that the House meet on July 15, 1992.

[*Translation*]

On July 10 I received a request, signed by representatives of the three recognized parties in the House, to rescind the recall because they felt it was no longer necessary, in the public interest, to recall the House for July 15, 1992.

[*English*]

This request to rescind the recall was unprecedented and the Standing Orders do not offer the Speaker any direction as to the action to be taken in such a case. As the recall of the House is ultimately the prerogative of the Speaker, on July 11, 1992, after careful consideration, I directed that the recall of July 15, 1992 be rescinded. I came to this decision as the request to rescind the recall was made by all three recognized parties that agreed it was no longer necessary in the public interest for the House to meet at that time.

[*Translation*]

I wish to thank the House for allowing the Speaker to explain the reasons for his decision.

* * *

VACANCY

SHEFFORD

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the following vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely, the Hon. Jean C. Lapierre, P.C., member for the electoral district of Shefford, by resignation, on Sunday, August 23, 1992.

In accordance with paragraph 25(1)*(b)* of the Parliament of Canada Act, on Monday, August 24, 1992, I addressed my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ of election for the said electoral district.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, today is International Literacy Day. This occasion gives Canadians an opportunity to look at the seriousness of illiteracy in our country.

A number of studies indicated that there are 25 per cent to 40 per cent of Canadians who have different

degrees of difficulty with literacy and numeracy. It is estimated that it costs Canada $10 billion a year to respond to this particular problem.

What we need is a change of policies. We need to stop cutting funds to the provinces for education. We need to remove the goods and services tax on books, and we need to provide jobs for young Canadians so that they can go back to college and university.

I urge all Canadians who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills to enrol in literacy and numeracy programs today in organizations that promote those programs: schools, colleges, and universities.

[*Translation*]

These programs exist in French, English and other languages.

I wish all Canadians who are now back in their class-rooms a very successful school year.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, on October 26 Canadians will have the opportunity to reaffirm their belief in this country in the first national referendum in 50 years.

The wording will neither be complex nor lengthy and could read as follows: Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached August 28, 1992?

The question is simple but the constitutional package is complex. It is my belief Canadians will speak in support of a renewed Canada provided they understand the proposals.

I urge all members of Parliament to work together to heighten the debate and take it to a level never before seen in Canadian politics. If this is achieved Canadians will unmistakably reaffirm their belief in this country on October 26.

* * *

DR. CHANDER GROVER

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago a human rights tribunal issued a devastating indictment of the National Research Council for its discriminatory treatment of world-renowned optics scientist, Dr. Chander Grover.

In the words of the tribunal, calling the treatment of Dr. Grover harsh and unfair falls far short of the humiliating, demeaning, and destructive treatment he suffered at the hands of the National Research Council.

This treatment continued even while his case was being heard and decided upon by the tribunal. Even worse, Dr. Perron, president of NRC, and the minister of state for science and technology were repeatedly made aware of ongoing retaliation against Dr. Grover.

I ask both the minister of state for science and technology and the Minister of Justice to investigate and ensure those responsible for this blot on our national reputation are properly disciplined. Until we blot out discrimination we will waste the talent of fine scientists like Dr. Grover.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for several months I have been speaking in Ottawa on behalf of parties involved in mining exploration and development, the economic development of our resource region Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

For several months the federal government has been conducting negotiations with Quebec concerning the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Mineral Development. As the federal Minister, of Energy, Mines and Resources said in his letter dated August 14, 1992, negotiations were progressing and an agreement might be concluded by the end of this summer.

The mining industry needs a boost, and the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue are getting impatient. They would like to see this agreement signed as soon as possible.

* * *

[*English*]

LABOUR

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we celebrated Labour Day, a time when women and men pause to join with their families to celebrate their contribution to nation building.

As we speak this week in the Chamber about how the constitutional deal will save Canada, let us not forget what we have to lose as Canadians.

While opinion leaders and politicians have spent their time worrying over a constitutional agreement, the second phase of the Tory agenda, the economic Constitution, was slipped on the public agenda.

The North American free trade agreement will mean even more job loss and dislocation for thousands of Canadian workers. The Tory response to the disaster of the free trade agreement with the U.S. was to extend the misery to those their first agreement missed.

I ask this House to join me in saying thank you to the women and men who through their labour have made this a wonderful country worth saving and in saying no thank you to NAFTA.

* * *

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, in the days and weeks ahead elected representatives at all levels of government will be called upon to help lead in the historic debate and referendum now coming before us, a process which I believe will result in a renewed and lasting spirit of Canadian unity.

• (1410)

There is no level of government that will play a more important role in this campaign than will the cities, towns and villages of Canada, the virtual multitude of Canadian municipalities where government and politics are closer to the people than most federal or provincial representatives ever really get.

It is therefore a critical part of the current referendum challenge to ensure that local leaders are fully involved in it. The mayors and councillors of Canada's municipalities have tremendous responsibilities and opportunities to influence the direction which Canadians will choose for the future destiny of our country.

I must say I am very pleased and proud that last Friday the leaders of the four municipalities in my riding, the city of Fredericton, the town of Oromocto and the villages of New Maryland and Stanley, publicly proclaimed their unanimous alliance in support of Canadian unity and their commitment to say yes to the constitutional question that will be placed before the nation on October 26.

* * *

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, on August 23 two young men were found dead in a rooming house in Parkdale—High Park from heroin overdose. Within a three-day time frame six heroin deaths occurred in metro Toronto, possible victims of a drug marketing war.

A TV special on drug abuse and trafficking problems in Vancouver showed police and politicians losing control of communities to criminals. Related to this is the visible prostitution trade. Parents worry that their children playing in parks and school yards are exposed to syringes and condoms.

I congratulate the Parkdale residents who are regaining control of their community. Now Parkdale community legal services are threatening to take action to force residents off the streets in protection of prostitutes.

Enough is enough. Under the present justice system taxpayers' money will be used to protect non-taxpaying hookers. The drug prostitution harassment has reached a national crisis. I call on this government to strengthen legislation to bring back safety and security to our streets and communities.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend all those who contributed to the attainment of the Charlottetown accord which I believe is a fair deal for Canadians and for Canada.

Like most Canadians I look forward to voting yes in the referendum and putting the constitutional dialogue behind us. Nova Scotian participation in the first ministers' process did not receive a great deal of publicity, but as a Nova Scotian I am proud of the leadership role played by Premier Cameron and his two opposition colleagues in bringing about a commendable resolution of these difficult challenges.

But the constitutional challenges are not foremost in the minds of Nova Scotians, nor I suspect of any other Canadians. We are concerned about the still sluggish economy with its lagging consumer confidence. While

clearly we are on the road to recovery, there is still much uncertainty and consumers are still reluctant to resume their normal spending patterns.

As we work to put the great constitutional uncertainty behind us, I urge all political leaders to address as well the economic issues that are foremost in the minds of Atlantic Canadians.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, the federal government must take immediate steps to alleviate the problems facing the prairie agricultural economy. In addition to continuing low prices and a tax on the market place, the prairies have been hit by drought, cool weather, frost, and in some areas snow.

The federal government has the responsibility to initiate support programs for disaster areas. Many rural municipalities throughout Saskatchewan and Alberta have asked to be designated disaster areas.

I remember clearly an old campaign promise: Farmers have to fight the weather; they should not have to fight the government. This year truer words were never spoken.

I call on the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance and the government to announce immediately the extension of the interest-free cash advance program and a new disaster relief program to accommodate the desperate needs outlined so well by the rural municipalities and the farmers of western Canada.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, most of us return to this House today with mixed feelings. Although we had important events and people to see in our ridings, we are pleased that the constitutional discussions have progressed to the point of agreement.

In spite of the weather, it has been a good summer for Canadians. The Canada 125 celebration and the Voyageurs program for youth have helped to fan the flames of patriotism.

Canadians have had enough of the constitutional discussions and are now prepared to respond to the agreement reached by the first ministers. There are those who oppose the agreement because they want no agreement. Others will stand firm because it is not exactly the way they would write it.

It is not exactly what I want either. There are changes I would prefer, but we cannot have individual constitutions. This agreement is the result of extensive consultation. All Canadians have had the opportunity to express themselves. It is time to accept that this is the best compromise we are going to reach. It is time to put the question to Canadians and to turn the page.

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METRO TORONTO

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the economic plight of metro Toronto has truly reached chronic proportions. While the government continues to take a hands-off approach, Canadians in Toronto are paying a particularly high price for this cavalier attitude.

The unemployment rate in Toronto has reached its highest level since the Great Depression: 11.7 per cent. Two hundred and forty-four thousand people are without jobs, more than double the number of only two years ago.

When you also add the number of people who have given up looking for work and the replacement of full-time jobs by part-time work, you regrettably have a Toronto which has been brought to its economic knees.

Metro Toronto's leadership role in the country's economy has been grossly mismanaged and allowed to deteriorate to an all-time low.

I urge this government to immediately put the brakes to this stagnation by exercising the levers to effectively stimulate the Toronto economy and thereby create the jobs and consumer confidence that is badly needed.

For this Conservative government to watch this unravel and do absolutely nothing is the height of political irresponsibility.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am happy that we are all back in the House of Commons today. I want to welcome members back from a summer that gave us the chance to travel throughout the country. I have had the pleasure of going from Victoria, B.C. to St. John's, Newfoundland.

I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. Will he agree that this House of Commons will resume, as scheduled, normal sitting on September 21, so that we can deal with the economic problems of this nation? Or is the government planning to postpone the economic affairs of this nation for another two months?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are back to deal with the Constitution. When that matter is resolved, and I think my hon. friend will agree with me that it is rather important, the attention of the House will no doubt turn to other matters.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, during my travels this past summer, I met with workers, businessmen and fishermen and everyone spoke about economic problems. Only when I was through talking with those people would the reporters ask me questions about the Canadian Constitution.

What I want to ask the Prime Minister is this: Why could we not sit as usual on September 21 and debate the economic problems during the referendum campaign? We were able to do both in 1980.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it will depend on the will of the House. I know that a large number of members from all political parties have expressed the wish to take part in the referendum debate in their own ridings.

I believe that the hon. member for Papineau said the other day that he would prefer the House to adjourn to October 27. I could be wrong as I do not have the text before me; I shall have to look at it more closely.

In any case, we are entring a major referendum debate which will involve all members of Parliament. They will probably want to take part in the debate in their own ridings. However, it is up to the Leader of the Opposition to suggest other alternatives.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people want us to deal with the other problems of the nation while we are debating the Constitution.

In fact, if we create the impression that the government or the Prime Minister want to avoid taking responsibility for the economy for another two months, Canadians might be very disappointed and refuse to be as nice as they should be on the constitutional matter.

The unemployed of this country want this government to change its economic policies right now so that they can have jobs and respect. When will the government do something about the economy? That is what they want to know.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Canadians generally recognize that variables cannot be isolated. You cannot put the Constitution over here and the economy over here. They are very closely co-mingled. Economic recovery in Canada depends in very substantial measure on a successful resolution of our constitutional problems.

• (1420)

There are people who will be opposing this deal; not because it has imperfections, because it does and that is fair ball, but others will be opposing the deal because they want to dismantle Canada. It is important that we all be out there, not only defending the deal to the extent humanly possible, but defending Canada as well.

I do not think that Canadians will hold it against us if we deal first and foremost for the next four weeks with resolving the constitutional issue once and for all and then turning our full attention as a united nation toward the question of the economy.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that the Constitution and the economy are co-mingled.

If that is correct, I ask the Prime Minister this. Why does he treat them as mutually exclusive, as an either/or question? Why does he not agree that while we are

working on the referendum, we can also be meeting in this House to hear the new economic plans of the government to get the economy going. Is this government saying that it cannot even walk and chew gum at the same time when it comes to the economy of this country?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would be the first to agree that resolving the constitutional problems and bringing about a mood of consensus and national unity will have a very direct bearing upon the economic fortunes of this country. There is no question about that and I think the hon. member would agree with me.

He knows that the constitutional issue which has been in the forefront of the political agenda for the last number of months affects investment plans. Foreign investors will be watching this debate very closely and very keenly.

I am sure that he, other members of this House and all Canadians will welcome the fact that we have an opportunity now to resolve the constitutional crisis in a very positive vein and that he would be the first one out there joining us in ensuring that it happens.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, Philip Cross, Statistics Canada's director of current analysis said about the economy, after eight years of this government: "There have never been four straight quarters where the economy has done as little as this. It's moving sideways, which is quite extraordinary for a recovery".

In the face of these facts, why does the government want to wait and do nothing for two months while the economy is drifting and 1.6 million Canadians are out of work? This is no way to build confidence in the economy of this country or its future.

If the government is serious about the country's future, why will it not present new plans to this House to get the economy going while we are working on the referendum?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, just this morning the Royal Bank of Canada predicted that the recovery will continue to gather steam for this year and move on to firmer ground in 1993.

We have had employment growth in the economy in three of the last four months. Forty-three thousand jobs have been created over that period of time and there has been consecutive real growth in the GDP in the last five quarters. The GDP is up. Consumer confidence is improving. Business confidence is improving.

I remind the hon. member that recovery is slow because the world economy is slow. The G-7 countries are projecting growth in the area of 2 per cent or less. Canada, as part of the world economy and an important trading nation within those economies, is directly affected. The signals are there. It is a slow but durable and sustainable recovery. I remind the hon. member that mortgage rates have dropped to a 35-year low in this country.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, Labour Day, Canada celebrated the work of the millions of workers in Canada who built this country, who work for this country. Sadly a large number of those are now out of work. In the two months that this House was in recess, July and August, 137,000 more full-time jobs were lost in Canada.

The Minister of Finance says that the fundamentals are in place. For those 137,000 people who have just lost a full-time job, added to the 1.6 million, I say this to the Prime Minister. The government talks about the prosperity agenda. Unemployed workers are asking: "Is this it, unemployment?".

When is the government going to bring in a plan to get Canadians back to work and to address the serious unemployment in this country?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that unemployment is higher than we would like to see it. However, the hon. member's assertion is absolutely incorrect.

The fact of the matter is that 43,000 new jobs have been created over the last four months. There have been increases in three of the last four months.

I remind the hon. member that while there have been increases in employment there have also been corresponding increases in the labour force. The labour force grew by 12,000 in the month of August and employment

grew by 11,000. It is certainly not dramatic but at least it is pointing in the right direction.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I remind the Minister of Finance that people across this country are hurting and are in pain because they do not know if they are going to have a job tomorrow if they have one today and if they do not have a job they do not know how they are going to get one because this government's policies have created unemployment in this country.

The government has choices about what it does. Whether or not the House is sitting, it is the government's responsibility to get a job creation program under way in this country.

Today the government sent millions of pamphlets to Canadians that were paid for by the taxpayer, on the trade deal. It is also spending another $1.8 million in radio ads alone to promote the trade deal, NAFTA. Despite the loss of over 360,000 manufacturing jobs since the Canada–U.S. trade deal came into effect, the government in this publication has the gall to say: "Free trade is helping to create the kinds of jobs Canadians need to compete in today's global marketplace." That is disgusting.

Canadians do not need to see ads for a bad trade deal. They need to see ads for jobs. When are Canadians going to see those ads?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party is wrong again. She suggests that something in the order of 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector since the free trade agreement has been signed. That is false.

Statistics Canada, as the hon. member will note, has reported that some 186,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector were lost between September 1984 and September 1992. To offset that, there have been 1.3 million new jobs created for a net gain well in excess of one million new jobs.

TRADE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Minister of Finance talk to Statistics Canada and ask why the unemployment rate remains at 1.6 million. It is unchanged.

[*Translation*]

On the other hand, the NAFTA, the agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada, a text of 900 pages, will be made public today. The American Congress will be holding public hearings on the agreement, but there will be nothing in Canada.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he undertake to have a parliamentary committee hold public hearings in all regions of Canada so that all Canadians can express their views on this agreement?

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was told before the summer break exactly what the government will be doing on this. It will be consulting Parliament similar to the way it consulted Parliament during the free trade agreement.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, in the United States, President Bush has recently announced a multibillion dollar program to help workers in industrial sectors adversely affected by the North American free trade agreement while the Clinton Democrats are calling for even more extensive adjustment assistance.

Why has the Canadian government not introduced additional adjustment assistance to help Canadian business and Canadian workers adapt to freer trade?

• (1430)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): It is, indeed, a good question. The hon. member is referring to an announcement by President Bush whereby he outlined spending $2 billion, $1.8 billion in real money for a work force of about 175 million people. In Canada, we spend $3.55 billion for 14 million workers. It does not compare.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister will know full well in his review of adjustment assistance in Canada that the deGrandpre report stated: "The removal of interprovincial barriers to

economic activity is the most important step government should take".

Canadians cannot understand how the government can negotiate free trade with the United States and Mexico but cannot negotiate free trade within Canada. As the de Grandpre report emphasized, a true economic union in Canada is essential if Canadians are to be competitive in the 21st century.

What concrete measures is the government taking to create a true common market within our own country?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there was some considerable progress made on that issue during the constitutional discussions. There was not as much progress as we would have liked and I think not as much progress as the opposition would have liked, although a little more than was made in an earlier round of constitutional discussions.

What is most important is that there is a firm commitment now by all of the first ministers to the principles of free trade within the country. There is a process set forth that will allow first finance ministers and then first ministers to gradually move us toward a situation in which in addition to the guarantee of free trade in goods under section 121 we will make significant progress on free trade also in services, in capital and in persons.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

When the Prime Minister signed the first disastrous trade deal he said that we would have an economic boom in Canada and he said that we would have the best adjustment programs in the world. Instead, what we have is a devastating recession. The situation in metro Toronto alone is worse than it has ever been in the entire lifetime of Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to refer to ministers or other members appropriately.

Ms. Copps: How can the Prime Minister agree to a second deal when the first deal is sending thousands of Canadians to the unemployment lines?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the adjustment issue. If she would care to look at what Statistics Canada has just published recently, she will see the number of jobs that have been created on account of free trade with the United States and that the recovery in this country is led by exports to the United States. Maybe she cannot see that, but Canadian workers do.

When she talks about the adjustment program, the Americans are looking at what we do in Canada in terms of income support, in terms of training, in terms of counselling workers and helping them adjust to this new economy. We are doing what the Americans hope to have under their program but do not.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that maybe the hon. minister should talk to some Canadian workers. While this deal might be good for Dallas and good for Acapulco, it certainly is not good for the workers in Hamilton, Toronto or Sydney.

Using the steel industry as a simple example, under the current deal the steel industry has been hammered and hammered and hammered by unfair trade practices from the United States.

How can the government agree to a second deal that has no binding dispute settlement mechanism, no anti-dumping code and no serious definition of subsidies and leaves us in the same mess as the current free trade agreement?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is quite wrong. The deal, indeed, has a binding dispute settlement mechanism. This statement is fundamentally and completely inaccurate.

Ms. Copps: Wrong.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says that they are wrong. When the deal is tabled on the floor of the House of Commons, she will see that she is wrong. I know she will then want to stand up and acknowledge that fact to the Canadian people.

For the benefit of my hon. friend when she is reviewing her facts with regard to trade arrangements, the free trade agreement has already attracted $15.1 billion in new foreign direct investment in Canada. Last year, Canada exported $5.7 billion more in goods and services to the United States than in 1988, the year before the free trade agreement came into effect.

I know that there is a fundamental difference of opinion with regard to trading arrangements between some opposition parties and the government. We favour broad, liberalized trading arrangements because we believe that Canada can compete with any other nation in the world.

The only way to build new prosperity is to trade one's way to new prosperity. That is precisely what we have done and it is what we are going to continue to do irrespective of the opposition that would like to take us back 40 or 50 years. Canadians will not do that.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Throughout this summer people in this country have seen continued unemployment, unemployment that is both frightening and unacceptable. The only thing worse in fact has been the inaction of this government in the face of that problem.

We see three months of unemployment stuck at 11.6 per cent. We see growth rates only a quarter of what the government has predicted. We see that business investment has declined.

I ask the government this question. The Minister of Finance says that he admits things are slower. Surely that is a reason for this government to come back with a different answer, a new response, some new energy and urgency to deal with unemployment.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that employment has increased by 43,000 in three of the last four months. The labour force is growing.

We have had five consecutive quarters of positive GDP, very modest. We are seeing some turnaround in consumer demand. As my colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration pointed out, the demand for exports is improving. In the first quarter, exports improved by 14.4 per cent. In the second quarter, there has been a further improvement of 4.6 per cent. Housing starts are improving. There has been steady improvement in the composite index, the index of fifteen components in the Canadian economy.

While the hon. member takes some pleasure in signalling some of the negative indicators, there are a number of positive indicators on the horizon. I think a close analysis will reveal that there are probably more positive indicators right at this particular time than there are negative ones.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, faced with the same situations which we face here, 10 days ago the Japanese government changed its policies.

It launched a $102 billion package of tax cuts, of spending and of government guarantees. Why is it fine for Japan to change its position to deal with an unemployment problem that is not as bad as ours and it is not right for us to make such changes? Why does getting people back to work make sense in Japan but not in Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, we do not have the luxury that the Government of Japan has.

We cannot stimulate in a fiscal manner because of our difficult debt and deficit situation. That is an issue we have to deal with. I know the hon. member would suggest that the government should print more money and spend it. That comes from his party's employment and immigration critic.

• (1440)

We do not share that view. We believe it is important to get the fundamentals right. In getting the fundamentals right, you get a situation where mortgage rates decline to a 35–year low, you get price stability and that is important for investment. If we can resolve the constitutional issue that will create further confidence.

He talks about taxes. This government in the last budget reduced taxes. What happened? The NDP socialist governments in Saskatchewan, Ontario and British Columbia took up that slack and increased taxes beyond that which we provided in relief.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Last month the figures showed that Canada lost a further 27,000 manufacturing jobs.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance: Did he foresee his government's economic policies were going to be so devastating to our manufacturing sector? If so, could he tell us specifically where the latest victims of Tory

economic mismanagement are supposed to apply for a new job?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that the restructuring going on here in Canada is also going on in other countries, particularly the G–7 countries. That is what all the G–7 countries are faced with. There has been a three million increase in the number of unemployed in the G–7 countries in the last two years.

I think the hon. member would also share the view that as productivity increases the number of jobs declines, relatively speaking. There has been a pick up in the telecommunications and service sectors and that is how there has been 1.3 million new jobs created over the last four to five years.

Indeed, the new economy, the economy of the future will be perhaps less reliant upon manufacturing, albeit it will be a very important component. Relatively speaking, the service sector, the high–technology sector, the electronics sector, the information technology as we refer to it from time to time, is part and parcel of the replacement for some of those manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, the minister has just told this House that according to him the decline in our manufacturing employment, which has been 17 per cent since free trade, is just the result of global trends. Why then has Canada lost manufacturing jobs at twice the rate of the Americans?

I want to ask this minister, does he really believe we can have a strong Canadian economy if we do not have a strong manufacturing sector? Manufacturing sectors are the backbone of every one of our leading competitors in the world.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, of course we need a strong manufacturing sector and that is why we disbanded the manufacturers' sales tax which was a hidden silent killer of jobs. That is why we brought in the GST which has improved the competitive position of the manufacturing sector by $3.5 billion. That is why we negotiated liberalized trading arrangements with Mexico and the United States to ensure we would have access to those markets.

I am pleased the hon. member has recognized that we have provided in the budget incentives for the manufacturing sector in terms of a reduction in taxes and improvements in the capital cost allowance which further improves the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector. It clearly demonstrates we do take the manufacturing—

Mr. Speaker: I think we must move on.

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YOUTH

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, young Canadians are facing a national crisis. As the Prime Minister celebrates his eighth year in office, over 450,000 young people are unemployed. Every year 100,000 young people drop out of high school and thousands more are denied access to post–secondary education and training.

Why does the Prime Minister not realize his programs have been those of anguish and despair? Why does he refuse to address the concerns of young Canadians?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member refers to help for young Canadians, he should look at—

[*Translation*]

—the panoply of programs that have been put in place to help these young Canadians stay in school.

[*English*]

One is the stay–in–school initiative. I think there are over 450 START programs all across Canada led by youth trying to keep them in school. The training effort has more than tripled in the last three years by this government.

The Liberals stand in this House asking for more for youth. They opposed for a year and a half spending hundreds more millions of dollars on training Canadians. That is what we have done. They resisted that. Today the hon. member stands up and complains, but I think that Canadians can see their game.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I travel throughout Canada listening to young people. I can tell you that this generation is extremely disappointed in the actions of this government. Eight years after the promise of jobs, jobs, jobs, young people in

Canada are still waiting for job opportunities, educational opportunities and training opportunities.

My question to the minister is the following: When will this government become a vehicle of opportunity for young Canadians? When will this government stop turning its back on young Canadians?

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, like my hon. colleague and I am sure a number of other colleagues who have travelled the country, we do meet young Canadians who have confidence in the future, particularly when they are looking at a unified Canada.

What the young people of this country want to make sure of is to have the fundamentals in place so that they have a chance to face the future, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Over the summer the government, with the support of the Liberals, went on an outrageous spending spree on military equipment, including spending $4.5 billion on cold war helicopters. Last Friday it spent an additional over $20 million on new armouries of all things. Yet the government is cutting back on job training programs.

How does the government explain this unconscionable spending binge to young Canadians like Mike McBride in my riding and other young Canadians all across Canada who are rejected for job training opportunities because the government says it does not have any money?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should listen. The government is not saying that it does not have any money. The government has increased spending on training Canadians, again a measure which that party opposed in this House and helped the Liberals for a year and a half to prevent Canadians from being trained. We have done it notwithstanding that. We have done it. We are spending $3.5 billion in adjustment and training programs for Canadians. The 800,000 Canadians who benefit from these programs know what we are talking about.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, unemployed Canadians know who is telling the truth on this issue.

My supplementary is for the Minister of National Defence. Recent history shows that these defence contracts which the government announced this summer are a lucrative source of jobs for at least some Canadians. Former officials of DND get snapped up by the private defence industry on projects which they have pushed within DND.

Will the minister take steps now to break up this cosy relationship that completely compromises the integrity of the advice which DND gives to the government on the helicopter and other issues?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all tell the hon. member that the $4 billion for the helicopters is spread out over the 13 years of the contract.

Second, the department has had very strict conflict of interest regulations since 1987 and they are being applied most rigorously.

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MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Last week, Canada signed a multimillion-dollar mineral development agreement with Nova Scotia. To date, eight Canadian provinces have renewed mineral development agreements, but Quebec has not.

• (1450)

After many months, have the negotiations with the Government of Quebec been concluded? If so, when will this agreement be signed in order to help the mining industry in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and in Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct in citing the fact that we have now signed MDAs with

virtually every province. We are also very interested in completing the MDA with the province of Quebec.

The federal and provincial governments are fairly close in terms of the dollar figures. As to the other outstanding issues, those negotiations continue. The federal government and my Quebec colleagues would like to see the MDA concluded rapidly. Therefore, the work that has been successful in the mining areas of Quebec, and in particular the member's area, could go forward as quickly as possible as well.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

For a long time now, and I have raised this before, Atomic Energy Canada has been negotiating with at least two provinces in Canada for the Candu III prototype nuclear power plant development. This project would renew Canada's leadership in nuclear design and management throughout the world. I think it is essential to the supply of power and electricity for the world's emerging energy demands in the next century.

Is it not true that if we are to have the Candu III operational as a prototype by the year 2000, decisions and commitments must begin now? If so, what is the state of the Candu III negotiations in Canada at this time?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as you would know and many members in the House would agree with, the Candu program is one of Canada's technological success stories. At the present time we are negotiating with Korea, for example, on further technology. If it is not first-class technology, you do not sell it in the world today and that has been the Candu story.

In terms of Candu III, we have spent a lot of money for the new generation, especially passive technology. There is no question that we are negotiating. There were two provinces that we were looking at in terms of putting a Candu III reactor into a Canadian setting. Those negotiations are obviously not complete.

I take the hon. member's words as words of support, but I cannot report anything further today as to when any conclusions might be reached. However, from this minister's point of view, I would like to see a Candu III placed in Canada at an early date.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, in February the Minister of Transport stated in the House: "It is in the best interest of consumers and the travelling public in this country to have two airline companies".

My question is simply this: Has the government's two-airline policy changed? If so, how does the government propose to ensure that competition continues in the industry? If not, is the government prepared to say that it will not accept a common ownership of the two airline companies in Canada?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have the time to answer the three questions that have been put.

I will repeat what we have always said: We want a safe, effective and competitive airline industry in Canada and we are taking every measure to make sure that it happens.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, perhaps if I ask the minister a very specific question he will give me a clear answer.

What is the government prepared to do to preserve genuine and healthy competition in the airline industry in Canada? Is the government willing to introduce measures to prevent the dumping of excess airline capacity on the market at non-compensatory prices?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the competition bureau will look into the issue of competition when the government is presented with an official transaction. In the meantime, any attempt to solve a non-existent problem is pure speculation.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Last week, President Bush announced a $1 billion increase in wheat subsidies that will drive down world wheat prices and further hurt western farmers. By the way, it is also a violation of the free trade agreement.

Now the minister for grains says the Bush move is, and I quote: "tantamount to a declaration of war on Canadian farmers". The minister has failed to say how he is going to fight back.

Maybe that is because he does not want to upset the Prime Minister's good friend, George Bush, thereby distracting Bush in the current presidential campaign.

What has the minister done, if anything, in the face of this latest trade provocation?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague, the minister of grains and oilseeds, will be disappointed that he cannot reply as requested.

The hon. member states the obvious. The declaration of an enhancement of the export policy by the United States is harmful not just to Canadian grain producers but to the Australians, the Argentinians and to all of those countries which live by export.

The hon. member asks what Canada has done. I draw to his attention that in the letter that my colleague and I sent to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Edward Madigan, we have requested consultations given U.S. obligations under section 701.4 of the free trade agreement. We intend as we have in the past to draw to the attention of the Americans that they are not gaining markets. They are spending their taxpayers' dollars in areas where it is not beneficial and they are harming the friends and allies.

If they wish to attack the Europeans and their trade-distorting subsidies that started this silliness, they can join with Canada. My colleague, the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds, is in the process of arranging at a meeting with the Argentinians and the Australians so that we can tackle this problem together.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, according to the minister of grains, the Americans declare a war and what does this government do? It consults.

Perhaps one way of defending Canadian farmers is to take this issue to GATT. Australia has already said it is going to take this issue before GATT and has invited this government to join it.

It is apparent that the Australians will not take this issue lying down, but it is all too clear that this government will not under any circumstances upset or take on George Bush.

Is the minister going to do anything at all or is he just going to let down the Canadian farmers once again?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the response of that member and his party when it comes to war and so has the Canadian public.

The hon. member asks what the Government of Canada has done. In 1991–92, the Government of Canada and the provinces, all governments, put together a package that cost the taxpayers $1.2 billion, federally and provincially, to support safety nets. In 1991–92, almost $1 billion was put forward to support producers and revenue shortfall. In NISA in 1991–92, over $316 million was put together to support producers.

We are taking the steps that we can to support producers. If the hon. member had heard my answer to his first question, he would find that Canada, Australia and Argentina are meeting to consider taking action under GATT which we are allowed under GATT law. We are also considering the option of taking steps under the free trade agreement, a free trade agreement that only Canada has the opportunity to take action under, not Australia and not Argentina.

I also draw to his attention that when the Americans announced the countries that were eligible, Mexico had been not included this year although Mexico had been included in the past. The reason that Mexico is not included is the North American free trade agreement.

Oral Questions

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

In the Charlottetown constitutional accord, exclusive jurisdiction for housing is given to the provincial and territorial governments. Is it the intention of the government that the present federal mortgage insurance fund, the fund which now provides 5 per cent down payments for first time home buyers, be privatized or disbanded? Alternatively, is it the intention that each one of the provinces and territories set up its own mortgage insurance fund, thereby duplicating 12 times over what the federal government does at the present time with one fund?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the intent is certainly not to duplicate. In fact, the intent and the result of this agreement will be to reduce duplication that already exists in a number of fields.

As the hon. member would know from reading the accord and following the debate as closely as he has, some areas in some of the six fields will be retained by the federal government. For example, our responsibility for housing for aboriginal peoples will be maintained. There will also be some other aspects with regard to CMHC that will be retained by the Government of Canada. Many of these matters are subject to some negotiation with the provinces involved.

* * *

AIRLINES

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Thousands of airline workers and their families are wondering if they are going to have a job tomorrow, literally as we speak. The reason they are wondering about their own future is that four years ago this government turned over all economic decision-making to the marketplace by deregulating the airline industry.

Will the government accept its responsibility for the financial mess of Air Canada and Canadian and its responsibility for the workers, and act now to reimpose its will on the industry? Or is this government prepared to let the industry crash and take its workers with it?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the airline industry in Canada is going through the same globalization and revolution as other countries. It is well known that there is a 20 per cent surplus of employees in the airline industry. No matter what happens in the next few months there will be a readjustment in the number of workers employed by one or the other of the airlines.

This government has in place, as has been said many times by my colleague in the Department of Employment and Immigration, an adjustment program to take care of these people.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Michal Kovac, Chairman of the Federal Assembly of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, on June 24 I gave you notice of a question of privilege on questions and statements of members. In view of the agenda of the House today and being one of the last members to upset the Prime Minister and delay anything that he might want to do—we had discussions this morning trying to be very practical about this and using a little common sense—and so that I do not lose my privilege, I would ask that this matter be deferred. We could have some further discussion and hopefully pick an appropriate time to have it debated.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member. We have had a private discussion and I can assure the hon. member that he has not lost his position and that there will be further discussions.

[*Translation*]

RIGHT TO SPEAK OF BLOC QUEBECOIS MEMBERS

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege concerns the right to speak in this House.

According to British parliamentary tradition, there is particular emphasis on the right of opposition members to speak in a debate as important as the one we shall engage in this week. Since Friday, we have been contacting the leaders of the other parties in order to establish our right to speak, to take the floor as members of the Bloc Quebecois in this particular debate. After obtaining five agreements in principle, we are now told they no longer exist and that we will not be able to speak today.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to hear from the three Whips why we cannot be allowed 20 minutes speaking time in this debate today and tomorrow, so as to protect the democratic traditions of this House. I would like to know why they cannot give us the right to speak.

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and the House that on this most important issue, perhaps the most important issue this Parliament could consider, it is certainly the intent of the government to provide every opportunity for every member who desires an opportunity to speak.

In order to do that within a reasonable time frame we are going to have to work out some arrangements of the types that we have worked out frequently in the past.

I am more than ready to co-operate with any and all members in the House to accomplish that.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu has raised a question of privilege concerning the right of opposition members to participate in the debate today and tomorrow, and perhaps beyond that time.

Unfortunately, this is not a situation where the Chair can intervene. The hon. member mentioned—and this seems rather interesting—that there had been a number of discussions about the possibility of having Bloc members take part in the debate, and the government House leader has clearly indicated he intends to co-operate. However, government members, opposition members and the hon. member for Richelieu will probably have to discuss the matter this afternoon, and I hope they will be able to find a solution.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONSENSUS REPORT

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) moved:

That this House acknowledges receipt of the document entitled: "Consensus Report on the Constitution, Charlottetown, August 28, 1992" and notes its appreciation to all those who worked so hard toward its completion.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to put before the House, in both official languages, the document entitled *Consensus Report on the Constitution, Charlottetown, August 28, 1992.*

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: The Charlottetown agreement, which I have just tabled, has been approved by the Prime Minister of Canada, the 10 provincial premiers, the leaders of our two territorial governments and the representatives of four aboriginal associations.

It reflects not only a collective expression of common will and purpose but a uniquely Canadian process of pragmatic compromise and compelling vision. These are in themselves powerful recommendations for its acceptance by the Canadian people and its subsequent ratification by the legislative assemblies of the provinces and this Parliament of Canada.

This agreement is the result of the most far-ranging and thorough process of consultation and discussion ever held by a Canadian government, and perhaps by any government, in a modern industrialized state.

Providing leadership in the area of constitutional reform is probably the toughest job in town. The results

are achieved painstakingly and only after enormous difficulties. Respite is infrequent and rewards are few.

Much of this challenging process has been admirably led to success by the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, whose perseverance and dedication have earned the respect and the admiration of all Canadians everywhere.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1510)

Mr. Mulroney: On behalf of the Canadian people, I salute the impressive and durable contribution he has made to our country.

[*Translation*]

Allow me, also, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the hon. member for Roberval, who has throughout this lengthy process always shown his ability to reconcile his profound loyalty to his Quebec roots with his love for Canada. He has brilliantly demonstrated that there is a natural link that exists between Quebec nationalism and Canadian patriotism.

[*English*]

Tribute must be paid as well to the provincial premiers, the territorial leaders and the aboriginal leadership. It is my view that they, all of them, set aside regional and special interests to serve first and foremost the national interest, thereby making possible the Charlottetown agreement.

[*Translation*]

Nor would this achievement have been possible without the substantial and vigorous contributions to the national unity debate by the leaders of the two recognized opposition parties in the House of Commons. They and their supporters can take pride in the Charlottetown agreement because they contributed tangibly to its development.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the devotion and skill of all the public servants who participated in this process, from the provinces and territories as well as from the aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government. Normally, public servants work in the background, but I believe that the contributions of Paul Tellier, Jocelyne Bourgon, Suzanne Hurtubise, Scott Serson, John Tait, Mary Dawson and Jim Judd are particularly worthy of special mention and exemplify the excellence and dedication of the Public Service of Canada.

[*English*]

This agreement, if endorsed by the Canadian people and enshrined in our Constitution, will mark an accomplishment that has eluded many generations of Canadians and their elected representatives. It marks the unanimous acceptance by all elected heads of government in Canada of a series of fundamental reforms designed to strengthen our nationhood and enhance our citizenship.

To achieve such unanimity is no small feat in itself. It is all the more so because of the infrequency with which it has come to pass in constitutional deliberations here and in democratic societies elsewhere in the world.

[*Translation*]

For example, attempts to reach agreement on constitutional change in Canada began in 1927 and were made on nine subsequent attempts from 1931 to 1990. Ultimately, agreement among Canadians on this matter proved elusive, and all these efforts at reform ended in some measure of failure or a lack of complete success. The act of 1982 was incomplete because of the absence of Quebec from the agreement. The Meech Lake accord, which sought to redress this unacceptable situation and which was, on two occasions, unanimously endorsed by all first ministers, was in the end, not ratified by two provinces.

I believe, that this agreement completes the unfinished business of 1982 and fulfils the promise of 1987. Above all, it builds upon the foundation of 1867.

[*English*]

When Sir John A. Macdonald shaped a compact that gave rise to this great country, it reflected who we were then, as four British colonies on the northern half of our continent.

He was right. He turned out to be very right when he predicted a brilliant future for Canada and ensuing generations were able to achieve the greatness that he foresaw for all of us and that he had worked so hard to achieve.

In 1865 Sir John described the agreement reached then in terms which I believe are equally applicable today. He said: "The whole scheme bears upon its face

the marks of compromise". Of necessity there was a great deal of mutual concession.

In the same year George Brown who had previously been a determined opponent of Sir John contrasted the Canadian resolution with the Civil War then going on in the United States of America. "We are endeavouring" said Brown "to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged others into all of the horrors of civil war". He said: "Have we not then cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles?"

Confederation itself was a creative innovation to cope with the major constitutional and economic problems of the day. For instance, the new system combined responsible parliamentary government and federalism in a completely original way unlike the already existing American or Swiss models which were not essentially parliamentary in nature. The Canadian model was subsequently used in Australia and several other federations.

Thus Confederation set an example for other countries in the reconciliation of internal differences just as the Charlottetown agreement seeks to do today. History provides Canadians with a shining example to follow.

From 1864 to 1867 when the Fathers of Confederation were faced with what appeared to to be an almost hopeless situation due to internal political deadlocks, radically changing external economic conditions with the end of American reciprocity in trade, and with security threats from outside exemplified by the Fenian raids, they rose to the challenge by devising a creative solution based on compromise and reconciliation. That creative solution was the establishment of a new federation and that solution brought the various components of Canada together to work on common objectives while safeguarding the diversity of those different units.

In some ways we face a similar challenge today, a challenge to respond to radically changing external and internal conditions. We too can respond by creating a renewed and revitalized federation that can unite all Canadians in the attainment of common goals while ensuring room for genuine diversity as has always been the case for 125 years. I believe that was precisely what was achieved at Charlottetown and which I recommend to the House of Commons today.

[*Translation*]

Even with his clear vision and exceptional talents, even with the support of his party and of his fellow citizens from Upper Canada, and even with the incredible resources and unlimited potential he had already envisioned, Sir John A. Macdonald could have been but a politician among many had he not been guided, above all, by the wonderful combination of realism and generosity. For Canada to exist in the first place and for Canada to have the opportunity to become all that it is today, Macdonald had to reach out his hand to francophones, the descendents of the explorers and founders of New France. George-Étienne Cartier, a true Quebec patriot, reached out his hand to Macdonald, a son of Scotland who, like him, would become one of the Fathers of Canada. Together, they worked to build a country that today is respected and admired around the world because it is founded upon diversity and an efficient economic and political union. It is a country that, with a modest population, has developed the seventh largest economy in the world and has created for all its citizens a standard of living that is the envy of millions of people on every continent.

• (1520)

As Cartier said of the Constitution of 1867: "We sealed our federal pact without bloodshed and without the exploitation of the weak by the strong. All it took was fairness, justice, and some compromises on both sides." He added: "I hope that if it must be amended it will not be to narrow the principles of fairness on which it is founded, but rather to expand them even more". I believe, that the agreement we are submitting for consideration today respects that wish expressed by Cartier on the eve of Confederation.

[*English*]

I stand here today in support of the agreement I have had the honour to table because preserving the historic spirit of partnership, the spirit of Macdonald and Cartier, renewed and redefined for the 21st century, strengthened in the Charlottetown agreement, endorsed by the Canadian people in a referendum and enshrined in our Constitution, will ensure the unity of Canada, I believe, in a future golden with the promise for all Canadians.

What were the fundamental objectives being pursued in this attempt at national reconciliation? Others may have different views and perhaps in the course of the debate we will hear them, but on February 12, 1991, in an address to the Canadian and Empire Clubs of Toronto, I as Prime Minister of Canada set out my own views with regard to the objectives we ought to pursue.

We must deal with the sense of powerlessness in the west and disparity in the Atlantic. We must listen to the concerns of the north and the voices of our aboriginal peoples. We must seek to understand the growing feeling of frustration of many Ontarians whose contribution to Canada is rarely recognized. We must find a way to ensure that Quebecers whose special character so enriches the distinctiveness of our national life become willing and enthusiastic partners in Canada.

[*Translation*]

I believe those sentiments now find voice in the document I have tabled here today.

As Prime Minister of Canada, it was my responsibility to preside over the nine full days of deliberations of first ministers and territorial and aboriginal leaders in August 1992, which concluded in Charlottetown on August 28. The provincial, territorial and aboriginal leaders came together then in a spirit of shared responsibility for the future well-being of this country and of its people. There was a common determination to rise above political philosophies, regional interests, or partisan considerations. We all felt that the peoples who make up Canada are stronger together than any of them could possibly be apart. Each of the partners in Confederation strengthens the whole, and each of those partners is stronger and greater by being part of a stronger and greater union. This concept has stood the test of time. It has made possible the Canada we know and cherish today: a nation that enshrined duality and diversity in 1867 and that embraced multiculturalism many generations later, making it a way of life; a federation committed to regional development as well as to national development, to equalization of opportunity as well as to economic prosperity for all its citizens.

[*English*]

Let us consider briefly what is contained in the agreement that is now before us and that will be shortly submitted to the Canadian people. For the aboriginal peoples there is simple justice, long overdue, through the recognition in the Constitution of Canada of their inherent right to self-government. It proposes a new partnership in a federation that was created in 1867 without their participation.

This generation of Canadians and as a result their political leaders are now called upon in this Parliament of Canada to redeem the promises of equality first made to the aboriginal peoples several hundred years ago by the representatives of French and English kings and never fulfilled. We propose to fulfil those obligations to the aboriginal peoples in the year 1992.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: By reforming our Senate to make it equal, elected and effective we are I think responding to a strongly held and legitimate view in western Canada generally and Alberta in particular, as well as in smaller provinces, that our second Chamber must not be the rubber stamp of the majority in the House and must be able to express the sense of legislative independence and true partnership that gave rise to the Canadian federation itself.

This is a provision that deals with the nature of Parliament itself. It is an idea that was advanced for a good number of years in difficult times by the premier of Alberta, the Hon. Don Getty, and he was then supported by others as time went on: the premier of Manitoba, the premier of Newfoundland and others.

It has resulted in a fundamental change and I think a beneficial change to the Parliament of Canada. I think it is appropriate on an occasion like today that I ask all members to join with me in paying tribute to the individual whose devotion to this concept made it possible, the Hon. Don Getty.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: The Canada clause will enshrine the fundamental characteristics of our political and economic union, our attachment to a parliamentary and federal system, the rule of law, the rights of our native peoples, the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society, the vitality and development of minority language rights, racial and ethnic equality, respect of individual and

collective rights, and equality between persons of both sexes.

The agreement provides for a more efficient and more equitable division of powers between the federal and the provincial governments, a rebalancing of roles and responsibilities to focus the federal government on matters of Canada-wide and international importance and to clarify and protect provincial jurisdiction.

This would express itself, for example, by a better discipline on the use of the federal government's spending power and the protection of intergovernmental agreements. Exclusive provincial jurisdiction would be recognized in the areas of forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, municipal and urban affairs, training, labour market development and cultural matters within the province.

The Constitution would contain a statement of key social and economic policy objectives shared by all of the governments of the federation. The social policy objectives would include comprehensive, universal health care, adequate social services and benefits, high quality primary and secondary education, collective bargaining rights, and a commitment to protecting, preserving and sustaining the integrity of the environment.

The economic policy objectives to be entrenched would include strengthening the Canadian economic union, the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, ensuring a reasonable standard of living, full employment, and ensuring sustainable and equitable development.

On economic union, I regret that we did not agree to dismantle all internal trade barriers in Canada. This is particularly anomalous inasmuch as we have already achieved a much more comprehensive elimination of barriers between Canada and those foreign nations with which we already enjoy substantial trading arrangements.

By retaining section 121 and agreeing to a political accord that will at the first first ministers' conference on the economy to follow ratification form the basis for modernizing this clause I believe that we will achieve a beneficial result, one that has been actively sought by the Leader of the Opposition and other members of this House, a view to which I subscribe entirely.

[*Translation*]

This agreement has a very special historical significance to francophones in Quebec and elsewhere across Canada. It is part of a process unique in history: the entrenchment of French language and culture in American soil. This great human adventure, embarked upon over 400 years ago by a handful of French explorers on the Gaspé shores is still unfolding today in Quebec and in hundreds of communities across the country where nearly a million francophones continue to make the French language radiate across North America and throughout the francophone community world-wide. As a Quebecer, I feel great pride in knowing that the guarantees for the protection and development of Quebec society and francophone minorities contained in the Charlottetown agreement will help ensure that French is spoken in Canada until the end of time.

• (1530)

As a matter of fact, I have no difficulty in imagining that a Prime Minister of Canada will one day in this House commend the contribution made to our country by a Quebec society in which its overwhelming majority of francophones, 15 or 20 million people, live side by side an English-speaking majority that has retained all its strength and dynamism. On that day, it will be said that the Charlottetown agreement, approved in 1992 by the Canadian people in a referendum and ratified by all the provinces and the federal government, gave a powerful impetus to the cultural, political and economic development of today's Quebec.

It would be wrong to see the provisions of the agreement that apply to Quebecers and to francophones as disparate fragments of powers haphazardly stripped from Ottawa during constitutional negotiations. These provisions make up a whole and, taken in their entirety, constitute one of the most formidable instruments for cultural and economic protection and development that Quebecers have ever, in their history, had at their disposal.

First of all, the historical reality of the distinct character of Quebec society will forever be enshrined in our Constitution, as will Canada's linguistic duality. This recognition of the very nature of Quebec society will become, once the agreement has been ratified, the cornerstone of the expression of Quebecers' future aspirations. To preserve and enhance its French character, Quebec also wants to control immigration within its territory. The agreement that I am tabling in the House

today gives it the means. The agreement reached with Quebec in this respect will be protected by the Constitution.

Quebec already has exclusive power over education. The agreement grants it sole jurisdiction over job training and manpower development, which are natural extensions of that responsibility granted in 1867.

The agreement also calls for the establishment of an agreement on telecommunications, and stipulates that Quebec will have, within its territory, jurisdiction over culture.

With responsibility over education, training, immigration and culture, the Quebec government will have in its hands all the power it needs for its linguistic and cultural affirmation within Canada, one of the world's leading economic forces. Therefore, any objective analysis of the consequences of this agreement must conclude that it grants Quebec society what is clearly a greater degree of cultural security. It cannot be denied that it answers, and answers admirably, Quebec's historical demands.

In giving so many cultural guarantees and new powers to the Government of Quebec, as well as to the other provinces, can it be that we are unwittingly diminishing its attachment to the Canadian federation? Without the slightest hesitation, I say that it is quite the contrary. In all the constitutional negotiations we have gone through in Canada and there have been quite a few the representatives of Quebec have almost always wanted to maintain Quebec's participation in national institutions. Such was again the case in the round that ended on August 28 in Charlottetown. The agreement we now have in our hands will enable Quebecers to assume their full historical role in our federation.

The guarantee of three Quebec judges on the Supreme Court, a reality which arises from a legal system that is different from the other provinces, a minimum of 25 per cent of the seats in this House, a double majority in the Senate for matters affecting the French language and culture and the veto which it shares with other provinces, over any changes to our national institutions are examples of major advances for the protection of the interests of Quebec and of francophones within the Canadian federation. These gains correspond to and in some cases surpass the demands expressed by Premier Bourassa's government in 1986 and contained in the Meech Lake accord.

They also correspond in large part to the list of claims put forth by Premier René Lévesque who in 1985 was prepared to take the risk of a united but substantially reformed Canada. In fact, this is how the last paragraph of the proposed constitutional agreement presented by Mr. Lévesque as premier of Quebec read: "The will expressed by the Prime Minister of Canada to correct the errors of the past has inspired, there as well as here, hope for a better future. The people of Quebec and their government, in response to the openness that has been shown, reach out their hands to their neighbours. In a spirit of mutual respect and good faith, and following such honest negotiations, we firmly believe in the possibility of creating better conditions for out future."

I believe that the Charlottetown agreement fulfils this wish of Mr. Lévesque, while at the same time meeting the expectations of the current Government of Quebec. Yet these provisions also ensure the ability of Quebec to participate, with full confidence, in Canadian political life because—we do not see it too often in the newspapers— we must never ever forget that the great majority of Quebecers have a deep love for Canada. This agreement finally allows all Quebecers to assert the pride they feel in the country that they created, that they built and that they have loved for so long.

As a distinct society within Canada, Quebecers have put their faith, their courage and their special genius into this country. They have put into it their very soul. In 1608, French was already being spoken in Quebec City. In 1642, 350 years ago, French was being spoken in Montreal, today the second largest French-speaking city in the world. In 1763, when Canada was ceded to England, the 90,000 French people living here openly feared for their future. However, today, more than five million French-speaking Quebecers, the inventors and the guardians of French culture in America, are affirming through their pride in a heroic past their sure belief in a brilliant future. Long, long before Confederation, the ancestors of this country called themselves Canadian, a name that generation after generation of pioneers bore with pride. Today, as the world's second largest francophone community, Canada stands alongside France as one of the chief pillars of the international Francophonie. It is by determining together the kind of country that we want that we will be able to achieve the great destiny our ancestors began preparing centuries ago. This agreement, enables a new generation of

Quebecers to say yes to Canada with pride and confidence.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Many times in the course of public consultations during the past two years Canadians have complained that our country is over-governed, that government is too far removed from people and that people are too far removed from the decision-making process.

I believe there is a good deal of truth in this assertion, along with ongoing questions about Quebec's role as Canada's only French-speaking majority province, problems in the Atlantic, and problems of western alienation. These are problems that speak to the future of a renewed federation and they have become, obviously all of them—the aboriginal question—fundamental to our national debate.

Prime Minister Pearson stated the approach and the philosophy that has motivated most Canadian Prime Ministers from Macdonald to the present occupant of the office. In his memoirs, Mr. Pearson described his view of co-operative federalism which he believed was the only nature of federalism that could apply. It was the only approach that in the longer haul could work. He reviewed, as well, how common sense should always prevail in a federation over sterile ideologies.

I quote Prime Minister Pearson: "My viewpoint was one of sympathy to the provinces in their desire for more control and for more resources. By co-operative action one could encourage the devolution of power, with the provision that a province could, if it wished, restore authority to Ottawa. Although the federal government had to retain intact certain essential powers, there were many other functions of government exercised by Ottawa which could properly and beneficially be left to the provinces. By forcing a centralism perhaps acceptable to some provinces but not to Quebec, and by insisting that Quebec must be like the others, we could destroy Canada".

Mr. Pearson said: "This became my doctrine of federalism. I wanted to decentralize up to a certain point as the way to strengthen, indeed to establish and maintain unity. I remember being severely rebuked for suggesting that some of the centralists were the greatest separatists". Mr. Pearson concluded: "In fact, I believe that our administration helped to unite the country by broadening the capacities of the provinces to discharge their constitutional powers in our federal system". I think the history of the last 25 years has already proved that Mr. Pearson was completely right.

I do not claim that the Charlottetown agreement is the last word in the needed effort to modernize the Canadian federation. I do say that this agreement will make possible the evolution of a more flexible federation in which there is a better distribution of responsibilities between the two levels of government.

In the wake of this agreement the question will arise as it does following any change at all in the *status quo*: Who will speak for Canada? The answer is clear. The federal authority is in power to discharge all of the responsibilities of a strong, national government. Pursuant to this negotiation, tomorrow as today, the Parliament and the Government of Canada will speak strongly and effectively for Canada and for all Canadians.

The federal government must be able to devote itself to the national interest unencumbered by a host of responsibilities that can perhaps be more effectively and properly discharged by the provinces. The provinces must be able to serve their citizens and establish priorities in their areas of responsibility without undue interference from Ottawa.

The proposed limitation on the use of the federal spending power for shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction is not an unreasonable proposal at all. It reflects this fundamental approach.

As noted earlier, in the Charlottetown agreement we have also acknowledged the exclusive provincial jurisdiction in a number of fields and agree that the federal government should withdraw from activity in those fields on terms to be established in intergovernmental agreements.

The reforms agreed upon at Charlottetown will help give Canada and all parts of Canada, particularly regions far removed from Ottawa, the flexibility they need to respond to changing opportunities in the world economy as it impacts on their own regions. They will also allow more sensitivity on the part of the governments to local needs and circumstances and to the different priorities and potentials to be found from one province to another in this large and extremely diverse country.

None of this is a break with the past. All of it represents a renewal of our federation and offers the real prospect of future progress and harmony. All of it represents the core values of decency and fairness that the world has long come to identify with the word "Canadian".

By any international standard the comprehensive constitutional renewal embodied in the Charlottetown agreement represents an especially significant achievement. Comprehensive constitutional change has often occurred in the aftermath of a dramatic break from the past, such as revolution or civil war or a similar major disruption. Its emergence as part of the orderly evolution of an existing federal constitutional system has in fact been relatively rare.

In the United States, for example, the new constitution devised after four months at Philadelphia in 1787 was indeed a major historic accomplishment, but it occurred during a post-revolutionary period only a decade after the War of Independence.

Much more recently in Spain, comprehensive constitutional change there resulted in a genuine democracy which was achieved in 1978, but this occurred as a result of the death of General Franco in 1975 and the end of a very long autocratic regime.

German reunification in 1990 represents an example of major constitutional amendment, but it occurred in the historic aftermath of disruptions that occurred throughout eastern Europe.

The Swiss constitution provides for two kinds of amendments: total revision and partial revision and both include ratification by referendum. While there have been over 90 partial revisions since 1848, only once in 1874 was a total revision brought to fruition.

The Australian constitution, largely inspired by Canada's initiatives in 1865 to 1867, contains a provision for constitutional amendments and these require referendums. However of 38 constitutional amendments submitted since 1901, only eight have received the necessary double majorities.

From this, two lessons can be drawn. First, achieving unanimous agreement on a comprehensive constitutional renewal reconciling the variety of interests within Canada represents indeed for the Parliament of Canada a signal achievement and an example to the world of what can be brought about through negotiations marked by genuine goodwill and a spirit of thoughtful compromise. Second, public support in the referendum process is crucial to bringing such an agreement to full fruition.

• (1550)

We are faced today with the imperative duty of closing the circle of this constitutional round and getting on with the important work of readying Canadians to meet the sweeping demands of global competition and profound societal change that we find everywhere, not only in Canada but also in every country around the world. Our history begs us to proceed and the world around us reminds us that we must.

[*Translation*]

While we were discussing constitutional change lately, for example, Germany put an end to 50 years of division. In a few weeks the Berlin wall, which split Europe into two hostile blocks, crumbled and was swept away by the irresistible tide of freedom. Communism, which had sought to enslave the world since 1917, came crashing down from its pedestal withn a year. All of Europe is now moving toward political and economic integration and is emerging as a giant among the trading groups of the world.

This year, we have marked historic and painful anniversaries that put our constitutional differences in a humbling perspective, with the 75th anniversary of the capture of Vimy Ridge and the 50th anniversary of the raid on Dieppe. The young Canadians who died to defend freedom there and on many other battlefields were among the finest sons Canada has ever had. Their heroism helped father the magnificent and independent Canada that future generations were to inherit. A generation apart, these young Canadians left their fields, their towns, their cities, their families to defend freedom that was under attack in Europe. The insignia that united them in the admiration of their compatriots and their companions-in-arms forever is the word "Canada", which they displayed proudly on their shoulders. Just

weeks ago, more than 800 courageous Canadian soldiers under the command of Major General Lewis MacKenzie wore the maple-leaf on their shoulders when, on behalf of the United Nations, they risked their lives to try to bring peace and hope, along with food and medical supplies, to the people of Sarajevo.

We are all the beneficiaries of the heroism and courage of generations and generations of Canadians who wanted only to leave a better, more humane and more prosperous country to their children.

The world has come to know that peace, understanding, conciliation, decency, are words that in many ways speak of Canada. We are not free from imperfections, but as citizens of Canada we have built an impressive heritage. That is what we must protect and nurture. If we are true to this heritage and faithful to our fundamental values, we too can build an even better Canada by ensuring its durability on a foundation that is true to the principles we share.

[*English*]

What Canada's leaders have produced is a series of constitutional reforms that strengthen the bonds which brought us together in 1867. These reforms renew the concepts that are at the core of Confederation. They provide a strong framework, a solid foundation to let us move confidently into the future together.

At one point in the 1960s, historian Frank Underhill reviewed the state of the nation and lamented that Canada seemed to have lost "that conviction of positive national purpose which inspired our forefathers in 1867. We are fumbling for that lost sense of impending greatness which once buoyed us up," he said.

Well, we now have as a generation a unique chance to capture and to recapture that sense of impending greatness in moving beyond the risk of division to the promise of cohesion and all of the opportunity that flows from such a vital decision.

On February 6, 1865, John A. Macdonald, then the young Attorney General of Canada West, urged members to put aside sectional and regional loyalties and vote in the best interests of the new nation about to be born. "I would again implore the House not to let this opportunity pass. It may never recur. If we do not take advantage of the time, if we show ourselves unequal to the occasion, we shall hereafter bitterly and unavailingly regret having failed to embrace the opportunity of founding a great nation." In some important ways these words, too, find an echo in this Chamber today. They are as real and gripping as when they were first uttered.

Resolving our outstanding constitutional issues will send a message to the world about the determination of Canadians to work together to achieve this country's full economic and social potential.

Just a few days ago, a keen observer of Canada, Martin Woollacott, wrote in the Manchester *Guardian*: "In a world in which the boundaries between self-determination and self-indulgence seem to be disappearing, one country at least is swimming against the tide. If the agreement reached last month by the federal Government of Canada and all of the provinces is ratified, that ought to be cause for celebration inside and outside North America. This is not a parochial matter," he said. "Giving adequate representation to people in diverse and geographically widespread societies, reconciling minorities and dividing up powers between various levels and centres of government in a workable way has a fair claim to be the single, most important political problem of our time."

I think he is right and I think the work that the premiers, the territorial leaders, the aboriginal leaders and members of this House have done has responded to the great call for reform in 1992.

Therefore, in the great sweep of world affairs, what happens here matters. How we vote in the coming referendum will matter as well.

One of our greatest authors, Bruce Hutchison, once wrote prophetically: "Our time has come and if not grasped, it will be lost forever". Indeed our time has come. Canada's time has come. The question that will be tabled tomorrow will be a proxy for a series of profound questions about who we are, what we care about, and how we choose fully to live together.

[*Translation*]

The agreement goes a long way toward making possible a new kind of Canada. It is not perfect, but it resolves most of the pressing concerns that have dominated the national debate for many years. There may be improvements brought to it as the decades unfold, given the constant desire of Canadians to make this country a finer place in which to live. This agreement provides the direction necessary—I would say absolutely necessary,

—to create that new Canada, adapted to conditions in the years ahead.

[*English*]

This constitutional package provides a framework within which we are able to move ahead as a united nation, diverse and different it is true, yet one nation. Now the referendum ensures that every person of voting age in Canada will have an opportunity to express his or her preference.

The referendum is not intended as a contest between those who believe in dividing Canada and those who believe in a united Canada, although there are political parties whose ultimate success can only be achieved through the dismantling of this country. This we shall resist by all democratic means, and I have no doubt, no doubt whatsoever that the cause of a united Canada will prevail.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1600)

Mr. Mulroney: The question is deeper, more profound and more important than that. Basically, the referendum relates to an appreciation of what it means to be a Canadian, to the magnificent privilege that attaches to our citizenship, and the responsibilities that flow from our common values. These marvellous attributes so admired around the world cannot and should not be force-fed to anyone. You are either proud to be a Canadian or you are not. You either love Canada or you do not. No one can be obliged to do either.

Our country, Canada, has no apologies to make to anyone anywhere in the world for offering her citizens a quality of life that the United Nations has determined to be number one in the entire world.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: The quite remarkable record of success by a relatively small group of people called Canadians in bringing under control the riches and resources of half a continent, attaining one of the world's highest standards of living, with enviable social programs, a high degree of technical and academic proficiency, a pervasive dimension of tolerance throughout a vast pluralistic society, and a full roster of individual freedoms, in itself makes it very clear that Canadians form one of the blessed nations on the face of this earth.

Politically, socially, and economically Canadians take a back seat to no one anywhere. Our democracy is as genuine and impressive as any anywhere. Our defence of liberty has been strong and consistent from our very beginnings. Our freedoms are as true and unfettered as men and women whose most noble traditions were predicated on a belief in God and an acceptance the rule of law can devise.

In recent years Canada fought the scourge of apartheid in South Africa and the blight of famine elsewhere on that continent. With the United Nations we fought against aggression in the gulf and for the cause of peace around the world. Most recently, Canada's peacekeeping troops at Sarajevo won the admiration of the entire world and our peacekeeping traditions have become deep-seated values in a very proud heritage.

Canadians have a reputation for being able to get the job done. That is the reputation we want to hold on to. It is that reputation which will be at stake on October 26 as we move to get the job done in our own country for the benefit of all Canadians and all of those who will come after us.

It is now time for all of us to find it in our hearts and in our souls to say without hesitation or doubt that a yes to Canada, a yes to this agreement, a yes to the common cause and the common values it represents is a yes, a strong, a compelling, and a powerful yes to liberating future generations of Canadians, young Canadians for decades and decades and decades to come, to liberate future generations of Canadians to achieve, to grow, to prosper, to share, and to care in a manner the world has come to know as the Canadian way.

On October 26 I invite all Canadians to answer history's call by saying yes to a renewed Canada whose benefits, God willing, will flow to our children and grandchildren and theirs for generations and generations to come.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to respond to the Prime Minister.

Like the Prime Minister, I am delighted that in this country we were able to obtain an agreement which, though not perfect, reflects a broad consensus among the ten first ministers of the provinces, the Government of Canada, the three main parties in this House, the people and leaders of the territories and also our aboriginal leaders.

As a Liberal, I am also very happy and proud that today we rise in the House to speak on the eve of a national referendum, because ever since the beginning of this debate, our party has insisted that the time has come for Canadians to have their say on the Canadian Constitution.

[*English*]

It will be the first time in the history of Canada when all Canadians on the same day will have a chance to express their views about the future of this country.

Of course, some people predicted that this would perhaps create some problems, but I knew that there was to be a referendum in some parts of Canada. We wanted to give the same privilege to all Canadians. We never budged from that. We stood by that and today I am very proud that we are giving the Canadian Constitution back to the people of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: As we said, any achievement is not who wins or who loses. It is not that. The federal government is not to win or to lose. Neither are the provincial governments to win or to lose. It is not the federal bureaucrats or provincial bureaucrats who will win or lose.

The objective was to make sure that the people of Canada were to win. They will tell us that on October 26.

[*Translation*]

It is a tremendous responsibility for all Canadians, because it will be the first time they will be able to say yes to Canada. It will be the first time that all Canadians will be able to express their views on the same day.

I am convinced that on that day Quebecers will say yes to Canada and that the rest of Canada will say yes to Quebecers.

[*English*]

We cannot fail and we will not fail. This country is too great to let it go down. I am confident that everybody in this nation will realize how important it is. On October 26 we will close that page. I would like today to thank some members of this House who have worked particularly hard on this file.

[*Translation*]

I would like to say a special word of thanks to my colleague, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, who did an outstanding job. I remember when he was on the Bélanger–Campeau commission and spent long hours in circumstances which, at times, were somewhat uncomfortable. Nevertheless, he defended the principles of federalism and Canadian values firmly and with honour. He was the one to sit down and draft a minority report, because the majority report contained things that were entirely unacceptable to people like us who believe in a strong and united Canada. He deserves our congratulations and respect.

• (1610)

On this side of the House, we also have the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

[*English*]

He has worked very hard in many committees. As one of our friends from Saskatchewan, he has always tried to ensure that he understood the people of Quebec and all the other people who speak French in this nation. He has applied his goodwill and good personality to make sure that we can find a solution. I would like to congratulate him too.

I would also like to congratulate the minister for constitutional affairs. He has worked very hard in the last 16 months. He has a lot of political scars. I also have a lot of them. Some we inflicted on each other. But I wish to congratulate him too. I will always remember the day in 1980 when he was with me in Shawinigan sharing the same platform. One week later, he came with me to share the platform in Rimouski where we were again talking about Canada. I would be pleased to share the platform with him again for the same cause. When it is over, we will fight again.

But there will be one thing that I am sure he will not want to talk about and I will not want to talk about, and that is the Constitution. It was in 1980 that we started debate on the Constitution and now it is 1992, going to 1993. On October 26, I will close the book. Those who wish to talk constitution after that better not vote for me because it will not be one of my priorities.

The Constitution is not everything. That is why I hope that by October 26 we will get back on the real problem of this nation. Canadians want us to deal with the problem of the made in Canada recession that is still with us and will not disappear the way things are going.

There is the problem of record unemployment, challenges like environmental protection and social justice, challenges like returning real prosperity to Canada and repairing the shattered hopes and dreams of those who stand in line for welfare and for UIC payments. It is very sad for those who have to stand in line for their daily bread.

I want us to get back to this problem right away. When I was travelling throughout the nation this summer going from Victoria to St. John's, people were talking about their problems. It was sad to see people 50 years of age, not sure they will have a job tomorrow. These people no longer have a dream for their children. Fishermen in Atlantic Canada are completely desperate because of the situation. They want us to talk about these problems. They want us to stop talking about the Constitution. I can tell them that after October 26 we will just talk about the economy and try to give them hope again.

The Liberal Party has worked very hard on this constitutional program. We tried to be very consistent as we spoke. When the party asked me to make a presentation to the Belanger–Campeau commission, we were the only federal party there to present an official position. After the discussions that led to this presentation in Montreal in April 1991, we had a nine point program where we gave the process to this government and the substance to solve the problem. I say to the government that we have appreciated that it has taken most of the process we have suggested and even more. In the process, the most important was the referendum that will once and for all Canadians give a voice in the Constitution. That was reflected in the Beaudoin–Dobbie report and was approved by the party at the national convention we held in Hull in February. All along we have pleaded for a strong, united Canada from sea to sea to sea.

We have said that any constitutional accord must not make Canada more difficult to govern. It must make it easier to adapt to new economic realities and challenges. It must not paralyse our national government and it must reflect our fundamental values. In my view, and in the view of my party, the new constitutional accord meets these four tests.

I will not talk about all the points but I will make some observations on the substance of the deal, such as the Canada clause for example. We were asking for a Canada clause because it was very important for us to have a clause where there was a commitment by all Canadians to the future of this nation, and the Canada clause is there. Of course, there will be some lawyers who will disagree with the meaning of one word or another but the spirit is there.

For example, the linguistic duality was extremely important to us.

[*Translation*]

Because to us, it is the very essence of Canada. It is what makes Canada a country that, as the Prime Minister said earlier, is an example to the world when we consider what is happening in the world today. In Europe, for instance, they are trying to build a federation and there will have to be a division of powers between the European Community, independent countries and even regions within those countries. However, the issue of linguistic diversity will always be a problem.

Here in Canada, we believe it is possible to be a francophone and feel at home anywhere in this country. Personally, I had the wonderful experience, thanks to a by-election, of being returned to Parliament as a member for the maritimes. Today I represent Acadians in this House. For two years I have been going to the riding of Beauséjour, to live and talk with Acadians, and I see how proud they are to be French.

You go to mass in Cap-Pelé, and it is as French as any village or town we have in Quebec. People there are very proud. They even talk baseball in French because of Réal Cormier. This is something that happens in other places in Canada as well. It is something I have always experi-

enced, because my family on my mother's side comes from Alberta. It is part of reality.

[*English*]

However, the other side of the coin is also true. Every anglophone has to feel at home in Quebec. Many of them have been there for more than three, four and five generations. They are Quebecers as much as I am a Quebecer. They have to feel at home there, otherwise they will not feel part of Canada any more.

[*Translation*]

I hope this agreement will encourage specific action to help French-speaking minorities maintain and develop the vitality of their communities. Provincial governments will have to act on their commitments, and the Parliament of Canada will have to ensure that provincial governments act on the commitments they made in Charlottetown to the Francophone minority.

[*English*]

We also wanted to make sure the charter of rights is protected. It has been the goal of all Canadians. It started a long time ago when the member for Prince Albert, John Diefenbaker, wanted to enshrine it in the Constitution. Now that we have achieved this, it has to remain there, to be protected and not destroyed. I am satisfied that it is there and it is still protected.

We have always stood firm on aboriginal self-government. It was part of our program at the beginning and we have never moved from it. It is a logical conclusion to what we did in 1982, when we enshrined in the Constitution, for the first time, the concept of aboriginal rights. This flowed from the royal proclamation of 1763, and it was a logical move. It has to be rooted in reality and self-government is a consequence of that. In the next few years we will have to make it work to make sure that self-government is within the confines of Canada, that it respects the reality of the provinces in Canada, and that the aboriginal peoples can themselves make the decisions for their own future.

• (1620)

As I say so often in my speeches, we have made enough mistakes for the aboriginal peoples that we might let them make a few mistakes themselves. When they gain confidence and when they gain their rightful place in Canada, I know that their goal will be to be good Canadian citizens. They want to be different and they will remain different. It is one of the qualities of Canada that we can be different and be equal at the same time. The aboriginal peoples care about their culture, their languages. They want to be very comfortable with themselves and, after that, they will share with us both the advantages and the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

Another preoccupation—

[*Translation*]

—for us was always to ensure, in the documents we—presented, that Quebec's demands would be satisfied in this agreement. However, some deficiencies had to be corrected. We now have a definition of the "distinct society" with which we are much more comfortable.

We know that immigration, which was managed acceptably for many years after the Cullen-Couture agreement under an intergovernmental agreement, will now be in the Constitution, thus giving Quebecers greater security.

The Constitution also had to recognize the reality of Quebec's Civil Code, the Napoleonic code, which is completely different from the English common law. It had to be recognized in the composition of the Supreme Court. It had already been recognized in the Supreme Court Act for generations, but it has been put in the Constitution, as well as a mechanism to solve problems in case of conflict between the provinces and the federal government which had concerned many Canadians. Now we have such a mechanism.

Of course, the question of veto over institutions was settled. Perhaps requiring the 10 provinces and the federal government to agree is somewhat rigid. I would have preferred a rather more flexible formula, but one cannot have everything and we are prepared to go along with that veto.

[*English*]

I would like to talk about some of the problems we have with this agreement. It is my duty to talk about them because I am not happy with everything. I know there are a lot of Canadians that are not happy with everything in this agreement, but perfection is not something that is easy to achieve. Liberals had to make a decision about what to do. There are two elements that we are not very comfortable with. On reflection, I think

that over time these problems can be fixed. They can be repaired and adjusted.

For us, economic union is crucial. We are very disappointed that we did not get more than we did. We cannot live in a modern age having protectionism like we see in Canada among the provinces where workers and manufacturers cannot move or sell to other jurisdictions. How can we compete in the world if we do not have flexibility? I have some examples. In my riding of Beauséjour, an industrialist told me that he cannot sell to the Government of Nova Scotia because his factory is within two miles of New Brunswick's border.

If we cannot compete within Canada, how can we compete in the world? This has to be dealt with. This problem can be fixed with the amending formula. It can be fixed with seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population. I think it can be fixed and I can guarantee Canadians that we will work to fix it. Otherwise we will be out of international competition.

We are not happy with the provision relating to the Senate. Liberals were the ones who, very clearly, were not afraid to talk about effectiveness. Liberals always said that equality will necessarily be at the expense of effectiveness. There is no doubt in my mind that is exactly what happened. When I reflected on the problem, I realized that we, in the House of Commons, will be able to prepare legislation that will guide the operation of the future Senate.

Already within my caucus we have established a committee to look at ways and means of ensuring that the rules of Parliament will give an adequate set of powers to the Senate so that it will become effective. The regions will feel that they are more represented at the centre than before. This is something that can be achieved through rule changes.

It will be achieved because it will be a representation based on a different basis. In politics, justice is important, but the appearance of justice is very important too. If we have a Senate that is effective, it in turn will give the people a sense that they have been heard.

There will be a debate in the House of Commons. After that, there will be a debate in the Senate. If we give the Senate some real power, the people will feel that they have been heard. One of the frustrations we are having in the House of Commons is that members can be very eloquent on some problems. However, when the vote comes, they know that they might cause an election if they vote a certain way.

Very often views are expressed in caucuses. There is a sense by some constituents that the members of Parliament have not spoken loudly or clearly enough. The Senators will have a chance to express themselves a second time openly and without the danger of defeating the government. There is frustration because arbitrating disputes is always difficult in any federation.

Justice is needed and the appearance of justice has to be there too. The new Senate will help to achieve it.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Another problem is the referendum question. I would have liked the question to be worded a little differently. In the referendum, I would have liked Canadians to be able to say yes very clearly and unequivocally to Quebecers, so that there is no ambiguity. At the same time, I would have liked Quebecers to be able to say yes in an unambiguous, clear and unequivocal way to Canada, to say that we Quebecers want to stay in Canada.

The question as worded deals only with the proposal for constitutional renewal. It therefore leaves dissatisfied all those who were anxious to vote on the complete separation of Quebec. I have no illusions about Mr. Parizeau's real intentions. It is a bit funny to hear him say now that they do not want to talk about separation any more. They do not speak of separation, because they are afraid of that word; they use the word "sovereignty". Why not call a spade a spade? A dictionary definition of sovereigntist would be someone who wants the separation of Quebec. Why not call things by their name? For them, a no vote will not be a vote for the *status quo*, nor will it be a vote for a new round of negotiations to renew the Canadian federation. I hope that my fellow citizens in Quebec will not be caught in their game and will see very well that their only goal is to make sure that Canada does not work.

I wish to say to my fellow citizens from Quebec that the option advocated by the Parti Quebecois and, I suppose, by most of the Bloc Quebecois is not the right one.

• (1630)

By turning down this challenge, they will abandon one million francophones outside Quebec, and that would be unthinkable, because as I see it, one million Francophones outside Quebec are as it were our insurance that the French language and culture will endure in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Although they might not be in the best of shape and not too sure of what the future holds, although they may feel left out of the mainstream, they are probably the most precious ally the French fact has in this country. Look at what they have produced in the literary field, our performers and writers Mrs. Roy who came from Winnipeg and Mrs. Maillet from Bouctouche. There are also all the people we have seen so many times on television in Canada. I am thinking of Mr. Bergeron, who was one of the greatest promoters of French on Canadian television and who also comes from Manitoba.

All these people have made a tremendous contribution to the French fact in Canada, and I am sure Quebecers do not want to abandon them. People who talk about separation or sovereignty are in fact ignoring the greater challenge of feeling at home in a bigger country, and that country is Canada. It is a country where, as I said earlier, we can be both francophone and Canadian no matter where we live.

[*English*]

Despite the problems I have mentioned, when I balanced the whole package I came to the conclusion that we have to vote yes. We have to tell Canadians that we are turning the page and preparing the country for the 21st century. We have to ask all Canadians to join in the mission of preparing this country for the fantastic challenges which it will face in the 21st century. We also have to stop talking about the Constitution to concentrate our efforts on the other real problems of international competitiveness and the position of trade within the world: how to survive in those situations if we keep talking about constitutions.

The people of Canada will have the opportunity to agree with the value of what it is to be a Canadian. This is a great country. There is greatness in this country but there is also a lot of fragility. What can unite us? It is very simple. It is all the virtues that we have developed over the years: tolerance, generosity, respect for others and sharing. When people from outside look at our country they see that it is a country that was, as the Prime Minister said earlier, a small colony of four colonies being united by the Parliament of England in 1867 and becoming one of the great powers of the world.

However, within the confines of this country we have come a long way in understanding, tolerance and acceptance. Some years ago we were having problems between Catholics and Protestants in this country. That does not exist any more because we are all *Chrétiens*.

This reality is very important. What will happen on October 26? The people of Canada from coast to coast and the people of Quebec will say that they want to preserve Canada. This country has to survive. This country has to come back and again be the greatest country in the world. This country has a mission to show to the world that it is possible to be bigger than our parts, to be united in our diversity, and to be strong because of the generosity of spirit that has made this country the best in the world.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: 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 Malpeque—Small Business; the hon. member for Moncton—National Defence; the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Job Training; the hon. member for Prince Albert—Churchill River—Aboriginal Healing Lodge.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to speak in this debate on the constitutional accord achieved by the first ministers, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, the leaders of the territories and aboriginal leaders. I would also like to thank all members, especially the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville and other members in my party who have been involved in the constitutional

debate for a long time. I also see here today the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, who is a vigorous supporter of the unity of our country.

It is a privilege to take part in this debate because today, we are talking about the future and the unity of our country. Unity, a prosperous economy, strong social programs and a healthy environment are the foundations of the kind of Canada we want to leave our children and grandchildren.

[*English*]

In thinking about this debate today I thought if I look back in five years or in ten years on this constitutional debate, when I sit down with my grandchildren and we discuss what happened on October 26, 1992, I want to be able to say that I was a positive participant in this debate, that my party showed wisdom in its deliberations, that all members of this House showed wisdom in our deliberations, and that we did what we considered was best for the nation, that we took the possibility of Canada's future and made that possibility a remarkable reality.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: Canada deserves nothing less from those of us in this House. That we are here at all discussing agreements is a testament to those men and women around the constitutional table who persevered through very difficult times and a testament to the Canadian people who, with many other concerns, such as jobs and making ends meet, have never allowed the prevalent constitutional fatigue to represent a loss in the interest of our country, the future of our country, the possibility of our country and the dream of Canada. Today we are here to say that we are taking one further step in realizing that dream of Canada.

What has been achieved in this constitutional accord is a step toward the future. Constitutions are road maps. They are living documents. I know most Canadians would like to put the Constitution to sleep for a while, but constitutions are living documents. Constitutions will change as our society changes, as our culture changes as our country changes, and that is as it should be.

I am proud to say that the New Democratic Party and this caucus endorse the Charlottetown accord because we feel this is a step to move us toward the 21st century in a positive way, to unite our country in a way that is in the interests of all regions and all peoples of this country.

Let me begin the discussion with two fundamental questions that my party and I asked: First, why do we have a Constitution and what should it accomplish?

In my view a Constitution must recognize historical truths. It must comprehend current realities and anticipate future possibilities. It should reflect both the diversity of a nation and the common values which unite it. Through this accord Canada would be taking a major step toward such a Constitution.

• (1640)

In this accord, as has been discussed by the other leaders, the distinctiveness of Quebec is recognized and embraced. The alienation of the less populous, less powerful regions is recognized.

The exclusion of the north, Yukon and the Northwest Territories, and the restrictions on its self-determination are responded to. The inclusion of the leaders in Yukon and the Northwest Territories will be a very important part of future constitutional discussions.

The profound historical grievances of aboriginal peoples are met with the recognition of the inherent right of self-government and a real place in Constitution making and nation building.

In addition, we have put in place a social covenant which articulates the fundamental social rights of Canadian citizenship and the values that we share. This should not be overlooked as a minor achievement. It is a very important part of this constitutional accord.

Does the accord fall short of perfection? Of course it does. Each one of us in this House, I am sure, has reservations about one aspect or another. There are things we would like to see stronger in some cases or perhaps weaker in other cases, and I will address some of those issues in a moment.

When one looks at the package as a whole, respecting that this is a negotiation, not a negotiation of one person looking in a mirror and talking to himself or herself but a negotiation of many peoples and diverse peoples—and I believe it must be viewed as a whole—one sees that we have achieved a remarkable compromise. Different, often competing interests within our nation, indeed different visions of our nation, have been somehow brought together, acknowledged and balanced.

Nothing is as Canadian as compromise. It is truly what makes us that kinder, gentler nation. Let us not underestimate its value and let us not overlook some of the other means of conflict resolution in the world around us.

We are talking about the difference in international terms between co-operation and confrontation, handshakes and hand grenades, ballots and bullets. One hundred and twenty-five years of compromise and peace look pretty good to this Canadian.

There are many things that my party and I would have liked to have seen different in this constitutional process. We advocated a constituent assembly, but I would have to say that this process is a major improvement over former constitutional processes.

Aboriginal people were included. The territories were included. I believe it is fair to say that this new dynamic created by the inclusion of territorial leaders, by new premiers, by aboriginal people, was instrumental in the attainment of this agreement. It proves there is a place for every Canadian and every Canadian has a contribution to make to this very serious issue of the future of our country.

I would like to speak briefly about some of the achievements we see in this accord. Let me begin with Quebec and the progress realized in the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

[*Translation*]

In this accord, the distinct identity of Quebec society is at last given formal recognition. That in itself is a great victory, but in addition to this recognition, Quebec is also being given the instruments it needs to maintain and reinforce that distinct identity. This is crucial for the future of the people of Quebec.

A guaranteed 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons demonstrates the role played by Quebec in Canada. It demonstrates Quebec's role as a founding nation and full-fledged partner.

I have no doubt there will still be some tensions between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the other regions of this country. Any relationship, any friendship that is worth having experiences this kind of tension. There will always be people outside Quebec who will say that Quebec is treated differently. There will always be people in Quebec who say they will want no part of Canada.

Too often, there is a tendency to notice only this type of attitude. For instance, we tend to ignore the deep attachment that unites people from Quebec and from the rest of Canada. We witnessed it in the "My Canada includes Quebec", campaign launched by real people, and I mean ordinary citizens. This campaign spread throughout the country and saw thousands of volunteers make those who wanted to say yes to Quebec sign petitions.

[*English*]

In Quebec there was a recent poll in the magazine *l'Actualité* which received little attention in the rest of Canada but should perhaps be brought to the attention of those who did not see it. The poll revealed, in the words of the magazine, "a profound attachment of Quebecers to Canada". Seventy-one per cent of Quebecers affirmed that being Canadian was a part of their identity. A majority said that they would be willing to make a personal sacrifice that brought nothing to Quebec but which rendered an important service to Canada. There was a strong attachment to Canadian symbols and geography.

That poll confirms something I believe and that is that there is a growing feeling you can be a Quebecois and Canadian at the same time, you can be part of both Quebec and Canada, belong in both Quebec and Canada, care about both Quebec and Canada.

To those politicians who say that Quebecers have to choose between Quebec and Canada, I say as an English Canadian: You are wrong. I say as the leader of a federal party: You are wrong. You can be a welcome part of Canada, a valued part of Canada, a part of Canada that helps make Canada the country we love and respect.

The other major contribution of this accord is that there are other relationships in Canada which are recognized as fundamental to our national character and national unity. I have often said that the circle of Confederation will not be complete until the rights of aboriginal people have been addressed. The recognition of the inherent right of aboriginal self-government in this agreement is an historical step forward in this country.

I have the great privilege of representing the Yukon Territory where First Nations people make up a large percentage of the population. In the over a decade I have worked with aboriginal people I have come to under-

stand something of the richness of their history and culture, of the despair and devastation caused by systematic attempts to rewrite that history and suppress that culture. I feel enormous pride that we are moving forward together in this country to address the injustices confronting aboriginal Canadians and at long last recognizing their historical rights.

This is something that all of us can take pride in. I remember about two years ago speaking to the World Indigenous Peoples Conference. I was then in Norway. I spoke about indigenous peoples issues. I was surprised by the number of people who came up to me from Peru, from Guatemala. In Guatemala 80 per cent of that population are Indian people. They approached me to say how extraordinary it was in their view, from their political culture, to see a political leader addressing the issues of indigenous people. They had never seen that before.

How proud we can be in Canada that we have set an international standard which says that the recognition of the rights of Canada's first peoples by this country are also valued and respected.

I must add that while we in Canada have facilitated that process, especially since 1982 and now in this accord, and that leaders of different political parties have supported this and have begun to listen to aboriginal people, let me say that it is directly due to aboriginal people themselves, to their strength, who persevered to be heard, to be listened to. I believe that Canadians at this place in our history cannot afford to say no to the First Nations of this country but rather, to say yes to an historic achievement.

• (1650)

There is no doubt we have made many mistakes in the first 500 years of contact between whites—immigrants to this country—and the First Nations of North America. Let us look at this agreement as the first step in the second 500 years to greater equality, greater justice and greater harmony.

As I said earlier, the regional realities of Canada have also been recognized in the constitutional agreement. The imbalance in Confederation in population, power and economic strength has been acknowledged and addressed in a number of forms and in the strengthening of the regional development clause. An attempt has been made to do that in the Senate as well.

The agreement on Senate reform represents another example of Canadian compromise. The result is not my first choice. It is not the first choice of this party, but it does demonstrate a willingness on the part of Canadians to try to find new solutions to old grievances and to take that risk to ensure all the concerns of the various regions of the country can be addressed.

[*Translation*]

The recognition of Quebec's distinct character, the aboriginal government, the reform of institutions, the social charter, a more comprehensive Canada clause, those are the reasons the New Democratic Party supports this agreement.

Our Constitution will allow a greater number of people to feel accepted and to feel concerned. It will enable them to know they have a place in our collective future. However, this does not mean that everybody will feel included. It does not mean that this agreement will solve everything. There will always be people who will feel that they are not included. There are people who have reservations and who are worried. We must listen to what they have to say. We must listen to those Canadians.

As a woman, I am concerned by the lack of progress made in certain fields. May I remind you that the United Nations puts Canada in first place among the countries of the world. We can be proud of this but do you know that based on the analysis on gender equality, Canada only comes in eighth place. This is unacceptable.

[*English*]

The issue of gender equality in the Senate is one which has caused a great deal of controversy in some quarters. The idea has been attacked as anti-democratic. While I do not believe that, I do believe we have the opportunity to make changes in our institutions which recognize not just regional equality but to expand that definition of equality to gender equality. I want to say I am pleased that four of the premiers have made a commitment to that principle.

I hope we will begin to look at this country in terms of wanting to make sure that our institutions reflect the reality of Canada, the reality of 52 per cent of this population, the women in this country. I will continue to push for gender equality in the Senate. As I have said, I

am pleased that some of the provinces have committed to that goal.

I would also like to repeat that our party's first proposal for greater equity and representation for women and minorities in a new Senate is a system of proportional representation. We will continue to consider that a viable and important alternative.

The New Democratic Party will also continue to support the concerns of the ethnocultural community. Many within that community feel their rights have not been adequately addressed in this agreement. They perceive a weakness in the Canada clause and they are concerned about the notwithstanding clause. Our party, as we expressed in the Dobbie–Beaudoin report, shares that concern. These are outstanding issues that cannot be put to rest but must be dealt with.

The same is true for the disabled who for some reason have been totally excluded from the Canada clause. They must receive the same protection, the same equal treatment as others in our society.

These issues must become a part of the debate that is to be held. The Constitution is a living document. Discussions will continue. There is certainly nothing in this agreement that prohibits us from continuing and updating the Constitution and that is something we must continue to do.

Finally, let me acknowledge there are some Canadians who are concerned that this constitutional accord restricts the ability of the national government to maintain and introduce social programs. In my view this is not the case. For example, if there is a government committed to a national child care program, as I understand this accord, that government could put one in place, but what is required is the political will.

This accord is not perfect. It is a real step forward for Canada. I look forward to the referendum campaign when we will have the opportunity and indeed the responsibility to explain the accord to Canadians.

It is time to put aside partisanship and rigid ideologies and consider how best to serve Canada's future. I want to emphasize that throughout this campaign we must listen to Canadians who have concerns about this agreement. We must not minimize those concerns.

The atmosphere must be one of understanding. There is no room for bitterness, hostility or alienation. As politicians we should be encouraging and developing forums where Canadians can express their views, forums of real public debate which include those with divergent views.

Whatever the result is come October 26, we will have to work together as a nation to address the other issues confronting Canadians in their daily lives: jobs, their families and their economic future.

Let us remember in all of this that despite its flaws, Canada is a great success and a very fortunate nation. About a year and a half ago, I met the President of Mozambique who spoke of the economic devastation in his country, the famine, the war. Then he said to me with great kindness: "I understand you are having your problems here too". I have to admit I was a bit embarrassed and it certainly helped to put our problems in context.

At the same time as we deal with our difficulties, and they are real and we must deal with them, let us celebrate what we have been given and what we have achieved.

Canada is truly a remarkable nation. We have the opportunity to be a true model to others, a model of diverse peoples and cultures coming together, living together and building something worth while together.

The author, Roch Carrier, recently expressed a view that I believe a vast majority of Canadians in all parts of Canada share. He wrote: "I am more comfortable in a grand dream like Canada than in a narrow park where everybody speaks like me, has a pale face like mine and feels threatened by anybody not like me". Let us embrace that grand dream. Let us embrace Canada. Let us say yes to a renewed Canada on October 26.

Mr. Speaker: Shall I call it five o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6) the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1700)

[*English*]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East) moved that Bill C–340, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (disqualifications of electors), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C–340 is an act to amend the Canada Elections Act dealing with the issue of prisoner voting.

The intention and the purpose of the bill would provide that any person who is convicted of an indictable offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a penitentiary is not qualified to vote at a federal election unless the person is granted full parole or a statutory release or is no longer in prison on account of a remission.

This is, quite frankly, the traditional position of the British common law. This is the position that has been enshrined in the British common law for years and years and years, in fact dating back centuries. It is a position which has been adopted into Canada as a result of the adoption here of the British common law. In fact, the first reference to prisoner voting, apart from the common law in this country, is one which goes back to the Constitution Act of 1791. That is an act in which the British Parliament dealing with Canada provided that all those who had been convicted of treason or felony would be deprived of a vote and disenfranchised. In addition to that, the common law position itself deprived anyone who was a prisoner in prison of their vote.

Subsequently, in 1898, the Canadian election legislation expressly provided that anyone who was a prisoner would be deprived of their vote. That was something that was understood at that time. It was not controversial. There was not a great debate about it. It was the common understanding of the people of this country at that time that that was the way things were as far as prisoner voting was concerned. So that particular piece of legislation was put in place and has been in place up to the present time in this country.

It is not something that is unique to Canada. It is not something that is unique to Great Britain or the United Kingdom. It is widespread, right around the world, that prisoners are deprived of their vote. In fact, if we look at other countries we see that that is the case in such countries as Greece, India, Jamaica, Norway, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, all but eight of the United States and in Australia as well, except for some of the states.

Recently, however, the courts in this country have addressed the issue and a number of prisoners have taken cases to the courts on whether or not prisoners have the right to vote in the light of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There are a number of cases which have been decided by the courts and a number of cases have been appealed or are under appeal right now.

There are three leading cases on this issue. There is the Sauvé case which is a decision in the Ontario courts of a prisoner who was imprisoned in Collins Bay penitentiary in Ontario. In that case the judge, Madam Justice Van Camp said:

> It seems to me that Parliament was justified in limiting the right to vote with the objective that a liberal democratic regime requires a decent and responsible citizenry. Such a regime requires that the citizen obey voluntarily the practical efficacy of laws relied on and willing acquiescence of those subject to them.
>
> The state has a role in preserving itself by the symbolic exclusion of criminals from the right to vote for the lawmakers. So also, the exclusion of the criminal from the right to vote reinforces the concept of a decent responsible citizenry essential for a liberal democracy.

Those were the words of Madam Justice Van Camp in the Sauvé case in Ontario, a position which has been questioned by some other courts in other cases.

There is the Badger case in the province of Manitoba and the Belczowski case in the province of Alberta. The Belczowski case in effect found that as a result of section 1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that the Canada Elections Act excluding prisoners from voting was too broad and that there was a right for prisoners to vote.

In both the Sauvé case and the Belczowski case the decisions have been appealed through the various appeal courts and are now at a stage where leave to appeal to

the Supreme Court of Canada has been asked for to finally make a determination of whether or not there is a right of this Parliament to restrict the voting rights of prisoners notwithstanding the fact that section 1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides that all Canadian citizens have a right to vote.

The issue seems to be a very simple and clear one. Some people have interpreted the court's decision as saying that there is no way as a result of the Charter of Rights that we can place a restriction on prisoners voting. However, quite clearly, if we look at the decisions of the courts in those cases, they are saying, at least to me and I believe to all Canadians, that you can make the restriction on voting rights for prisoners, it is just a question of the kind of a restriction that you put in place. You cannot say for instance that somebody who is out on parole cannot vote. You cannot say that somebody who has been released on remission and is no longer in prison cannot vote. There are restrictions that you can put on voting as a Parliament and that we the courts in fact would like some guidance from you as to what kind of restriction that should be. We want to see what Parliament has to say on this subject.

It is with that in mind that I have brought this bill before the House to make it quite clear to the courts what Parliament has in mind as far as restricting the right to vote for prisoners.

This bill, as I have indicated, does not say that a prisoner who is on parole is going to be deprived of his right to vote or a prisoner on statutory release or who is no longer in prison because of a remission of their sentence. It does say however that any person convicted of an indictable offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a penitentiary is not qualified to vote at a federal election.

Traditionally in this country and traditionally in many other countries around the world, as I have indicated, people of the country have taken a position that one of the penalties that goes with a conviction for a criminal offence of a serious nature is to be deprived of your vote. Those who have been convicted of a crime of a serious nature certainly do not have the right to vote in a federal election to choose the members of this House until they are released again into society.

I had a chance to reflect on this a little more over this past week as I read some of the reports in the newspapers of people being convicted and sentenced in my own city of Toronto.

• (1710)

On September 1 I picked up one of the Toronto newspapers and read of two particular cases that I think we should bear in mind when dealing with this issue. The first has the headline "Man jailed 17 years in failed $3 million hold-up". This is a case of a man who made off with $3 million in a downtown Toronto bank robbery but was caught when he came back to the area to retrieve his keys. He was jailed for 17 years. In imposing sentence on this man, one of the longest serving and most astute judges of the Ontario bench in dealing with criminal matters, Mr. Justice Hugh Locke, said of this particular person: "He was motivated by greed. He employed electronic devices and threatened the lives of many human beings. He threatened to blow up a building with thousands of human beings inside". As a result of that, Mr. Justice Locke sentenced that man to 17 years in prison.

Now surely, Madam Speaker, neither you nor I nor the Canadian people nor the courts in this country believe that somebody who Mr. Justice Locke would have used those comments about, somebody whom he sentenced to 17 years in prison, should have a right to vote while in prison. Surely that should be one of the additional penalties along with the 17 years.

In the same paper I picked up there was another headline that came to my attention. This was of a man who was sentenced to 13 and a half years in prison for three Brampton sex attacks. In this particular instance, the man came before a judge who used to be a member of this House when you and I were first elected, Madam Speaker. He was then the hon. member for Cambridge, Mr. Chris Speyer. Mr. Justice Speyer, in handing down judgment on this particular person, called this person a predator "as dangerous an individual to women as one can imagine". The facts of the case on which he based that opinion were the facts that he was sentenced for three sex attacks on Brampton women in their homes, including a knife-point assault on a frail 71-year old widowed grandmother. Surely, Madam Speaker, neither you nor I, the Canadian people nor the courts in this

country believe that that particular person should have a a right to vote while he is in prison.

I would hope that the members of this House, the members of Parliament, would endorse the principle which has been longstanding in our system of justice, that depriving a prisoner of his or her right to vote is part of the criminal sentence, that this is a reasonable thing, that it is something that we need to carry on, that if we do not carry it on we have to beg the question then who is running the country? Is it those who have been convicted of serious criminal offences and are imprisoned as a result of that, or is it those who have been good law-abiding citizens, citizens of whom Madam Justice Van Camp spoke when she said: "The state has a role in preserving itself by the symbolic exclusion of criminals from the right to vote for the lawmakers. So also the exclusion of the criminal from the right to vote reinforces the concept of a decent responsible citizenry essential for a liberal democracy".

I applaud and I echo those comments of Madam Justice Van Camp.

I would like to move that, notwithstanding any Standing Orders or the usual practices of the House, Bill C-340, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (disqualifications of electors), be referred after second reading to the justice committee. I would hope to have a seconder for that motion. I believe the hon. member for Medicine Hat will second that motion.

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am curious whether or not it is in order for the member to move a motion on his own bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Churchill. I was about to rise and ask if there was unanimous consent for the change to this bill which the hon. member is suggesting, that it be referred to the justice committee instead of to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Would there be unanimous consent?

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, there is not unanimous consent. A committee of the House is already looking at this very matter. It is the Special Committee on Electoral Reform chaired by the chief government Whip.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consequently the motion remains as read earlier.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in the debate on this very interesting and I suggest controversial bill the hon. member has introduced in the House today.

I am a member of the committee to which the hon. member for Churchill just referred. I confirm his view that this whole issue is being studied by that committee at the present time.

The committee will in due course be submitting a report to the House on the issue, as I am sure the hon. member is aware. It certainly will consider the views expressed by the hon. member in his speech and in the bill he has tabled before the House.

However, I want to make a few observations about the bill. I am rather surprised he brought it forward because surely in the course of his work and preparation of the bill he must have studied the decisions of the courts in this country that have pronounced on the validity of the existing provisions on the Canada Elections Act which currently deny to inmates in federal prisons the right to vote. I refer him to section 51 of the Canada Elections Act which reads:

> The following persons are not qualified to vote at an election and shall not vote at an election:
>
> (e) every person undergoing punishment as an inmate in a penal institution for the commission of any offence.

In considering the validity of this particular provision the courts have made judgments on the issue. He has said that the Supreme Court of Canada has not yet pronounced on it. I understand that is the case, but the fact is that we have two judgments from very senior courts in Canada which have pronounced on the issue. One is the judgment of the Federal Court of Canada in the Queen *v.* Belczowski, which was heard in Edmonton in January of this year and the decision handed down in February. In that case the Federal Court of Appeal unanimously found that the section violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There was a similar decision in the Ontario Court of Appeal in the case of Sauvé *v.* the Attorney General of Canada, the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada and the Solicitor General of Canada. Again in that case the

validity of section 51(e) of the Canada Elections Act was impugned and indeed it was held to be contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The charter has changed the position of the common law to which my hon. friend referred. He said the common law of England denied to prisoners the right to vote and that had been the position for many years. I understand it may still be the position in the United Kingdon.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms adopted in the later part of this century has changed the common law. It gave to all Canadian citizens the right to vote. It was established as a fundamental right of citizenship in Canada. That right to vote is a very important one.

• (1720)

The fact is that the charter changed the law. We have to interpret old laws in relation to the charter and recognize that the situation has changed. I suggest that Bill C-340 introduced by the hon. member does not reflect much of a change that the charter has brought about.

The bill says that every person convicted of an indictable offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a penitentiary will be denied the right to vote, in effect. Clearly, if the inmate is out of prison at the time, voting rights will return. However, if the prisoner is in penitentiary, which is exactly what is the case under section 51(e), then the right to vote is denied to that person.

I am sure that the hon. member is going to argue that only those convicted of indictable offences will face the loss of their voting rights. That may be true but of course there will be various indictable offences for which terms of imprisonment for less than a prison term may be granted where the person is not in a penitentiary but is in a provincial jail.

Under this new bill I assume that person will have voting rights because the term of the bill is that the person be in a penitentiary. Of course a penitentiary is a federal prison. Provincial prisons are not penitentiaries. Therefore, someone who has been convicted of the indictable offence of impaired driving, for example, will find himself or herself able to vote as long as the sentence is one of more than two years.

Persons who are convicted of indictable offences quite serious in their nature but receive a sentence of less than two years will be entitled to vote. In other words, the degree of severity of the sentence will be the sole determinant in whether or not voting rights accrue.

I am not sure that is a fair basis on which to place the distinction between who should have the right to vote and who should not among the class of person referred to, persons sentenced to prison terms.

The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing cost us $17 million or $18 million. It submitted an extensive report to the committee on which the hon. member for Churchill and I are privileged to sit that is spending its time studying the report. We have a four-volume report to work on. I have two of them here.

The commission has made certain recommendations with respect to the rights of persons in prison. One recommendation of the royal commission was that persons convicted of an offence punishable by a maximum of life imprisonment and sentenced for 10 years or more be disqualified from voting during the time they are imprisoned.

The committee is looking at that recommendation. I am not sure that it finds full favour with the members of the committee because it also bases the ban on voting on the question of the severity of the sentence rather than on the crime for which the person was convicted.

There is some interest in the committee in looking at crimes as the basis for depriving persons of voting rights rather than the severity of the sentence. Indeed some of the arguments put forward in the royal commission's report indicate that perhaps that kind of disqualification would be fairer.

In the course of its report at page 44 of volume 1 the commission said: "The scope of the current disqualification is clearly too broad. It fails to distinguish between types of offences and thus disqualifies persons who have committed offences that cannot in any way be considered significant violations of the essential norms of responsible conduct in a liberal, democratic state. In terms of Canadian jurisprudence this blanket disqualification cannot meet the proportionality test laid down in the Queen

v. Oakes, 1986, because the disqualification is not proportional to any intended objective".

I could quote also in support of my opposition to this bill a page from the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal in the Queen *v.* Belczowski at page 15. I quote from the decision of Mr. Justice Hugessen who said:

> Depriving prisoners of the vote is not a ringing and unambiguous public declaration of principle. On the contrary it is an almost invisible infringement of the rights of a group of persons who, as long as they remain inside the walls are, to our national disgrace, almost universally unseen and unthought of.
>
> If, as I think, therefore, the alleged symbolic objective is one whose symbolism is lost on the great majority of citizens, it is impossible to characterize that objective as pressing or substantial.

He continued on page 17 of the judgment:

> Alternatively, and far less commendably, it would appear to me that the true objective of paragraph 51(e) of the Canada Elections Act may be to satisfy a widely held stereotype of the prisoner as a no-good, almost sub-human form of life to which all rights should be indiscriminately denied. That, it need hardly be said, is not an objective which would satisfy section 1 of the charter.

He goes on:

> The fact of being in prison is not, by any means, a sure or rational indication that the prisoner is not a decent and responsible citizen.

The prisoner may have made a mistake. The penalty that the law may have imposed or may impose on a person who has committed an offence may result in a prison term for one, a fine for another, probation for another.

The fact is that the proposal put forward in the hon. member's bill and the proposal in the current law violate our charter by these decisions because they propose that the test not be the offence, the degree of culpability, the character or anything about the accused person, but that it be whether or not that person is in prison at the time the election is held.

An hon. member: An indictable offence.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says: "An indictable offence". The hon. member must know that no one will be in penitentiary unless that person has been convicted of an indictable offence. I say to the hon. member one cannot get to a penitentiary unless one commits an indictable offence. Summary conviction offences do not get sentences of longer than two years so one cannot get to a penitentiary on anything but an indictable offence.

The hon. member has drawn a distinction without a difference. I suggest this distinction is insufficient in law to justify a change from the decisions of the senior courts that we are faced with.

We have to try to get a law in Canada that will work in terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is what the committee is struggling with and will continue to struggle with. This bill fails to meet that test, I suggest to the hon. member, that with regret I must decline to support it.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I would also like to echo some of the thoughts and concerns of the last speaker.

It is certainly not our intent or my intent as a representative of the New Democratic Party to say that there is no occasion when someone should be denied the vote. In other words, there are probably occasions when people should be denied the vote but they should be explicitly explained in law.

One of the problems that we have had in the royal commission report and one of the problems that I have with the private member's Bill C-340 in front of us at the present time is that the depriving of the right to vote is only for those people who are imprisoned, while they are imprisoned. It is not related to the offence itself. In other words, if a judge lets somebody off or if the judge decides to levy a fine or if the judge decides to send someone to a provincial jail as opposed to a federal penitentiary, that person does not lose the right to vote.

Mr. Redway: Do you think they should be deprived of that right?

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I am being heckled by the member who presented the bill and whom I did not heckle during his speech.

In terms of fairness there is a problem with this bill. We have had a royal commission, as was pointed out earlier, which spent in excess of $16 million looking at the charter, looking at the whole electoral system in this country, and it made a recommendation.

We have had for almost the last six months a committee of this House looking at who should have the right to vote and the regulations pertaining to that. As part of that process members from all three parties have been grappling with when someone convicted of an offence

should lose the right to vote and when that should not occur.

I have heard members say that the Clifford Olsons of this world should not have the right to vote. That is a justifiable argument, but how is it going to be phrased in law in such a way that the courts will not throw it out in the future? That is a concern. They may also have to take a look at who is actually in prison at the present time.

• (1730)

One of the ironies we all know exists in our system is that the very fact you are convicted of an offence does not mean you are going to be treated equally by the courts. Some will go to jail. Some will go to jail for short terms and some will go to jail for long terms. Others, as I mentioned earlier, will get off with a fine. Often this relates more to the legal and financial powers of someone who is convicted rather than to the individual aspects and merits of the case.

We know that in our country there are many, many more native Canadians who end up in a penitentiary than others who commit similar offences. It is not one of the bright lights of our judicial system but it is a fact in this nation.

If the mover of this motion had taken the approach of listing certain offences, perhaps those offences which carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment or those offences which carry a maximum period of five or 10 years imprisonment, everyone who is convicted of those crimes would lose the right to vote. That would be a fairer system because if you are convicted of a crime, you lose the right to vote and it is not on the basis of what the judge determines should be your punishment. Therefore, if you commit murder you lose the right to vote. It is not whether you are put in jail for one or two years. That is the whole point.

If the member had taken that approach, I think he would have found that his bill would have been charter-proof. That is one approach. It is not the only approach, but it is one that has been considered by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform which, as I said earlier, has representation from the three political parties in the House of Commons. We recognize what has happened with the court cases. With respect, I do not believe that this member's bill will get around future court challenges.

I understand the concerns many Canadians have and I am sure the member has with the fact that there are people who have committed horrendous crimes and still have the right to vote. However, I do not believe that the bill before us resolves it in a way that is fair to all Canadians and at the same time recognizes what has happened in the courts of this land.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Since no more members wish to speak, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

Would there be unanimous consent to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would be prepared to wait for a few minutes to make sure that members are here and we can proceed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, last spring I expressed concern in Question Period about the difficulties small businesses are experiencing in obtaining financing.

It is estimated that in this country, eight out of every 10 new positions are created by small business. Certainly, Canadians need jobs. Unfortunately, due to this recession, many small businesses lack the confidence to invest any further and also consumers lack the confidence to spend. Both consumers and businesses have lost confidence that this government will bring in an economic plan to get us out of the recession and put Canadians back to work.

Over the summer I talked to several business people in my district of Malpeque, Prince Edward Island. Many of them expressed concerns to me about their fear of not being able to continue and how much longer they could really weather this recession.

In August I heard from a tourist operator who has been experiencing some tough times over the past two years. This is a tourist operator who has been in business for a decade. As I say, she has had two rough years, last year and this year.

She wanted to renegotiate her mortgage payments over a longer time to take off some of the pressure. She had hoped to do this under the small business financing program. After consulting with four financial institutions on Prince Edward Island, two of them never even bothered to look at her application and the other two simply said that her revenues were down.

You can imagine the frustration of this constituent. It is understandable that she is frustrated because of course revenues are down in nearly all businesses across this country. If her revenues were up, she would not have been in there trying to renegotiate her loan.

To demonstrate the anguish that small business people are feeling across this country, I want to quote from her letter. She said: "I thought these programs were to help small businesses in financial difficulties due to the recession. However, it seems your business has to be making money in a given year just to be eligible." She adds at the end of the letter: "Maybe the government would rather see me on welfare, getting paid to do nothing, rather than helping me stay on my feet".

Those two paragraphs are from a letter of a business person in my constituency who has been a successful tourist operator for the past decade. I am not saying that these small business loans are of no use. Certainly, they help some businesses. However what I am saying is that I believe they can be improved. They can be simplified and they can be better tailored to meet the needs of small businesses.

I challenge the government to look at these programs, to make the necessary changes so that the programs are better able to meet the needs of the small business people.

Finally, pressure must be placed upon lending authorities to ensure that they are sensitive to the problems of small businesses and that financing remains available for these small businesses through the tough times, like the example I referred to of the tourist operator in my district.

This recession has dragged on too long. The least the government can do is to ensure small businesses have access to the financing they need to grow, expand and create the much needed jobs which this government's policies have failed to do.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I listened with care to the comments of my hon. friend opposite who, as usual, has addressed this issue with careful preparation, thought and as a constructive debater.

As a reflection of the seriousness with which the government views the issue of the availability of financing for small business, the minister of state met with financial institutions on several occasions to express concern over the tightening of credit, real or perceived.

While there is still room for improvement, we have seen some progress with the freezing and in some cases, reduction of the level of service charges by several of the banks.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the government has already taken action and is also in the process of expanding a number of measures that address this problem.

• (1740)

With inflation under control and interest rates down to levels we have not seen for 20 years, Canada now enjoys one of the most stable and favourable investment climates of any industrialized country. This by itself should remove much of the uncertainty that has unnerved financial decision–makers over the past several years.

Improvements to the Small Businesses Loans Act program, including a doubling of the amount that could be guaranteed, will be introduced later this year. It is interesting to note that loans registered under the SBLA program in the first quarter of this fiscal year were up by 9 per cent over the previous year. Activity since the end of June indicates that this trend is continuing. This would appear to be an indication that this government guaran-

tee program is achieving its goal of making credit accessible to firms which might otherwise be denied it.

You will recall, that we introduced the small business financing program in the last budget as a quick means of being able to lower the cost of refinancing businesses that were in financial difficulty.

The additional competition anticipated from the recent overhaul of our financial services regulatory environment should improve the access of small businesses to financing. Businesses unable to obtain conventional financing can approach the Federal Business Development Bank for term loans, equity financing and venture loans, as well as innovative approaches to assisting them in managing their affairs.

Labour-sponsored venture capital funds are also developing into an important source of equity financing in those provinces that have passed compatible legislation.

Finally, we will continue to monitor the issue of small business access to financing to ensure that this critical sector of the economy has the resources it needs to realize its full potential as we move on the road to recovery.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Recently, the government chose to close a supply depot and base in the city of Moncton. The result is that 250 civilian people will be put out of work. This base was promised to the community. It was promised to have a new facility. The hundred million dollar commitment was, in fact, made by three ministers of national defence.

This government has now reneged on that promise. What is interesting is that it reneged on this promise a month before a task force was to report on just exactly how the military's facilities should be rationalized and how we are going to deal with base closures. I asked myself why the minister would choose a month before this independent report was coming down to make this announcement to close the base.

There are a couple of reasons. The obvious one, if you read the report, is that there was no mention of the Moncton base closure in that report. Obviously, the independent study did not even know the government intended to close the base. I can only conclude from that that this was a purely political decision taken at the very last minute by a very politicized department and a very political minister.

Second, if you look at the recommendations in the task force report, one can only conclude one thing. This minister did not want to be held accountable to those recommendations and have to deal with those recommendations and do what is necessary under those recommendations.

The report recommends a couple of things that are of interest. Number one, it suggests an independent agency, and I quote from the report: "In order to translate ministerial proposals into government decisions we see a need for a process that will enable members of Parliament, affected communities and the public to ask questions and to assess DND's case; and also provide time for federal and provincial agencies in affected communities to work out mitigation measures; and thirdly, to limit partisan political considerations in closing the base". Obviously, it is that last item that this minister does not want to deal with.

As well, the recommendations create a responsibility for the federal government. Again I quote from the report: "We see federal responsibility for mitigating the effects of base closures as a natural extension of this responsibility, and Employment and Immigration Canada is the obvious department to take the lead in developing a federal policy". God help us in Moncton if that department should be responsible for initiating that process because the minister has already said that he would do nothing for Moncton because Moncton is doing fine. He has no concern for the 250 people who are going to lose their jobs, their families, their dignity, all of those things associated with being gainfully employed. The fundamental flaw in everything that is done is that this minister and this department have turned the Department of National Defence into a political pork-barrel. I asked the minister to explain why he would go back on his promise and the promise of the previous two ministers, close that base and put those people out of work and then spend the same amount of money in another community and as well go against what is obviously proper military advice from everything that we can determine in analysing the reports and information to the effect that the Moncton base should stay open as it is an integral supply base to the whole military system in Atlantic Canada. This minister has chosen to close that base, disregard military advice and to play pure partisan

politics. What has been done is fundamentally wrong and this government should be called to account.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, it is certainly understandable why the member for Moncton would raise on behalf of his constituents and the 250 who lost their jobs this issue here in the House of Commons. However, it is quite indefensible that in doing so he would accuse the Department of National Defence and the minister of political pork-barrelling, that the department has been made a purely political department over something like this and that the military advice with respect to the closing of the depot in Moncton was ignored.

I have four brief points in rebuttal to what the member has said. First, the number of depots in the country has been on a decline over the long period of our Canadian history: from 34 to 21 to 15, down to five, now down to two. It is because methods of transportation have improved, communication has improved and the need for many depots structured throughout the land is not the same now as it was in many earlier periods of Canadian history.

Second, the size of the Canadian Armed Forces, as the member well knows, is being reduced. In concert with that it is part of the process to reduce the infrastructure necessary to support our Canadian Armed Forces.

Third, and a very important advance in terms of our military preparedness, is the forward staging of *matériel* in the Canadian Armed Forces bases themselves. A lot of what formerly had been kept back in depots is now found, for example in the case of the Moncton base, at bases in Halifax and so on. This is to say that there is actually more distribution of *matériel* throughout the country at the Canadian Armed Forces bases proper rather than held back in depots.

The fourth and final point is that just as we have seen in industry, which has modernized its whole practice of warehousing with something called "just in time delivery", the very modern Canadian Armed Forces of the 1990s is also understanding that it is no longer necessary to have great warehouses filled with many thousands of mattresses or countless paper forms or so on, that we too can be part of the modern age and therefore reduce the overhead of supplies that are kept in the depots.

For all these reasons it is intelligent policy to concentrate now on the two depots in Montreal that can admirably serve central, eastern and Atlantic Canada and the Edmonton depot to serve western and northern Canada.

I think the hon. member for Moncton should applaud intelligent policy making and support it rather than denigrating it here in the House of Commons.

JOB TRAINING

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the most important issue for Canadians today is the economy. Canadians are concerned about their jobs, their businesses and the future of their children.

We have record levels of unemployment, record levels of bankruptcies and the government refuses to change its policies or its direction.

According to the statistics released last Friday by Statistics Canada, in August there were 1.6 million Canadians unemployed for a percentage of 11.6 per cent. That is 1.6 million Canadians who are looking for work.

• (1750)

Those figures do not include Canadians who are no longer looking for work, who have dropped out of the labour market. Worse still, the number of full time jobs fell by 8,000 in the month of August and part-time employment increased by 19,000. While the total employment was going down, the mix of full time versus part-time was increasing in favour of part-time jobs.

What does that mean? It means that those who are working part time for the most part are working on minimum wage, non-union jobs with no benefits, no unemployment insurance, no pensions, no health plan and no paid holidays. That is the direction we are going in.

Just to look at some of the statistics or some of the clippings on this from a recent poll that was made public by Angus Reid through the freedom of information: "The government conducted a poll with Canadians and the results were that Canadians viewed the GST and free trade as the major villains driving the recession into

its third year, federal polling results obtained under the access to information reveal".

Because of all these things, on June 4, approximately three months ago just before the House adjourned for the summer, I asked the Minister for Employment and Immigration why with that situation it was the same situation then as it is now. At that time there were 11.6 per cent of Canadians unemployed. I asked him why he was cutting back on training funds for the unemployed and why he was cutting back on job creation programs for the unemployed.

Of course, the minister replied as he always does that in fact he was increasing the moneys. Of course, he increased the moneys in 1991–92 from what they were in 1989–90. If you compare the moneys that were available back in 1984, 1986 and 1987, they are much less as a per capita expenditure for Canadians. He is picking a starting point which allows him to say he is increasing the funds, but in fact he is not increasing the funds.

The funds have been cut back as compared with a few years ago and all summer we all received as members complaints from Canadians that they had been enrolled in training programs. These are unemployed Canadians who were enrolled for retraining. All of a sudden, they were advised by the local Canada Employment Centre that their retraining or training program could not go ahead because the funds had been cut back.

I do not know what happened to the government members over the summer but I hope they were subject to the same barrage of complaints that we were. I hope that the parliamentary secretary who is here today to answer will give us a better answer. I ask the government to please have some compassion for the Canadian unemployed and increase—not fool around with numbers—the funding for training and job creation considering the horrible situation that is faced by Canadians.

[*Translation*]

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 Minister of Employment and Immigration, I have the pleasure to inform the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce that our government has recognized the importance of training programs in this country and has allocated the funds required to help the unemployed.

For instance, let me mention the funds allocated to Quebec within the last two years under the independent trainees program. The hon. member is well aware that last year the government ensured that $27.6 million would be allocated to the independent trainees programs offered under the unemployment insurance program.

Because of this, in Quebec some 7,000 unemployed were able to receive training. This year, we are still having some economic difficulties and the government must provide even more assistance to the Quebec unemployed who want to obtain some type of retraining. The government therefore allocated $87.5 million to this program at the beginning of the year. In June, the government realized that this amount would not meet the demand and added another $32.9 million, increasing it by $6 million in August 1992. In a single year, the government has therefore increased by $100 million the funds allocated to the independent trainees program. This a significant example of the commitment made by this government to help the unemployed during these difficult times.

This government currently allocates $1.95 billion to training under the unemployment insurance program. It spends another $1.6 billion on training and employment assistance programs aimed at those who do not receive unemployment insurance benefits.

This year, 900,000 unemployed Canadians will take advantage of training programs established by this government. This year, we will spend a total of $3.55 billion on programs to give Canadians the training they need to re-enter the work force. This represents a net increase of $450 million from last year's budget of $3.1 billion.

This government is here to help Canadians go through a difficult period. It is also committed to manage public expenditures in a responsible manner so that Canadians do not find themselves more in debt at the end of the recession, as the previous government did during the last recession.

Adjournment Debate

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL HEALING LODGE

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to raise again the question I raised on June 1 concerning the selection of Maple Creek as the site for the aboriginal women's healing lodge.

Since that time there has been a lot of good work done on this issue by people like the students from the Gabrial Dumont Institute in Prince Albert, Alice Carrol from the Prince Albert Tribal Council, and Elizabeth Bear from the Crisis Centre in the city.

If I might review what happened here, the original decision to close the Kingston prison for women was welcomed by many of us, especially aboriginal people from northern Saskatchewan, because there are three aboriginal women from my own constituency who died in that institution.

The fundamental finding was that in order to be effective these women had to be closer to their families and to their support networks. That was the fundamental flaw with the Kingston location.

My contention is the selection of Maple Creek fundamentally ignores those two basic criteria. One half of 1 per cent of the aboriginal people in Saskatchewan live within 200 kilometres of the Maple Creek location.

There is no vacant housing on that Indian reserve in the region. As well, there are only two low income houses in the town of Maple Creek and both of them are occupied. There are very few aboriginal people who live in that city so that is not a welcoming environment for those families to move to while the women of those families are incarcerated.

The same holds true with aboriginal support networks. There are not aboriginal institutions in the city of Maple Creek. It is a very small band and there are not the kind of institutions like there are, for example, in Prince Albert where you have the Gabrial Dumont Institute, the Prince Albert Tribal Council, and a number of other aboriginal institutions that could provide the expertise for this facility.

I call on the minister to review this case because I do not think there was an objective evaluation of the proposals that were made. I have a number of instances I would like to cite, one of which has not been made public but which I have become aware of. A member of the selection committee phoned a national aboriginal leader who had supported the Prince Albert bid to ask him to withdraw his support of the Prince Albert proposal before the decision was even made, before the group ever met. A member of that committee phoned a leader and asked him to withdraw his support. That says to me there was a predisposition to choose a location other than Prince Albert.

Since that time I have used the access to information legislation and obtained further information on what happened here. I find things like some of the criteria that were included, things like the question of water. When it comes to water, the report from the selection committee makes a big deal of what great access to water there is at the Maple Creek site. However when you read the Maple Creek proposal, it makes only a vague reference to creeks and streams in the region. It does not say anything specific about water at all.

When it comes to Prince Albert, they say the North Saskatchewan River is polluted. They did not even read the proposal. Neither of the two Prince Albert locations are even on the North Saskatchewan River. They are on the Little Red River and on the Shell River, neither of which is polluted. An issue that seemed to be very important to the committee, but which it appears it did not even consider, is the Prince Albert proposal.

As well they said Prince Albert was an inappropriate place because there are already corrections there and it is a prison town. The fact those institutions exist means there are aboriginal women there and aboriginal people who have experience in dealing with corrections who could provide the professional expertise and support that is required here.

I would like to again ask the government to review this because I do not think an objective decision was made here. I would like to plead with the government to take another look at this so we do not make another mistake.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

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 Solicitor General, I am pleased to speak today on the point raised in the House on June 1, 1992 and mentioned here previously by the hon. member for Prince Albert—Churchill River on the selection of

Maple Creek–Nekaneet in Saskatchewan as the site for the new healing lodge for aboriginal female offenders.

Correctional Services Canada established a planning committee for the healing lodge. It has nine members, five from the CSC and four aboriginal women representing native women's organizations. In addition, three elders advise this committee on aboriginal spirituality and traditions. The planning committee was responsible for carrying out the location assessment process for this facility and recommending a site to the Solicitor General.

Twenty–three communities in Saskatchewan that expressed interest in having a healing lodge were evaluated by the committee. The location selection criteria and the assessment process were specifically designed to reflect aboriginal culture. Correctional Services received many high–quality submissions, but the first–place proposal from the town of Maple Creek and the Nekaneet Band was exceptional in that it met or exceeded all the requirements, including the support of a council of elders, the provision of health services respectful of native culture, the need for appropriate land, the availability of spring water and the support of an aboriginal community that is proud of its traditions and open to other native groups.

Maple Creek is almost equidistant from Calgary, Regina and Saskatoon. At present, 47 aboriginal women are under federal sentence and 23 of them are from Saskatchewan and Alberta. The selection of the site for the healing lodge was well received by the aboriginal women at the prison for women.

As in the other new facilities for federally sentenced women, program delivery will be premised on individualized plans, a holistic approach, an interactive relationship with the community and a focus on preparation for release.

As the Solicitor General stated on June 1, 1992, politics did not play a part in the site selection process and all parties concerned sought only the welfare of the aboriginal women.

With regard to the request for a complete review of the selection process, I am satisfied that the decision made by the Solicitor General of Canada was made with integrity and in good faith. I emphasize that the decision to locate the healing lodge for aboriginal female offenders in the community of Maple Creek–Nekaneet is in conformity with the recommendations and advice of the planning committee. The Solicitor General took into consideration the best interests of aboriginal female offenders.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to be adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.02 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 9, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

GROUNDFISH INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, while the referendum will end much of the constitutional uncertainty in our country, coastal Atlantic Canadians are still burdened by the uncertainty about the future of the Atlantic groundfish industry.

The government and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in particular are to be commended for the extensive support program put in place to alleviate the impact of the closure of the northern cod fishery.

The hard times are not yet over as we look ahead to severe quota cod cuts in the gulf and in the 4VN and 4VS stocks.

The transfer of National Sea's head office to Lunenburg is welcome news for Lunenburg county but the fact is 65 people will lose their jobs in the process, and 26 of these will be in the town of Lunenburg.

I urge the government to start planning now a support program for the impact of the 1993 quota cuts on the Nova Scotian economy.

In addition to support for individuals directly affected, consideration should be given to injecting new capital into the AFAP diversification fund. The Atlantic fishing industry must maximize its use of the ocean's resources. Government must continue to play an activist role in this process.

WATER EXPORTS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, now that we have had an opportunity to pursue the North America Free Trade Agreement our worst fears have been verified.

Canada's rivers and lakes were not made explicitly exempt in the deal. In the Canada–U.S. deal beer was exempt and in the North America Free Trade Agreement culture was exempt. Why not water?

Does this government plan to eventually allow the sell off of some of our rivers and lakes to the United States and Mexico? Is that why this government has consistently failed to pass independent legislation in this House which would prohibit major water sales to the United States and Mexico?

Canadians do not want to sell fresh water from our rivers and lakes to the United States and Mexico. Water should not be considered simply another commodity to be sold to the highest bidder.

There are many reasons for us to scrap NAFTA at this stage as American political leaders are suggesting today. One of the main reasons is the fact that this deal is a tacit agreement for this government to sell water to the United States and Mexico in the future.

* * *

WOOD ISLANDS FERRY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, a new terminal design is being proposed for the Wood Islands ferry in my riding. Transport Canada and Public Works are preparing to demolish existing buildings at the terminal site by September 30, 1992. The present federal government plan is to build a generic terminal which will eliminate the existing atmosphere that is pleasing to tourists and all commuters.

The Wood Islands ferry terminal should be a welcome mat for tourists and a nice place to relax before leaving the Island by ferry. Instead, the federal government is going to build a big wire fence and a speedway off the ferry.

The Wood Islands ferry terminal has been completely redesigned and the concerns of the people in the community are being ignored. The federal government should listen to the people and make the ferry terminal a more pleasing place for both tourists and the people of eastern Prince Edward Island.

* * *

CASH FLOW ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the Cash Flow Enhancement Program enabled farmers to secure interest-free cash advances during the past two crop years, 1990–91 and 1991–92. Under the program each producer was able to secure up to $50,000 interest free on the security of his undelivered grain.

Regrettably there remains on the prairies a serious cash flow problem resulting from low world prices, the export subsidies of competing export nations, poor harvest conditions and in Saskatchewan, the unilateral gutting of the GRIP program by the provincial government.

The Cash Flow Enhancement Program enables farmers to get some immediate cash on grain they have produced but cannot sell. I urge the government to renew this program for the current 1992–93 crop year which commenced August 1.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, Canada was one of the key players in the founding of the United Nations. This country's experience in two world wars, Korea and many other modern-day United Nations operations are invaluable on the international scene.

It is very important while we discuss constitutional and economic issues, et cetera, in this House of Commons of Canada that we never forget the responsible and the effective manner in which our Canadian Armed Forces continue to carry on Canada's major roles in the international community and continue to build goodwill for Canada wherever they go.

Some 750 members of the airborne regiment including support staff and a hospital unit from CFB Petawawa are headed for Somalia to assist in the distribution of humanitarian aid. Approximately 100 will soon leave for Cambodia as part of the UN advance mission. Another 45 will go to Kuwait on a very important mission. Others are all around the world, including Cyprus.

The appreciation and support of this Parliament of Canada goes with them and our hearts and encouragement go out to their loved ones back home in Canada. Our Canadian Forces exemplify the real spirit of Canada in the world.

* * *

CYPRUS

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, there is no question the world community now believes that conditions have matured for the restoration of justice in Cyprus, respect for the human rights of all its population, and for the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations whose efforts and particularly those of the Secretary General and the Security Council, must be sincerely supported at this crucial point of the Cyprus problem.

The occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkish troops since 1974 has developed into a heavy burden for Turkey which will not end unless a just, viable and workable settlement is attained for the reunification of Cyprus.

The international community expects the Turkish government to promote a real sense of responsibility and a down-to-earth approach toward the peace talks between Greece and Turkish Cypriots which will resume at the United Nations on October 26.

Let us hope that on October 26 we will see a greater degree of political will by the parties involved for a lasting agreement.

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NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement has completely inadequate environmental safeguards. The environmental assessment of the deal has not been made public as promised. Why should Canadians believe that the results, whenever we see them, have not been scrambled together to support this neo-conservative deal?

Canadians have repeatedly heard this government's breezy assurances that Mexican environmental standards will rise to Canadian levels. This promise is scandalous considering we have yet to live up to our own standards.

When money is involved environmental commitments fall by the wayside. The pressure to lower environmental standards is real. It has happened here and despite Mexican legislation, multinationals have made a toxic mess of the Maquiladora.

It is naive to assume that conditions will magically right themselves with the signing of this trade deal. The Prime Minister has made national and international commitments on environmental protection, yet there are no enforceable regulations which would safeguard these promises in the proposed deal. With one stroke of a pen, the health of workers and the lives of future generations have been put at risk.

* * *

• (1410)

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the three leaders of the national parties spoke in favour in this House of the Charlottetown accord.

This historic moment brings to mind comments from the first Premier of Alberta, Alexander Rutherford, in 1906. He said:

> We live—in one of the grandest provinces in this Canadian Confederation. We believe there is a great future before our province, and that it will still be a grander province in the very near future. We hope that our fond expectations will be realized. We are a hopeful people. We have no pessimists in Alberta—a pessimist could not succeed. We are optimistic and always look on the brighter side of affairs.

I invite all Albertans to look on the brighter side as did the first premier of our province and join the yes side in this referendum campaign. Let us seize our responsibility as citizens of this country and of the province of Alberta and make our full contribution to this country.

S. O. 31

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada 5,200 women will die of breast cancer this year as breast cancer continues to be the most common form of cancer to women in 1992. A full 20 per cent of cancer deaths among women will be from breast cancer.

I call on the federal government to adopt the recommendations of the report of the Sub–Committee on the Status of Women. In particular, I urge the federal government to design an extensive public awareness plan aimed at educating women about preventive measures and early detection methods. I urge the federal government to take measures to improve research into the causes, the detection and treatment procedures of breast cancer.

This disease has cost many women their lives and has caused much hardship to families across the country. It is time for the federal government to take action on this issue.

* * *

CHARLOTTETOWN ACCORD

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that every Canadian can find something in the Charlottetown constitutional accord that they do not like. I certainly can.

Obviously, Canada's housing ministers can as well because as recently as June 29, federal, provincial and territorial ministers of housing meeting in Toronto agreed that there continues to be a need for a strong federal role and national standards to respond to the housing needs of Canadians. I share their sentiments.

The August 28 Charlottetown constitutional accord gives exclusive jurisdiction over housing to the provinces and the territories. Despite this however, I am sure that the federal, provincial and territorial housing ministers will join me in voting yes on October 26 because we want a strong and united Canada, one which will continue to be the very best country to live in anywhere in the world.

S. O. 31

DAVID SPENCER AND CHRISTINE LAMONT

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to urgently request the Prime Minister to make a formal request to the President of Brazil for the expulsion of David Spencer and Christine Lamont.

The parents of Christine Lamont have just returned from Brazil where they have had the opportunity to meet with the Brazilian minister of justice and other high-ranking officials.

The Brazilian minister of justice told them that under the exchange of offenders treaty, all possible appeals must be exhausted before they would be able to make an application under the treaty.

The exchange of offenders treaty has not yet been ratified. Estimates from Brazil are that two appeals launched by Spencer and Lamont could take two to four years. Christine and David cannot wait that long.

The Brazilian justice system is flawed. President Collor is involved in heightening political crises and faces possible impeachment. It is the president's power to respond to the expulsion request.

The window of opportunity to get these two Canadians home is quickly closing. I urge the Prime Minister to request their expulsion today and not to wait for the treaty.

* * *

TRADING CARDS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I was shocked and dismayed to hear about the latest fad in trading cards.

Canadian youngsters are trading mass murderer cards from the U.S. that picture murderers and describe the details of their indecent acts of violence and sexual abuse, especially against women and children.

I understand both the Minister of National Revenue and the Minister of Justice are working to see that these cards will be banned from entering Canada.

I strongly support the efforts of the ministers concerned to put an end to this horrific playground fad. The Criminal Code provision dealing with obscenity must be amended so that customs officials will be able to stop these unacceptable and obscene cards from entering Canada.

* * *

SHIP INDUSTRY

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, the signing of the Canada–U.S.–Mexico Free Trade Agreement has brought to mind the dreadful loss of jobs in this country after the advent of the Canada–U.S. FTA. One of the hardest hit areas has been secondary and tertiary manufacturing in this country.

In the FTA the Jones Act was protected to allow American industry and shipbuilding to be protected from Canadian competition. The same may happen with NAFTA.

I am making an appeal to this government, through you Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the refit of the HMCS *Protecteur* is done on the west coast, preferably in Victoria and by the Yarrows Shipyards.

An agreement to this request will be most appreciated by the people of British Columbia.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, September 8, we celebrated International Literacy Day, which gives us an opportunity every year to reaffirm our commitment to this cause.

The reason we attach so much importance to literacy in Canada is that it has a major impact on the quality of life of all citizens of this country and on our future as a nation.

People whose ability to read and write is limited cannot take part in the decisions affecting their neighbourhood or their community. It is harder for them to obtain the information they need to make wise choices as consumers, as workers or as parents.

The commitment we made a few years ago is still current. We made literacy one of our national priorities in order to give equal opportunity to all Canadians.

In closing I would call on all members of this House to continue their efforts beyond International Literacy Day, so that even more Canadians are made aware of the importance of knowing how to read and write.

THE LATE ÉMILE BENOIT

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, last Friday two fiddlers were playing in a cemetery, saying their goodbyes to Émile Benoit. I was there, along with a hundred of his friends, not only to bid him goodbye but also to salute his life.

Émile Benoit was widely known for his folk music, his "joie de vivre", his sense of humor and his generosity.

Whether in Quebec City for the summer festival, in St. John's to be awarded an honorary doctorate or in France to entertain the crowds, he always managed to spread his zest for living. Émile, we will miss you.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Speaker: I should like to extend a welcome to the 43 new pages who are joining us this year.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: These young people, carefully chosen from over 200 candidates, come to us from all across the country to see our parliamentary system first hand as they serve us in the Chamber.

[*Translation*]

In this important period in our history, I am sure that they will perform their duties with energy and competence, and I hope their year of service in the House will be a positive experience in their lives.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister, but before I start I want to say that we have just learned that Alberta Premier Don Getty has resigned to campaign full time for the yes side in the national referendum.

I hope the Prime Minister does not get any ideas from this because we want him around for the next election.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: On a more serious note, Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

We learned this morning that an OECD report deplores the fact that Canada is losing any competitive position it ever had internationally and that no progress has been made in the last ten years. This decline is attributed to the fact that we are not spending wisely for education, that we do not spend enough on research and development and, as I said in the House yesterday, that tariff barriers between the provinces destroy any chances of progress.

• (1420)

Does the government intend to take action immediately to solve these very serious problems?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend referred to Premier Getty. He has indeed announced his intention to resign. He has played a very constructive role in the national unity debates over the last five or six years. On behalf of all members I would like to extend to him and to his wife Margaret and family the very best wishes of the House of Commons.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend is wondering whether I am getting any ideas. He says he wants me around for the next election. I would not want to break the hon. gentleman's heart.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: I will look forward to seeing him in the next election. I should remind him that the last person who said he wanted me around for the last election would not be saying that today. I just put a little word of caution to him.

[*Translation*]

Concerning the point raised by my hon. friend, the report indeed mentions certain serious problems in Canada, for instance productivity. On the other hand, the report emphasizes the fact that Canada has the most generous taxation system of the industrialized world for research and development. As for education, the report notes that, per capita, Canada invests more than any other G-7 country. On the other hand, the results remain clearly unacceptable as far as productivity is concerned.

However, there is something important which should be noted. While we accept that there is a serious problem, the latest figures show a change in the trend in Canada. Here is what they tell us.

[*English*]

Productivity growth averaged nearly 3.5 per cent in the first half of 1992, roughly three times its average performance in the 1980s. Unit labour cost growth is way down. It averaged over 1.5 per cent in the first half of 1992 compared to 4 per cent in the first half of 1991.

While there is a serious problem, there has emerged in the last six, seven, eight months some important indications that the recovery will be led by productivity growth and by exports. Those are two encouraging signs, but we will continue to work very hard with all parties in the House to correct those areas of weakness in the Canadian economy.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the OECD report talked very strongly about the problem I mentioned in the House yesterday concerning our not having enough free trade within the country and about the barriers that exist between the provinces in Canada being tougher to overcome than the barriers that exist between the countries in Europe.

I understand the Prime Minister did not have unanimity on the constitutional discussions he had with the premiers. He was seeking unanimity. Is he planning to move very quickly to have seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population agree to break down the barriers within Canada immediately?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that seems to be at variance with what my hon. friend said yesterday.

I have indicated that we have the framework agreement which will allow the first first ministers' conference on the economy to deal effectively with an expanded and modernized section 121 immediately following ratification. This, for example, was actively supported by Premier Wells from Newfoundland all the way to British Columbia with a few exceptions. My hon. friend is aware of that.

Having been there in 1982, having asked for an expanded and modernized section 121 in 1981 and 1982, and having received a flat no for his efforts, he is certainly aware of the difficulties in moving recalcitrant provinces along in this regard. We have made very substantial progress. At last count we had eight of ten representing substantially in excess of 50 per cent of the population.

We have every reason to believe that the spirit of mutual accommodation and conciliation that prevailed at Charlottetown will prevail with respect to section 121 and that Canada will get the kind of common market clause it needs and deserves.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I like the very eloquent words of the Prime Minister. I wish his party would have been of that view 10 years ago when we tried to do that, but wisdom came later. We knew we had to do that 12 years ago.

Is it possible that this meeting will be held before the end of the year?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if we can secure ratification of the constitutional proposals before the end of the year, we would look forward to holding a first ministers' conference on the economy. Clearly this is the priority item on the agenda.

I think the minister for constitutional affairs and the minister of health would confirm that there seemed to be an acceptance of the fact that we have an extraordinary anomaly where there are greater barriers between provinces than among countries with which we trade around the world.

This does not make a great deal of sense, and I think most provincial premiers acknowledge that. We now have a framework agreement which will allow us to correct this and I think correct it quite soon. I thank my hon. friend for his offer of assistance.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I too have a question for the Prime Minister arising out of the OECD report.

According to this report, "Canada's actual level of labour productivity was 45 per cent behind that of the United States in 1990", compared to 24 per cent in 1980.

This was the situation in this country after six years of Conservative government.

Why is the Prime Minister not doing something concrete to close this productivity gap instead of simply driving this country into recession and keeping it there? If the Prime Minister is so concerned about breaking hearts, why does he not realize he has broken the hearts of 1.5 million Canadians and their families who have seen nothing from him but the bread lines and the unemployment lines? Why does he not recognize this and do something to help them get back to work?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think all members of the House would acknowledge that unemployment levels are too high, that they represent a very serious problem.

My hon. friend chuckles over there. At 11.6 per cent they are still too high even though they are lower, a little bit lower than when the Liberal government left office in 1984. They were at 11.7 per cent. They were too high then and they are too high today, even though we managed to get them down to 7.3 per cent at the end of 1988. We have embarked on a program which will hopefully reduce that unacceptably high level of unemployment.

I point out to my hon. friend, as I did to the Leader of the Opposition, that the numbers he has just used are out of date.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, they can be tabled on the floor of the House of Commons and examined. I have just told him that his numbers are inaccurate and out of date. Canadian productivity was up 1.9 per cent in the second quarter of this year from a year ago, and competitiveness of Canadian exports has increased by 6 per cent in the first half of this year alone.

We still have a problem of productivity. We have a problem of investment in research and development even though we have the best fiscal regime that exists in the OECD. We have a problem with regard to the results of education. Even though we spend more per capita on education than any of the G-7 countries, we do not produce the results.

• (1430)

One of the reasons for the constitutional rearrangements is the harmonization and the elimination of overlap and duplication that will allow us to expend the taxpayers' money more beneficially, to improve productivity even further.

I acknowledge that there is a problem. We are working on it and we are making progress.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I do have to acknowledge being incorrect in one of my figures. I said that the Prime Minister broke the hearts of 1.5 million out of work Canadians. It was actually more than 1.6 million so I stand corrected.

My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. It has been reported that the government has ordered that the report of its productivity task force, which was supposed to be made public early this month, be put off being made public until after the October 26 referendum date. Even if this task force has been largely a dog and pony show, the public has a right to see what is in the report to see if there is anything worth while in it.

Will the Prime Minister rescind that order and get the report before the public right now? Will he take some concrete action to deal with the gap which he has questioned but which is in the report of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development? Will he rescind that order and get that report tabled this week?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend hates the word competitiveness. He denigrates the notion of any examination of the prosperity initiative, but in fact this government is pursuing in every sector an examination of our competitiveness through the prosperity initiative. In no way is its tabling in this House going to be delayed. It will be on time.

I can tell the hon. member that one of the findings he is going to discover when he reads the prosperity initiative is that we have increased our share of the American market. He is against free trade and NAFTA. We have increased our share of the American market in 19 of 23 sectors since the free trade agreement.

* * *

TRADE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

It is quite clear after the release of the draft NAFTA yesterday that this government has initialled yet another bad trade deal for Canada. This trade deal fails to stop U.S. trade harassment on things from softwood lumber to automobiles. It fails to protect workers in all regions. It fails to protect jobs and it fails to protect the environment. Any way you slice it, the NAFTA deal is a failure.

Will the Prime Minister take the advice of others who have said to withdraw from this deal right now, to withdraw this deal, take it off the table and make sure that he stands up for Canadian workers and the Canadian people? The U.S. House majority leader has recommended that to the U.S. Congress. I would suggest to the Prime Minister that he do the same thing. Will the Prime Minister remove the trade deal now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, is the leader of the NDP seriously suggesting that the Canadian government take the advice of the majority House leader of the United States Congress on something this important? You want us to follow the advice of those nasty Americans?

Ms. McLaughlin: No, take our advice.

Mr. Mulroney: Oh, of your House leader. That is different.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps we should go on to the next question.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it would be useful for Canadians on this very serious matter because many Canadians have lost jobs. We have lost over 360,000 manufacturing jobs since the Canada–U.S. trade deal and the government is now intent on making this bad deal worse by signing the NAFTA deal.

I want to use one specific instance. When the agreement was announced the Minister for International Trade and the chief NAFTA negotiator said that this trade deal would reduce American trade harassment of Honda and other companies in Canada. Yesterday Carla Hills, the chief U.S. negotiator, told the U.S. Senate finance committee that "the passage of the North American free trade agreement would not absolve Honda" from the current U.S. harassment. Over 5,000 Canadian jobs are on the line.

My question to the Prime Minister is: Why has his government initialled a deal that is going to lose Canadian jobs? Why is he not here to protect Canadian jobs?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, why is it, after having denigrated the Americans and their negotiators for years that my hon. friend now cites Carla Hills as an authority on the interpretation of what is going to happen to a Canadian product being exported to the United States? The Minister for International Trade has already indicated that it is not the case, that there is a very clear protection for the auto pact and its advantages are expanded for Canada.

Surely my hon. friend should know that for every $1 billion of exports, 15,000 new jobs are created in Canada. Of all of the major trading countries in the world, the percentage of GDP in Canada related to foreign trade is higher than any, with the exception of Germany, almost 30 per cent. Our lifeline to new jobs is trade.

Here is an opportunity to trade into a brand new market, although 80 per cent of Mexican products enter Canada free from duties now. What we are doing is getting a level playing field for Canada in Mexico with new opportunities for financial services, new opportunities for automotive products, new opportunities that will create new jobs in telecommunications and pharmaceuticals. These are new opportunities for Canadian jobs.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Canadians recognize that the one thing which has been traded away is Canadian jobs.

[*Translation*]

U.S. trade representative Carla Hills said yesterday that "even if Canadian cultural industries are excluded from NAFTA, the United States reserves the right to take retaliatory action against Canada". I am quoting Ms. Hills. How can the Prime Minister claim our cultural industries are protected when the United States is already starting to threaten us?

[*English*]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend cites exactly the wrong example. The fact is that what was achieved by the Canadian negotiators was a complete and total exemption, protection for culture under the NAFTA agreement.

Prior to the free trade agreement the Americans had the ability to retaliate any time we took any measures to protect Canadian culture. The free trade agreement limited their ability to retaliate and that is enshrined in NAFTA as well. It is a major success for Canadians.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

[*Editor's Note: Disturbance in Gallery.*]

Ms. Copps: I think we on this side of the House want a government where everybody feels they are on the inside. That is why we hope there is an election soon.

Four years ago when the Prime Minister rammed the trade deal through the House, he promised the finest adjustment programs in the world. Four years later 600,000 more Canadians are out of work than there were when he made that promise. What happened to his fine words of four years ago when today we still have no new adjustment programs?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member refers to the free trade agreement and our undertaking to have adjustment programs, she should read the de Grandpré report.

• (1440)

A task force by the private sector in this country made recommendations to the government to deal with the adjustment challenge that any industry faces in the world, free trade or not.

The number of adjustment programs in this country have been increased tremendously in the last three years. They compare us to the Americans per capita. Canada spends 35 times more per capita on adjustment programs for Canadians than does the United States.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I hope we will not have a Canada that will be the same as the United States in every respect. We in the Liberal Party want no part of that.

The Prime Minister himself gave his word four years ago, when he said there would be adjustment programs. Mr. de Grandpré made some concrete proposals which were subsequently ignored. I therefore want to ask the Prime Minister why he has reneged on his commitment to adjustment programs for the millions of unemployed workers who want jobs in this country.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to the Grandpré report, and she says we failed to implement the report's recommendations. I would ask her to name a single one that was not implemented. One of Mr. Grandpré's main recommendations was to activate the passive funds available under the Unemployment Insurance Program.

We tabled Bill C-21, and the Liberal Party, with its friends in the other place, spent a year and a half fighting the adoption of Bill C-21, a measure that today benefits 500,000 Canadians who are receiving training thanks to this legislation.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle-Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Last week, the minister confirmed a promise made repeatedly by his government that the North American Free Trade Agreement would provide for a tripartite commission on the environment. Here is my question: Does the minister still maintain that commitment?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for LaSalle-Émard mentioned a promise made repeatedly by the government. I am not sure what he is referring to, but I can inform him that on September 17, exactly a week from now, I will be meeting my American counterpart, Mr. Reilly. I will also be meeting my Mexican counterpart, Mr. Colosio. We will discuss a trilateral co-operation agreement involving our three countries. This is a first, and comes as a result of the trade agreement signed by our three countries. In fact, as far as I know, this is the first time a trade agreement is used as a lever to achieve something in the environmental sector. Next week I expect to have more information for the hon. member as a result of these meetings.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the minister in a speech in Toronto last week confirmed the promise. It is clear from his statement now the ink is barely dry on the North American free trade agreement and already this government is being pushed around.

The trilateral commission on the environment was to be the umbrella. It was to be the overseer for all environmental concerns arising from NAFTA.

When the minister meets next week in Washington, he might ask Carla Hills what she meant yesterday when testifying before the United States Senate when she said there would be a bilateral commission only. In other words, Canada was going to be left out.

Will the minister admit this amounts to a fundamental breach of the spirit of the North American free trade agreement, and will he tell us what he is going to do about it?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, let me be short, brief, and concise. I was not in Toronto last week. I know where I am today and I am not sure the member knows where he is today.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

After the North American free trade agreement was initialled by Canada, U.S. and Mexico, the Prime Minister announced he would be happy to sell this deal across Canada.

After that announcement by the Prime Minister, a $3 million propaganda campaign, paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, was initiated by this government to sell the NAFTA deal without any comment from the opposition members of this House.

If the Prime Minister is prepared to put to a national referendum the political future of Canada, is he prepared to put on a referendum parallel to that the economic future of Canada and let Canadians vote yes or no on whether they want a North American free trade agreement?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I understand my hon. friend, he is suggesting that Canada's future is at stake because of trade with Mexico, which represents approximately 1 per cent of our trade. The nation is in peril because of the 1 per cent of trade, which is essentially beneficial to Canada. It is demonstrably silly and fatuous for the hon. gentleman to try to make that point.

What I do not understand with the NDP is this: The NDP rises in this House time and time again to make the case that the Government of Canada and the Parliament of Canada should be more generous than we already are with respect to assisting developing nations to achieve a greater degree of prosperity. Their philosophy seems to be more and more hand-outs to countries that seek to elevate the degree of prosperity and wealth of their individual citizens.

What Mexico is saying, as a developing country, is: "We are looking for an opportunity, not for handouts, but an opportunity for fair trade with developed countries". What Canada and the United States are saying is that the best way that we can create that prosperity collectively while assisting ourselves is to allow a developing country the opportunity to trade its way to prosperity. They do not want hand-outs. They want equality of opportunity which is the basis of the GATT and all other important industrialized trading arrangements. So the NDP should be in favour of this and not against it.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for making a speech about everything except my question. My question was: If this is petty, if this is small potatoes, why are you spending $3 million to sell a small-potatoes deal to Canadians? You say you can sell this deal. You will have a hard job after this is signed selling Margaritas on a Tijuana beach.

Mr. Speaker: I know the hon. member would want to address the Prime Minister or any other minister through the Chair.

Mr. Barrett: Through you, Mr. Speaker, my question for the Prime Minister is this. If he is prepared to spend $3 million of tax dollars promoting this deal, why is he not prepared to put it on a referendum and let the Canadian people have a say themselves without the propaganda?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that I indicated that this was small potatoes. I never said any such thing. I never said any such thing.

Mr. Barrett: But you're spending $3 million.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor and I am sure hon. members would want to have extended to him the courtesy so that he can make an answer.

Mr. Mulroney: This is an important trading arrangement. We have conventions under the British parliamentary system and here in Canada whereby these matters are dealt with. There will be an opportunity for a full and extensive debate with regard to the provisions of the North American free trade agreement. My hon. friend will be able to register his disapproval and perhaps indicate to the Canadian people the alternatives that he proposes to this kind of important trading initiative.

He refers as well to the beach of Tijuana. I can tell him that if I were to have a Margarita on the beach of Tijuana, it would be with someone other than him.

• (1450)

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that neither eventuality is likely to happen.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): I think, Mr. Speaker, the real question is whether either of them is going to find a way to get to Tiajuana, given the state of the airline industry. That is why I would like to ask the Minister of Transport this:

The Minister of Transport yesterday would not confirm whether the Government of Canada still has a two airline policy. I think it is vital to all Canadians to know where the government stands on this important issue. Therefore, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether or not the Government of Canada continues to believe, as the Minister of Transport previously stated, that there should be two Canadian airline companies in this country. Yes or no?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have repeated this time and again. Maybe the hon. member for Ottawa Centre was flying too high to understand the answers I gave him. If he would come back down to earth and listen to what I say, he may remember forever that we want a safe, efficient and competitive airline industry to survive in Canada.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, if the minister ever gets his feet on the ground, I wonder whether there will be one foot or two feet. Perhaps then he could tell us.

Yesterday as well he said that the problems confronting the industry were non-existent problems, and I quote: "What we have had in this country in the face of a transportation policy that was supposed to increase competition and improve air service is a result that sees both airline companies losing together over $2 million a day. Last week the chairman of Air Canada said that up to 39,000 jobs may be lost in the airline industry and related businesses in this country". This is a serious problem and the real problem is a non-existent air transportation policy.

What does the minister have to say to the Canadians who are concerned today about losing their jobs?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I notice that the transport critic from the other side is no better at telling jokes than he is at asking questions.

The truth of the matter is that PWA has indicated this morning that it will be making an announcement as to what offer it is going to accept this afternoon, either the Air Canada offer or an alliance with American Airlines. We repeat again that it is a private transaction between two private companies and the policies of this government have been very beneficial to the travelling public and the consumers of this country.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, despite the importance of the issue, the Minister of Transport continues to be evasive. Yesterday he said in the House that his government is taking every measure to ensure a competitive airline industry. He said it again today.

Given the evasiveness of the Minister of Transport, maybe the Prime Minister can tell us what these measures are. Canadians have a right to know. Is it competition between two Canadian carriers, greater foreign competition, or no competition at all?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there are two airlines in existence at the present time. There are offers that have been made between these two companies and another offer from American Airlines to Canadian Airlines. An announcement will be made this afternoon. After this announcement is made there are agencies of the government that will examine the projected transaction and then we will be able to answer to that.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Minister of Transport is going to sit on his haunches and wait for a decision to come from the private sector before Canadian consumers can be guaranteed what they need.

Will the minister give his unequivocal assurance to this House that whatever the result of those merger proposals this afternoon, he will protect the travelling public from price gouging and guarantee that Canadians will have access to competitive regional air carriers?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I repeat again that there are two transactions that are being contemplated at the present time.

Once an announcement is made by one or both airlines, we will deal with all of these questions in the proper manner with the help of the agencies that are set up precisely to look after that.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Comfortably ensconced in this House, the Prime Minister has been extolling the so-called virtues of the Charlottetown Accord, rallying to his cause such allies as the Leader of the Official Opposition, his new friend, and dead sovereignists. However, democracy demands genuine public debate, and I would like to give the Prime Minister an opportunity to confront a real live sovereignist. I ask him to accept the challenge of meeting me in public debate in Quebec, anywhere and at any time during the referendum campaign.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am a real live Canadian, and I brought one into this world.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: For months, the leader of the Bloc Quebecois has been insisting on public consultation. They want to know the views of Quebecers. There is going to be a referendum in Quebec, and on October 26, you will know the outcome and what Quebecers really think.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I think who brought who into the world is beside the point.

I thought we asked for a debate on sovereignty, but the federal government and Mr. Bourassa's government have decided there will be no debate on sovereignty. There will be a debate on the accord, the draft produced in Charlottetown. Now I want the Prime Minister to say whether he will accept my challenge, yes or no.

An hon. member: He is scared.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): The last challenge I accepted was in 1988, when I went twice to the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean, with my wife, to get my friend elected as the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

There will be not one but many debates in Canada and Quebec, because when the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois were asking for a referendum, they said it had to be a referendum on sovereignty.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): So let's have one.

Mr. Mulroney: And now we have a referendum, and the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are saying: It is not on sovereignty, it is just a question, so we can say no without any consequences.

I think I hear the Bloc murmuring in the background. I can assure you there will be a watertight question, a debate according to the rules and a decisive outcome. Considering the honourable commitment made by the leader of the Bloc, I assume that if the vote is not in his favour, he will do as he said and resign the next day.

* * *

• (1500)

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Agriculture concerns the cash flow enhancement program which enables farmers to secure up to $50,000 interest free on the strength of their farm stored grain.

Because of the cash flow problems occasioned by foreign export subsidies and in Saskatchewan by the unilateral gutting of GRIP by the provincial government, will the minister consider renewing the cash flow enhancement program for hard-pressed farmers for the current 1992–93 crop year?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we all recognize the importance of the interest free portion of the cash advance, as it is referred to.

We are consulting within government. Even with interest rates below 5 per cent, it is an expensive program. We must resource it and be able to find those resources. That is what my colleagues and I are attempting to do at this time because we recognize the value of the program.

Mr. Speaker: There will be a single question from the hon. member for Mackenzie and a single question from the hon. member for Dartmouth.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Prime Minister or whoever is speaking for the government is on trade policy.

Yesterday the Minister of Agriculture intimated that the U.S. export enhancement program would not apply to Canadians or Mexicans due to the CUSTA and NAFTA. He seems to have conveniently forgotten that Ontario corn producers succeeded in getting a countervail of $1.10 a bushel against United States corn in 1986, using the existing GATT rules against dumping.

Is it not true that the present GATT rules clearly prevent such export subsidies, but that importing countries are simply reluctant to say no to U.S. cash and the cheap grain that results from that?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to an answer that I gave yesterday where I pointed out that in the politically driven announcement by the President of the United States to expand the export enhancement program, they have not only expanded it to countries which we find difficult to accept, they have removed some countries from eligibility that had been there in the past. I used the example of Mexico.

If my colleague reads the NAFTA agreement, he will see that Mexico, United States and Canada have come to a negotiated agreement as to how export subsidies may be used within our three borders.

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PORT OF HALIFAX

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

In the last year alone the port of Halifax has lost hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in port traffic as a direct result of this government's regressive tax and rail transportation policies. Now a task force, appointed by the Premier of Nova Scotia, has laid much of the blame for the decline of the port of Halifax squarely within the federal government's jurisdiction.

My question is this. Does the minister finally accept the responsibility, accept the findings of the Premier's task force? Specifically, what action has he already initiated to implement all of the 10 recommendations of that report?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have received this report together with other reports from Canada Ports Corporation. We are examining the conclusions of this report. We expect to answer the questions raised in this report very shortly.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that there is unanimous consent for the following motion.

That, after the first three speakers on Government Motion Number 11, all subsequent speakers shall speak no longer than 15 minutes each.

That, on Wednesday, September 9, 1992 the House shall sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment until such time as the three Whips agree or no other member rises to speak, but in any event, not later than 9:59 a.m. on Thursday, September 10, 1992, whereupon the Speaker shall adjourn the House until the next sitting day, provided that no dilatory

motions or quorum calls shall be deemed receivable during extended hours.

That, on Thursday, September 10, 1992 the House shall continue to sit between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. to consider Government Orders.

That, if the debate on Government Motion No. 11 is concluded before 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, 1992, the question on the motion shall be put at 8:00 p.m.

That, at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, the Speaker shall put all questions necessary to dispose of Government Motion No. 11 and immediately thereafter the House shall stand adjourned until Monday, September 14, 1992 at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, there have been some extensive consultations with the opposition parties. In view of what the parliamentary secretary has read I can give the consent of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Riis: Ditto, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, we want to thank all three parties for having had the decency to consult with us. We support this motion and will co-operate with all three parties in the House to make it a democratic debate.

We thank you for intervening yesterday to instigate these negotiations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent in the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*English*]

THE LATE HON. GEORGE MCILRAITH

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we were saddened last month to hear of the passing of the Hon. George McIlraith. George was 84 years old and had spent half of his life in Parliament. He served as a member of the House of Commons for Ottawa West and Ottawa Centre for 10 consecutive Parliaments, from 1940 to 1972, when he was summoned to the Senate where he served until 1983.

During the Mackenzie King and the St. Laurent administrations he was parliamentary assistant to C. D. Howe. He served in the Pearson and Trudeau cabinets as Minister of Transport, President of the Privy Council, Minister of Public Works and Solicitor General.

During the tumultuous years from 1964 to 1967 he was leader of the government in the House of Commons. He was an asset to the Prime Minister of the day. George had a gift for making problems go away. Those of us who knew him well knew that sometimes George had a way of expressing himself that made problems just disappear.

After leaving cabinet he returned to his private practice of law in which he was active until the day he died.

For many years he was minister responsible for the National Capital Commission. It is no coincidence that it was during those years that the NCC played so constructive a part in the development of the national capital region, both as a symbol of national beauty and pride and as an eminently liveable community.

He never claimed for himself the credit which was due. He was too preoccupied looking after the needs of ordinary constituents, the little people as he called them, of every ethnic background, of every possible income group. George was available and there when he was needed.

George McIlraith was a soft-spoken man whose almost understated exterior masked a canny understanding of people and government and a deep devotion to his country and community. When others sought advice, his usual admonition was: "Just keep your head down and do your job". He followed his own advice; while the flamboyance of others garnered the headlines, George McIlraith got the job done.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of all Liberal members, as well as his friends and colleagues, I join all Canadians in mourning the death of a beloved fellow countryman.

To his children Janet, Ann Margaret, Cathy and George, and other members of his family I offer my deepest condolences.

[*English*]

Mr. William Scott (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged to rise today to pay tribute to a fine gentleman who served this Parliament and this country well for over 40 years.

The Hon. George McIlraith was first elected to the House of Commons in 1940 and had already established an illustrious reputation as government House leader when I came here in 1965.

• (1510)

He had begun his career as parliamentary secretary to the Hon. C. D. Howe during the difficult times of the Second World War.

George McIlraith served many prime ministers. Over the 32 years he was in the House of Commons, he was sworn to the Privy Council by the Right Hon. Lester Pearson in 1963 and held several portfolios before he was summoned to the Senate in 1972. His retirement from the Senate in 1983 marked the end of 43 years of active service to the country he loved so dearly.

I served in the House of Commons with the hon. gentleman for seven years and we sat in different chambers for another eleven years after that. My memories of George McIlraith will be of a true gentleman who always acted in a very straightforward manner. He was an excellent worker for his constituents and a credit to the Parliament that he so loved.

To his family and friends I express my condolences. To Parliament I extend hope that his memory will be an inspiration to us all in our efforts to make this a more productive and civil place to carry on the business of our nation.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of our party to pay tribute to George McIlraith.

When I was first elected in 1968 he was the Solicitor General and later on the Minister of Public Works. He was one of the highly respected gentlemen of the House. He was of a calibre similar to that of Mr. Stanley Knowles, John Diefenbaker, and two or three others.

He had been here for many years. He was a member of Parliament from 1940 to 1972, later appointed to the Senate, and stayed there until 1983. If I recall correctly he served under four different prime ministers, a cabinet minister under two of those prime ministers. One of his former colleagues, the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, who is here in the House today, knew Mr. McIlraith very well.

He was a very soft-spoken man, a very generous and sincere man. When I first came to the Hill I realized very quickly he had a lot of friends on the Hill among the staff who worked for Parliament. He was seen as a person around here who the staff could go to and talk to. He would listen to them and try to solve some of their problems.

He was sort of Mr. Parliament Hill. He was Mr. Ottawa, not just for the Liberal Party but for many citizens of this city of Ottawa.

On behalf of our party I want to express to his four children, to his family and to his friends, our most sincere condolences on the passing of Mr. McIlraith.

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in Ottawa—Carleton the senior member of the party in Ottawa was the Hon. George McIlraith.

He had deep roots in the Valley. He was a very intimate friend of three generations of leaders of our country. He was a superb parliamentarian. He was leader of the House at one time. I remember one evening when he asked me to fill in for him. I was Parliamentary Secretary to the then Minister of Northern Affairs, Arthur Laing, and he asked me to be the acting House leader. The late Gordon Churchill was then the House leader for the Loyal Opposition.

After we conducted the business of the House, Mr. Churchill got up and complimented me on the very clear way that the House business had been conducted and would I arrange with the Prime Minister to replace the Hon. George McIlraith.

I said it might be that the hon. House leader of the opposition would prefer me but he may not know, to use the parlance of football, where the play is going. That is Mr. McIlraith's technique. I want to assure him and through you, Mr. Speaker, the entire House, that we do not often know where the ball is going either.

Mr. McIlraith was once faced by the then very popular mayor of Ottawa, the late Dr. Charlotte Whitton, the first female mayor of a major city in this country, a remarkable woman, a remarkable person, and one of the leading social workers in the country.

She was mayor of Ottawa and she challenged George McIlraith in the then riding of Ottawa Centre, now Ottawa West. Despite the great Diefenbaker landslide in 1958, she was unable to unseat the Hon. George McIlraith, so deep were his roots on Preston Street and parts of Ottawa that only Jean-Robert and I would be able to describe and guide you through.

Despite the fact that Dr. Whitton as mayor of Ottawa was defeated by the Hon. George McIlraith, she retained him continually as her personal solicitor. He was one of the two executors of her will who administered her estate when she died. If that does not take talent, if that does not take skill, if that does not take human qualities, I do not know what does.

The Hon. George McIlraith served our country and served Parliament for over 43 years in both Houses. He is one of the few senators I know, had he been here, who could have been elected in an elected Senate. He was a wonderful parliamentarian, a very fair man and a great credit to public life in this country.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in making a few comments about a man we admired so much.

I did not have the honour to serve with George. Because he was a former member for Ottawa Centre I went to visit George in order to seek his advice on whether or not I should run for federal politics. At the time I recall George looked at me and said: "Who are you?" I told George I was an engineer and a municipal politician. The first thing he did was he leaned over and pulled a book from behind his desk. The book was about Mackenzie King. He said: "Here is this book. Read about Liberals".

I was extremely inspired not only by the advice of George who gave me a tremendous amount of strength and insight into what it takes to be a true grassroots politician, but also I still look at him as a tremendous example as a true politician who truly represents the community.

Hon. George McIlraith was a man dedicated to serving the people because he was a man of the people. He believed in Canada and in the Liberal principles. He believed in his family, his friends and his constituents.

George was a great leader who served a great country. He is missed by all of us. He is missed by his family and his friends. To Janet, Mary Margaret, Cathy, George, and all of the grandchildren, we offer our deep sympathy.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of sincerity and indeed dedication that I rise today and join others in a tribute to the Hon. George McIlraith.

If there is anything we have to say about George McIlraith at this moment that is really important it is that he was one of those quiet, decent, gentleman-like politicians who never stood on the street corner shouting at everybody going by or trying to draw attention. He just simply got the job done in his own quiet perfectionist manner.

He loved this Parliament. He loved his country. He was absolutely dedicated to the public life of this country.

I would dock my boat at Petawawa Point and cross over the Ottawa River to Fort William, Quebec. I would pull the boat up on shore, go into George's cottage and have a chat with him. Long after he retired he wanted to be briefed on what was going on in caucus and in Parliament. It was not always easy to explain that to him, as one can well imagine.

When young members came into this House, George McIlraith took them aside, had a reception for them, told them what happened around here and gave them some ideas on how Parliament was run. In those days that was never done much, certainly not when I first came here. I went to George McIlraith many times, as members of the opposition did in those days. There would be no great fanfare. You may never have received a letter. You may never have received a telephone call, but in a couple of weeks' time things would have been done.

• (1520)

The man we are describing today is one of the last generation, quiet, extremely effective politicians who did his job with a great deal of dignity.

I join the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and relate one of my more interesting and humourous memories of those days when the Hon. George McIlraith and the Hon. Paul Martin Sr. sat together on the government benches. The Hon. George McIlraith was Solicitor General at the time. Someone got up and asked him a very sensitive question. By the time George sat down opposition members were looking across wondering what he had actually said. The member from the opposition asked the question a second time and by the time George sat down again they were none the wiser. Someone shouted across: "You have just won the contest

against the Hon. Paul Martin. You have now succeeded him as the man in the House who can give an answer and when you sit down you are not in trouble". That was George.

To his children I want to say they can be very proud of their father who sat in this House with such distinction for so long. One of the eulogies given at his funeral was very apropos. One Christmas Eve in the McIlraith home while everyone was preparing for a good dinner, a young man who was courting one of the McIlraith girls was approached by George after he had come away from the telephone. On the telephone George had said: "Yes, yes, okay. Now, what was that address again?" He took a shopping bag, went to the fridge, dropped in a ham and a loaf of bread. He filled the bag with groceries and asked the young man who was courting his daughter: "Will you please deliver this to Mrs. So-and-So at such and such an address". That is the depth of the human side of the man whom we are remembering today.

He could sit in an office on Parliament Hill with C.D. Howe, sit around the cabinet table with prime ministers, come into this House and answer questions, but he still had time for the average individual. I believe that today's politician who does not forget where his or her roots really are will learn a good lesson and take a good page out of George McIlraith's book on how to be respected at this time, and throughout his or her life and what the Parliament of Canada is all about to the average person across this country.

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, the words of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra are hard acts to follow.

I came to Parliament Hill in 1958 and I first met George McIlraith then. As a reporter, I interviewed him over the next 20 years. He was a very gentlemanly minister, member of Parliament and representative of the people.

I want to keep this brief by saying that all of us on this side will greatly miss George McIlraith. We extend our full sympathies to his family.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prolong these tributes unduly but I wish to add that I had the privilege of working for the Hon. George McIlraith when I was a student at Queen's University at Christmastime in 1966 for a few weeks and then in the summer of 1967 and in 1968. He was a great employer.

We became quite good friends and shared a very common affection for the Ottawa Valley where both of us had roots or what one would call roots today, to use an overworked word, perhaps.

In his 43 years of service to Parliament, which by any record is an outstanding number of years, he displayed a respect and affection for this institution which he imparted by his generosity of spirit to many others.

He will be sorely missed. To his family we extend our deepest sympathy on the loss.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 299 petitions.

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

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CO-OPERATIVE ENERGY CORPORATION, LOWER CHURCHILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY PERMANENT ENGINEERING BOARD

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 1991 annual reports of the Co-Operative Energy Corporation, as well as the Lower Churchill Development Corporation, and the annual report of the Columbia River Treaty Permanent Engineering Board to the Governments of the United States and Canada for the period of October 1, 1990 to September 30, 1991.

[*Translation*]

ORDERS IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS AND REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today in the House, in both official languages, Order in Council appointments recently made by the government pursuant to Section 110(1) of the Standing Orders.

These orders are deemed referred to the Standing Committee named in the appendix.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to present to this House 90 petitions which have been signed by more than 3,000 people in memory of a young girl, Rosalynn Dupuis, who died as a result of a stabbing. A young offender has been charged with her murder.

The people who have signed these petitions, which are a few of many more to come, ask that the laws governing young offenders and the crimes they commit, especially the violent crimes, be changed in order that judges have the ability to impose sentences fitting the crimes which have been committed.

CABLENET NETWORK

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition on behalf of 100 per cent of the residents of Wildan Estates in Freelton in Hamilton—Wentworth. One hundred per cent of everyone canvassed in the survey is not bad.

After 18, going on 19 years of successfully running their own non-profit cable system, these people are being victimized by the Burlington based Cablenet network which claims Wildan Estates is on its turf. It is trying to seize Wildan Estates. I will not stand for that. I am going to bat for these people right to the chairman of the CRTC but I am tabling this petition first in the House.

• (1530)

BILL C-330

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to present to this House a petition certified correct by the clerk of petitions.

It contains the signatures of over 10,000 Canadians who support private member's Bill C-330. They want Canadians to have a greater say in the disposition of offenders in the judicial process. They call upon Parliament to support victims' rights and the protection of the public from violent offenders.

There will be tens of thousands of signatures to follow.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by about a hundred residents from my riding.

The undersigned residents of Canada send this petition in memory of Ryan Garrioch and they want to draw attention to the following: that the majority of Canadians supports equal treatment of criminal offenders but with legislated aid shelters it shelters the criminal from the law for young adolescents. They also ask that chapter 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality of rights.

Therefore these petitioners want Parliament to revise the laws of Canada and replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act that has a lower maximum age of 13.

REFUGEES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour of tabling many petitions from the Toronto, metropolitan Toronto and Mississauga region regarding the ongoing conflict in the regions of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia. The conflict is showing no signs of abatement and it is painfully apparent that the Canadian contingent of the United Nations peacekeeping force is unable to resolve the situation.

Whereas the conflict has caused 2.5 million persons to be physically displaced from their homes thereby becoming refugees in their own nations, and whereas Canadian citizens of these ethnic backgrounds are willing and prepared to sponsor these refugees and their families, the petitioners call upon Parliament to implement legislation an/or procedures to help alleviate the plight of these 2.5 million refugees by all measures possible, including financial aid, essential supplies and permission

to enter Canada as refugees on a temporary basis, until the conflict has ceased, or perhaps on a permanent basis.

CANADA POST

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): I have a second petition, Mr. Speaker, signed by over 300 residents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park regarding the closing of two postal stations, Postal Station B on Ritchie Street and Postal Station M on Bloor Street West.

The closing of these two postal stations means that Parkdale—High Park no longer has a full service post office.

These petitioners call upon the minister responsible for Canada Post to review the decision to close Postal Station M and Postal Station B, renew their leases and ensure that the service remains at these two stations for the residents in Parkdale—High Park.

RWANDA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the third petition, also from Canadians living in the metropolitan Toronto area, is regarding the plight of people living in Rwanda. I will read just the prayer, which calls upon Parliament to, first, urge the Canadian government to apply pressure on the Rwandan regime to immediately stop killing innocent Rwandans; second, urge the Canadian government to stop economic aid and other forms of assistance to the current Rwandan regime; and, third, urge the Canadian government to support the EEC resolution on Rwanda issued on February 20, 1992 in Santo Domingo.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is signed by petitioners from right across Ontario, calling upon the government to ask Canada Post to honour Marie Sklodowska Curie by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of her 125th anniversary which will occur on November 7 of this year.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of people from all across Canada which notes that the current government under Bill C-91 has sought to prevent the production of no name generic drugs in Canada by allowing brand name drug manufacturers to produce drugs without competition for up to 20 years, and that this has already driven up the price of prescription drugs in Canada.

The petitioners therefore call on the government not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22 passed in 1987 so that Canadians will have the full benefit of lower priced generic drugs and so that provincial and private drug plans can serve Canadians without being forced to charge higher fees and/or provide less coverage.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure to present a petition signed by several hundred people from across British Columbia, mainly seniors. They point out that the price of new and existing drugs has already increased substantially to both individuals and provincial and private drug plans since Bill C-22 was passed in 1987.

The petitioners are therefore asking this government not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22 in order that our provincial pharmacare programs may survive.

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and the honour to present three petitions on three different issues. First I have one relating to the crisis in the fishery on the south coast of Newfoundland and in the gulf, 3Ps, 3Pn, 4R. It is from several hundreds of fishermen from a number of communities: from Baine Harbour, Brookside, Boat Harbour West, South East Bight, Petit Forte, Parker's Cove and Rushoon in my riding, as well as from the community of Southern Harbour in the minister of fisheries' riding.

These hundreds of people have written asking that the government do for their coast what it has already done for the northeast coast. The petition points out—and I will not read it all, but I will mention the one or two explicit points—that the government has already moved to implement a cod moratorium on the northeast coast and provided a compensation package.

The prayer of this petition which I support whole-heartedly is that the government do likewise for the people in the southwest coast in Newfoundland and the gulf, that it provide a fair and reasonable compensation package for those who are adversely affected by the severe downturn in the fishery.

I support the petition whole-heartedly.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Second, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from people in the Port aux Basques-Isle aux Morts area of my riding on the issue we are now addressing in Parliament.

They are calling on the government to enact legislation providing for a referendum, but I did want to get that one on the record for the sake of the people who have taken the time to circulate it.

HOUSING

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Third and finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which is from a number of people in my riding in Stephenville, Port au Port, Point au Mal, Kippens, Barachois Brook and Stephenville Crossing areas.

The petition reads that whereas the federal government promised to maintain the federal co-operative housing program with a budget of $6.1 million during 1992, whereas the minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation informed the co-operative sector of this promise as late as six days prior to the February 25, 1992 budget, whereas that budget not only eliminated the budget for co-operative housing but also terminated the federal co-operative housing program including the indexed linked mortgage, whereas this will mean that 2,000 new homes will not be constructed with a job loss of 4,400 people during 1992, and whereas even housing co-operatives which require no government assistance are unable to secure a mortgage—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The time for presenting petitions is limited to 15 minutes and other members want to present petitions.

Mr. Simmons: I fully realize that, Mr. Speaker. I was merely reading the petition which I think was within my right. Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reinstate the federal co-operative housing program and its budget of $6.1 million for 1992 and as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, *rapidement*, my first petition deals with Canadians who wish to axe the tax on reading and other learning materials. They feel it is contrary to our objectives of increasing literacy and educational levels in our country.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my second petition comes from Canadians who deplore the cuts in transfer payments to the provinces for education. These people believe that these cuts run counter to the government's policies on productivity and competitiveness.

[*English*]

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my last petition deals with petitioners who wish Parliament to be very vigilant with the CRTC as it looks to control the use of foul language on radio and television.

They point out that we do not need foul language to entertain or to inform in English, in French or in any other language.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a small group of people who were part of a very large group working across my riding this year in consequence of the celebration of our 125th anniversary as a country. They are the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada. More petitions are being processed.

These people had a project they called the Proud to be Canadian project. They present their signatures to show their pride in our heritage and in our flag. They encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents across Canada who are concerned about Bill C-91 and the effect it will have on no name drugs as well as on the price of drugs to seniors in particular.

The petitioners are asking Parliament not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22 so that Canadians will have the full benefit from lower priced generic drugs and so that provincial and private drug plans can serve Canadians without being forced to charge higher fees and/or provide less coverage.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of Kamloops.

They are calling for the goods and services tax to be removed from feminine sanitary products such as tampons and pads. They point out the fact that these products are a necessity for women between puberty and menopause and therefore the government should not apply the tax to these necessities.

NORTH THOMPSON RIVER

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition concerning the ongoing saga over water diversion.

The petitioners are pointing out that a company presently plans to transfer water from the North Thompson River down toward San Diego, California and are hoping that the government would introduce legislation soon that would prohibit this type of project.

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from pilots in Kamloops who point out that they fly into the airstrip at Jasper National Park. They have found out that the government plans to close this airstrip. They are simply asking Parliament to revoke the proposed regulations issued by the Department of the Environment and ensure that this airstrip remains open.

JUSTICE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to introduce a petition calling upon the government to request the Government of Brazil to expel Christine Lamont and David Spencer and return them to Canada.

HOUSING

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I have a further petition under Standing Order 36 calling upon the government to reinstate immediately the federal co-operative housing program and commit the $6.1 million to that program.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Third, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I want to introduce a petition from the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada to support pride in our flag and in our country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time for presenting petitions has now expired.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 300, 319, 322, 323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 336, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 345, 347, 349, 357, 358, 359, 360, 364, 372, 373, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380 and 382.

[*Text*]

Question No. 300—**Mr. Parker:**

With respect to the recent trip of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to Finland and South Africa (*a*) what was the total cost of air fares (*b*) who else accompanied her on the trip (*c*) what was the air fare for each (*d*) what class of ticket was used?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):

FINLAND:

a) The total cost of air fares for Finland was $29,225.40.

b) The following accompanied the minister:

Ms. R. Mezzanotte

Mr. S. Mullin

Mr. K. Phillips

Ms. S. Beauchamp

Mr. V. Johnstone

SOUTH AFRICA:

a) The total cost of air fares for South Africa was $61,699.

b) The folowing accompanied the minister:

Ms. R. Mezzanotte

Mr. S. Mullin

Ms. L. Edwards

Ms. C. McMaster

Mr. V. Johnstone

Ms. E. Brannen

Mr. G. Hawes

FINLAND:

c) The following air fares for each:		d) the following class of ticket:
Hon. B. McDougall	$6,755.00	F
Ms. R. Mezzanotte	$4,080.90	J
Mr. S. Mullin	$4,176.90	J
Mr. K. Phillips	$4,133.90	J
Ms. S. Beauchamp	$4,080.90	J
Mr. V. Johnstone	$5,997.80	J

SOUTH AFRICA

c) The following air fares for each:		d) the following class of ticket:
Hon. B. McDougall	$10,382.00	F
Ms. R. Mezzanotte	$7,518.00	J
Mr. S. Mullin	$7,398.00	J
Ms. L. Edwards	$7,322.00	J
Ms. C. McMaster	$7,322.00	J
Mr. V. Johnstone	$7,836.00	J
Ms. E. Brannen	$7,398.00	J
Mr. G. Hawes	$6,523.00	J

Question No. 319—**Mr. Gardiner:**

With respect to the newsprint flyer issued by Canada 125 Corportation (Volume 1, Number 1), (a) what were the total costs of production and distribution (b) what was the date and value of the contract related to the production of this publication (c) to whom was the contract awarded?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

a) The total cost of producing and distributing (Volume I, Number 1) tabloid is $839,435.

b) The contract for production and distribution of four tabloids had a net value of $3,357,743 and was dated April 1, 1992.

c) The contract was awarded by tender to GTC Transcontinental for production and Canada Post for distribution.

Question No. 322—**Mr. Boudria:**

Over the last four years did the government and/or the Canada Council provide any grant to the organizers of Vancouver's Women in View Festival and, if so, what was the amount given in each year and for what purpose?

Mr. James Stewart Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am informed by the Department of Communications, the Canada Council and the Department of the Secretary of State as follows:

Department of Communications

FISCAL YEAR	PROGRAM—RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
1988–89		Nil
1989–90	*Cultural Initiatives Program* View, the Perfoming Arts Society (Women in View Festival)	$6,300
1990–91	*Cultural Initiatives Program* View, the Perfoming Arts Society (Women in View Festival)	$1,400
1991–92	*Cultural Initiatives Program* View, the Perfoming Arts Society (Women in View Festival)	$11,700
1992–93		Nil

Canada Council

Over the last four years the Canada Council has provided the following grants to the organizers of Vancouver's Women in View Festival:

YEAR	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
1988	Fees to artists performing at festival	$15,000
1989	Honoraria to writers giving public readings at festival	$1,391

1990	Travel expenses of artists performing at festival	$3,000
1990	Honoraria to writers giving public readings at festival	$730
1991	Honoraria to writers giving public readings at festival	$1,294

Department of the Secretary of State

The department granted funds to the "View, the Performing Arts Society" for the organization of symposium and workshops components of the Women in View Festival:

1988–89	$2,475
1989–90	$2,500
1990–91	$2,500
1991–92	$3,000

Question No. 323—**Mr. Edmonston:**

Does the government intend to introduce legislation concerning the RCMP and its internal and external complaints committees and, if so (a) what changes would occur in the complaint lodging mechanism (b) what types of complaints would be acceptable under the new regulations?

Mr. Leonard Gustafson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Consistent with the measures outlined in the February budget, the government intends to amalgamate the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Public Complaints Commission and the RCMP External Review Committee. No substantive changes are anticipated to the existing process of lodging complaints. Further details of the amalgamation will be included in legislation which the government plans to introduce in Parliament shortly.

Question No. 331—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

Since January 1, 1991 what is the total amount of funding granted by the Medical Research Council (a) for pure medical research (b) for clinical medical research?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): The Medical Research Council of Canada does not apportion its funding on the basis of pure medical research and clinical medical research. However, one means of classifying its research expenditures is attached.

NUMBER OF OPERATING GRANTS FUNDED IN 1991–92 BY RESEARCH AREA

	NUMBER OF GRANTS	AMOUNT OF FUNDING (thousand of dollars)
Bacteriology	64	4,749
Biochemistry–Molecular Biology	237	21,871
Blood	58	4,391
Cancer	98	6,917
Cardiovascular	156	11,552
Cell Biology	77	6,196
Dental Science	31	4,031
Drug Research	81	5,514
Endocrinology	88	8,044
Gastro–Intestinal–Liver	77	7,010
Genetics	59	5,857
Hearing	8	352
Imaging–Nuclear Medicine	26	2,734
Immunology–Transplantation	99	9,259
Metabolism	89	6,656
Musculo–Skeletal	66	4,214
Nephrology	39	3,642
Neurosciences	339	26,682
Nutrition	22	1,388
Reproductive–Pregnancy	70	8,013
Respiration	90	6,165
Virology	65	4,866
Vision	49	2,515
Not classified	2	44

Question No. 332—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

In 1991 with respect to medically and clinically related projects (*a*) How many (i) women (ii) men applied for funding (*b*) How many (i) women (ii) men received funding (*c*) What was the total dollar value of research funding granted to (i) women (ii) men?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare):

MEDICALLY AND CLINICALLY RELATED PROJECTS 1991–1992

	a) Applications		b) Approvals	
	(i) Women	(ii) Men	(i) Women	(ii) Men
GRANTS	294	1,394	108	541
AWARDS	1,185	1,610	315	477

NOTE:

Grants includes operating grants, clinical trials, AIDS grants, university/industry programs.

Awards includes studentships, fellowships, centennial fellowships, clinician scientists, scholarships, MRC scientists, dental clinician scientists and dental fellowships.

(c) (i) and (ii) The distribution of funding among the successful applicants was approximately $28.4 million for women and $31.6 million for men.

Question No. 333—**Ms. Langan:**

With respect to the construction and erection of a container crane at Centerm in Vancouver (a) Was there a contract signed by Ports Canada (b) Is it to be built in the Peoples Republic of China and, if so, (i) will there be a 51% Canadian content requirement (ii) how would the Canadian content be guaranteed (iii) what will be the Canadian content in this contract (c) How many estimated Canadian jobs will there be in this project (d) What is the total monetary value of the contract?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): The Canada Ports Corporation advises as follows:

(a) Yes, a contract was signed between the Vancouver Port Corporation and the Shanghai Port machinery plant.

(b) Yes.

(b-i) Yes.

(b-ii) Canadian content is being closely monitored. Shanghai Port Machinery has been advised that the crane will not land in Canada if Canadian content is not 51%.

(b-iii) Canadian content will be 51% or better.

(c) It is difficult to estimate the number of Canadian jobs related to the project. However, the following is a list of Canadian firms providing material and services:

Kanlift Industries—engineering consulting

Algoma Steel Co.—steel material for the crane

General Electric Canada—controls and electrics

Softac Canada—high voltage system

Hillmar Industries—cable reel and crane brakes

Fire System—fire-fighting equipment

Earl's Industries—hydraulic system

International Paints (Canada) Ltd.—paint

Sonic Barrier Sound Products Ltd.—miscellaneous

Gough Electric—electrical

Basic Hydraulics and Equipment Ltd.—hydraulics

Alimak Canada—elevator

K.W.H. Constructors—steel erection and installation

Dock Express—transportation

(d) $6,298,691.59.

Question No. 334—**Mrs. Mitchell:**

With respect to the recent advertising campaign "Canada–125 years to celebrate" (*a*) what was the total cost of this campaign (*b*) What companies or individuals were paid to create the ads (*c*) What was the cost of placement of the ads (*d*) What was the cost of production of the ads (*e*) How many times did each ad run and over what period (*f*) What part of the Secretary of State budget funded these ads?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

a) The total projected cost of the advertising campaign is $12.3 million.

b) The companies PNMD/Publitel, Palmer Jarvis Advertising and Publicité Martin were contracted to create the ads.

c) The cost of placement of the ads is estimated to be $10.1 million.

d) The cost of production of the ads is estimated to be $2.2 million.

e) The ads ran between April 27, 1992 and August 9, 1992. It is not possible to determine the exact frequency of the ads because all placements have not yet been determined.

f) The communications branch of the Department of the Secretary of State funded these ads.

Question No. 336—**Mr. Edmonston:**

Was Mrs. Lorraine Lagacé ever the subject of electronic surveillance by the RCMP and, if so, (a) who authorized it and for what reason (b) when did the surveillance end?

Hon. Douglas Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): In keeping with the practice of this government and former government, I will not comment upon any police or security investigation except as provided for in section 196 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

I can tell you however, that the activities of the RCMP were closely examined by the McDonald Commission of Inquiry. The enquiry was thorough and painstaking. The commission made its report in August 1981 to the government of the day and that government took the action it deemed appropriate. I consider the matter closed.

Question No. 339—**Mr. Milliken:**

With respect to the Small Businesses Loans Act how many small businesses loans were made by month during 1991 and from January 1, 1992 to April 30, 1992?

Hon. Thomas Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Loans made under the SBLA program since January 1991 are as follows:

	Number
January 1991	672
February 1991	755
March 1991	838
April 1991	944
May 1991	1120
June 1991	907
July 1991	896
August 1991	807
September 1991	813
October 1991	918
November 1991	933
December 1991	789
January 1992	742
February 1992	745
March 1992	919
April 1992*	1021

* May not include all loans made, due to the 90-day leeway provided to lenders to report making of loans.

Question No. 340—**Mr. Boudria:**

Since January 1, 1988 has the Canada Council provided any grants, loans or contributions to Mr. John Hofsess and/or the Right to Die Society and, if so, what amount has been paid and/or remains to be paid?

Hon. Henry Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Since January 1, 1988 the Canada Council has provided one grant to Mr. John Hofsess as follows:

Year	Amount	Purpose
1991	$18,000	Regular non-fiction grant awarded by jury for the purpose of a book length study entitled: "Requiem: Death and Dying in Canada".

The full amount of this grant has been paid. The council has not provided any loans or contributions to Mr. Hofsess and it has not provided any grants, loans or contributions to the Right to Die Society.

Question No. 341—**Mr. Karygiannis:**

With respect to Sean Morriss of Vancouver (a) has he received any moneys from Revenue Canada or from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and, if so, (i) in what amount (ii) for what services and during what period of time (iii) were any moneys received before or during the commission of the criminal acts for which he was convicted in 1991 (b) Did any Revenue Canada personnel intervene on his behalf with respect to the withdrawal of criminal charges against him in 1986?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue):

(a) Mr. Sean Morriss was paid $3,500 by cheque by Revenue Canada, Taxation, under a contract of service. His services were requested by the department between March 24, 1986 and April 13, 1986 in order to identify equipment used in scientific research projects which were being investigated by Revenue Canada, Taxation. Except for the above, there was no money ever given to Mr. Morriss by the department. The criminal acts for which Mr. Morriss was convicted in 1991 occurred in 1989 or later.

(b) No Revenue Canada personnel ever intervened on his behalf with respect to the withdrawal of criminal charges against him. Furthermore, we do not know of any criminal charges ever being raised against Mr. Sean Morriss in 1986.

Question No. 342—**Mr. Wappel:**

How much federal funding has the National Action Committee on the Status of Women received within the past five fiscal years?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women received $2,454,575 within the past five fiscal years.

1991-92—$300,000
1990-91—$396,000
1989-90—$506,000
1988-89—$621,897
1987-88—$630,678

Question No. 343—**Mr. Mifflin:**

Does the government intend to introduce legislation which would make realistic the "Total Force Concept" for Canada's Reserve Force and, if so, when?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Any amendments to legislation required to support the "Total Force Concept" will be considered as part of the over-all review of the National Defence Act mentioned by the Associate Minister of National Defence in the House on May 6, 1992. Due to the complexity of the review, no firm time can be given for introduction of legislative changes.

Question No. 345—**Mr. Wood:**

Since January 1, 1985 how much has the government spent in legal fees on submissions including those to GATT, the U.S. International Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Commerce to represent Canada's case on the softwood lumber dispute with the United States?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): During the period January 1, 1985 to March 31, 1992 the government has incurred legal fees of U.S. $2,835,022.02 related to the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

Question No. 347—**Ms. Copps:**

With respect to the RCMP investigation of the Hon. John Munro, David Fredrick Ahenakew, Peter Kenneth Manywounds, Solomon G. Sanderson, Douglas L. Cuthand, James Patrick Woods, Lawrence O. Russell, Noel Starblanket, Lyle Wayne Ahenakew, the Assembly of First Nations, SINCO, and the Native Indian Business Association between January 1, 1986 and November 30, 1991, what was the total cost incurred including (*a*) all salaries (*b*) all materials (*c*) all travel and accommodation (*d*) all computer time (*e*) all phone and fax charges?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): The Munro et al investigation was carried out over a six-year period involving RCMP members across Canada. A review of the available source documents has been made to determine the best available estimate of the investigative cost. The total calculated amounts are:

Salary expenses	$517,924.83
Clerical expenses	$140,111.00
Travel expenses	$24,801.22
Meals, accommodation expenses	$6,446.21
Purchase of computer imager	$58,483.68
Other (photocopying, fax, et cetera)	$19,752.07
Total estimated costs:	$767,519.01

Question No. 349—**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):**

With respect to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (*a*) what is the government's policy with respect to the provision of services to different regions of Canada (*b*) How does the government intend to fulfil this policy?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): The CBC's mandate is spelled out in paragraph 3.(1)(m) of the Broadcasting Act which was proclaimed on June 4, 1991. The mandate was arrived at and up dated after extensive study by the Caplan-Sauvageau task force on broadcasting policy and review by the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

Among other things the Broadcasting Act states that the programming provided by the CBC should "reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences while serving special needs of those regions" (subparagraph 3.(1)(m)(ii)). The Act also states that the CBC's programming should "be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means and as resources become available for the purpose" (sub paragraph 3.(1)(m)(vii)).

The government provided the CBC with an additional $46 million for 1992/93, bringing its total parliamentary appropriation for 1992/93 to $1.1 billion.

Although the CBC is funded by government the corporation operates at arm's length from the government. As such it is the responsibility of the CBC's management and board of directors to determine how best to allocate the funds made available to it by the government to fulfil its mandate, including the administration of its regional operations and activities.

The government believes that the CBC has an important role to play in the Canadian broadcasting system in reflecting our national identity, and the provision of regional programming about and for the various regions of Canada is one aspect of this role.

Question No. 357—**Mr. Rodriguez:**

Does the government know of plans to send two directors of Canada 125 Corporation to the North Pole to meet the Canada–U.S.–Russian polar expedition and, if so, what is the estimated cost, including transport, food, clothing and other related items?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned, the answer is as follows:

No director or staff of Canada 125 Corporation went to the North Pole to meet the Canada–U.S.–Russian polar expedition.

Question No. 358—**Mr. Corbett:**

Which government department produced a bookmark with the logo "With the future in mind" and how many were produced and at what cost?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Public Service Commission is concerned the answer is as follows:

In 1991 the Public Service Commission produced 7,500 bookmarks with the logo "With your future in mind", *à la mesure de vos aspirations*, at a cost of $3,275.

Question No. 359—**Mr. Angus:**

With respect to the series of television ads entitled either "Experience Canada" and/or "The Partnership in Travel" sponsored by the Canada 125 Corporation (*a*) what was the total cost (*b*) what were the costs of production (specifically talent costs by individual) and placement (*c*) what persons or companies received contracts for these ads (*d*) what were the dates and amounts of these contracts?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

Canada 125 Corporation was one of many sponsors of Experience Canada. The private organization Experience Canada is responsible for the production, distribution and all other costs incurred for the series of television ads.

Question No. 360—**Mr. Angus:**

With respect to the legal fees incurred by the Canada 125 Corporation (*a*) What has been the total cost of legal services from January 1, 1989 to date (*b*) What firms and lawyers billed for this work (*c*) What was the nature of the services provided (*d*) Were these bills ever submitted to assessment or taxation?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

a) The total cost of legal services to June 15, 1992 is $148,193.77.

b) The Canada 125 Corporation legal counsel is Blake, Cassels & Graydon Warren Tettensor.

c) The services provided range from legal work associated with the structuring of the corporation (e.g. letters patent) to the development and execution of contracts with suppliers, partners and/or proponents of projects with ESSO, Experience Canada, Participaction, et cetera). They also include general advice on legal matters, such as the registration of the official Canada 125 logo.

d) Not applicable.

Question No. 364—**Mr. Pickard:**

With respect to the transfer of functions of processing postal imports from Revenue Canada to the Canada Post Corporation,

(*a*) How many jobs will be affected at Revenue Canada Customs

(*b*) How much compensation is being provided by Revenue Canada Customs to Canada Post Corporation?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue):

(*a*) There are 137 employees affected in Revenue Canada. The majority of these employees are expected to be placed within customs and all will be made a reasonable job offer within the federal Public Service pursuant to the national joint council's work force adjustment directive.

(*b*) Revenue Canada will be paying Canada Post $3. per parcel. This amount represents a portion of the costs that will be incurred by the Canada Post Corporation for assuming the responsibility to perform the data entry and material handling functions.

Question No. 372—**Mr. Shields:**

With respect to union members who crossed the picket lines during the fall 1991 Public Service strike (*a*) has any evidence, data or reports been gathered by Departments concerning union local or PSAC interference with them (*b*) Have any reported that the union has taken a disciplinary action against them and, if so, (*i*) how many and what type of action was taken (*ii*) How many union memberships were suspended and for how long?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): A survey of large departments has indicated that there is no systematic or organized collection of evidence, data, or reports concerning PSAC interference with union members who may have crossed picket lines during the 1991 Public Service strike.

These departments have indicated a general awareness through informal discussions with employees and supervisors as well as through various media reports that PSAC locals have been attempting to take union disciplinary action against employees who crossed the picket line. For the most part, such action would appear to be limited to the temporary suspension of membership in the union and the expulsion of employees from union activities.

The disciplining of employees by PSAC is strictly an internal union matter. Unfortunately, Treasury Board as employer can do little, if anything, to protect employees against what could be seen as harsh treatment by the union. However, any systematic or organized gathering of information by departments could be seen by the Public Service Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) as employer interference with the administration of an employee organization and contrary to the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

In a decision by the PSSRB dated March 16, 1991 responding to a complaint by a group of employees against the action by PSAC, the board stated that the rights of members are matters between those members and the employee organization. They are governed by the by-laws and constitution of that organization.

Question No. 373—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

With respect to companies in China which manufacture and export textiles, steel pipes, diesel engines and leather jackets (*a*) What are their names and addresses (*b*) What is the total value of these imports (i) between 1984 and June 1989 and (ii) since June 1989?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): The statistics on imports of these commodities from China are attached herewith.

The following should be taken into consideration:

(a) As the name and addresses of manufacturers in China are not captured by the Customs Commercial System nor by Statistics Canada, this information is unavailable. However, names of the vendors from 1988 to 1992 may be made available. It should be noted, however, that in most cases vendors are not necessarily manufacturers.

(b) The 1984 to 1987 statistics on imports from China were obtained using the Canadian International Trade Classification commodity codes, whereas the 1988 to April 1992 statistics were obtained using the harmonized system classification codes. As this may influence the import figures, readers should interpret the commodity data cautiously.

Statistics Canada—International Trade Division
Client Services Section
Imports 1984 – 1987 Annual Data from China
For a Selected List CITC Codes—by Product, by Year
in Canadian Dollars

Product	1984	1985	1986	1987
Diesel Engines	86,186	3,082	9,838	–
Leather Jackets	593,470	113,146	165,549	419,033
Steel Pipes	121	–	–	–
Textiles	56,719,482	59,820,227	66,318,511	105,118,935

Canadian Imports From People's Republic of China

	Jan. 1988 – May 1989	June 1989 – Apr. 1992
Textiles	$475,842,825	$1,272,170,678
Steel Pipes	$4,055,878	$15,370,126
Diesel Engines	$121,781	$20,705
Leather Jackets	$4,035,287	$38,445,786

Note: Textiles are H.S. chapters 50 to 63 inclusive
Steel Pipes are H.S. classes 7304; 8205; 8708; 9209.10
Diesel Engines are H.S. classes 8408.10; 8408.20; 8408.90
Leather Jackets are H.S. class 4203.10

Question No. 376—**Mr. Wood:**

. Does the government intend to move the Canadian Forces 414 Squadron from North Bay, Ont. to Shearwater, N.S. and Comox, B.C., and, if so (*a*) What is the total projected cost for the transfer of equipment, personnel and families including relocation programs, legal fees and real estate commissions (*b*) What costs have been incurred in Shearwater and Comox to accommodate the move, including new housing and facilities (*c*) What is the cost to

reconsolidate and reconstruct Canadian Forces Base North Bay after the departure of the 414th Squadron?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): The subject move has been effected with the squadron at CFB Comox retaining the 414 Squadron designation and the formation of 434/420 Composite Squadrons at CFB Shearwater. The stand-up date of these squadrons was July 5, 1992 with operations commencing at that time. DND airfield support operations at CFB North Bay will cease on July 31, 1992.

The costs associated with the out-of-cycle transfer of personnel and dependants including relocation programs, real estate commissions and legal fees are projected at $1.9 million. The cost associated with the transfer of equipment is unavailable at this time.

Construction is required at both CFB Comox and CFB Shearwater to accommodate the relocation of 414 Squadron assets. This cost is anticipated to be approximately $12.2 million. Construction cost at CFB North Bay to consolidate residual activity once 414 Squadron has relocated are projected at $4.4 million.

The projected savings to the Department are $34.3 million over five years.

Question No. 377—**Mr. Riis:**

With regard to the program entitled Voyageurs Canada 92 (a) Will Air Canada be eligible to receive deductions or other reductions (eg. gift to Canadian Crown, business deduction, or other) of tax for the seats provided to this program and, if so, what is the total estimated cost of these tax write-offs (b) Are the seats being allocated for the program to be charged at the full fare economy rate or if not, what will the rate of fare be for these seats for the purposes of tax reductions by Air Canada?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned the answer is as follows:

(a) Air Canada will not be eligible to receive any tax reductions from its participation in Voyageurs Canada 92

(b) Not applicable.

Question No. 378—**Mr. Fisher:**

With regard to the visit of the President of Russia to Canada in June 1992 (*a*) what was the cost of printing documents in relation to this visit (*b*) What were the titles or descriptions of the materials printed (*c*) What quantities were printed of each document (*d*) Who received the contracts for such printing?

Hon. Barbara MacDougall (Minister of State for External Affairs): In so far as External Affairs and International Trade Canada is concerned the reply is as follows:

The cost of printing documents in relation to the visit of the President of Russia in June, 1992 was $384. The descriptions and quantities of materials printed were: 50 copies of four backgrounders and 100 copies of five Canada-Russian treaties. Canada communications Group received the contracts for this printing.

Question No. 379—**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):**

With regard to the visit of the President of Russia in June 1992 (*a*) What was the value of contracts for public or media relations for this visit (*b*) What firms or individuals received such contracts and on what date (*c*) What was the value of each contract?

Hon. Barbara MacDougall (Minister of State for External Affairs): In so far as External Affairs and International Trade Canada is concerned the reply is as follows:

There were no contracts for public of media relations undertaken for the visit of the President of Russia in June 1992. All work was handled by staff members of the department.

Question No. 380—**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):**

With regard to the targeting and recruitment committee (TARC) of CSIS and the Solicitor General, between January 1986 and January 1990 (*a*) How many times did this committee meet and on what dates, (*b*) Did anyone who was not either a public servant or a member of CSIS attend such meetings and, if so, who were they and what was their title and with which office were they employed?

Hon. Douglas Grinslade Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): The correct name of the committee in question is the Targeting Approval and Review cOmmittee (TARC). The purpose of this committee is to determine the appropriateness and scope of investigations conducted by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). It is a committee internal to CSIS, chaired by the director, and it meets as required. In addition to CSIS employees one senior official from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and one senior official from the Department of Justice regularly attend TARC meetings.

In keeping with the policy of the government, I will not provide details of CSIS operational policies for reasons of national security. However, I can tell you that the make-up and responsibilities of the TARC were clearly explained in *On Course*, a public document which outlines the government's response to the five-year review of the *CSIS Act*.

Question No. 382—**Mr. Angus:**

With respect to the Westray Mine public inquiry, (*a*) What documents or memorandum (titles and dates of those documents) has the federal government provided to the inquiry (*b*) Were any of the documents provided to the inquiry not tabled in the House and if so which documents identified by title and date were not tabled (*c*) When were those documents released to the inquiry (*d*) Were any documents provided to the Government of Nova Scotia and if so which documents and on what dates were they provided?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): (a) On June 4, 1992 the federal government tabled certain documents concerning the Westray coal mine project. Included with these documents was a list of additional supporting material available in an ISTC reading room. A complete set of all documents (tabled and available in the reading room) were sent on the same day to the inquiry.

(b) The supporting material listed in the tabled documents was sent to the inquiry.

(c) These documents were released to the inquiry on June 4, 1992, the same day that all documents were tabled in the House.

(d) On June 4, 1992 the Government of Nova Scotia received the same documents that were tabled in the House and the supporting material.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 289, 329, 330 and 368 could be made Orders for Return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House that Questions Nos. 289, 329, 330 and 368 be deemed to have been made Orders for Returns?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 289—**Mr. MacAulay:**

With respect to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), for every year since it was created, by each federal riding (*a*) what is the total spending (*b*) Which companies or individuals have received funding (*c*) What was the nature of each project (brief description) (*d*) Where is each company or project receiving funding located (*e*) What was the amount and type of funding (*f*) How many estimated jobs were created (*g*) Is the company or the project still in operation and, in the negative, when did the operations cease (*h*) What is the average A C O A contribution for every job created?

Return tabled.

Question No. 329—**Mr. Mifflin:**

With respect to the Canadian Armed Forces how do (*a*) the 1992 and 1995 planned rank structures (*b*) The operational to support ratio compare with those of (i) Australia (ii) France (iii) Germany (iv) Israel (v) the Netherlands (vi) New Zealand (vii) United States?

Return tabled.

Question No. 330—**Mr. Shields:**

Since the inception of the Arctic Winter Games has the government or any of its agencies provided the games with any grant funding and, if so, (*a*) To whom (*b*) How much was given for each game (*c*) For what purpose was the funding granted?

Return tabled.

Question No. 368—**Mr. Saint-Julien:**

Do the National Museums of Canada and the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa own standard commercial vehicles and, if so, (*a*) how many (*b*) What is the make and year of these vehicles (*c*) To whom are they assigned?

Return tabled.

* * *

[*English*]

STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 Questions Nos. 291 and 327.

Due to the length of the answers to those questions I would ask that they be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

[*Text*]

*Question No. 291—**Mr. Saint-Julien:**

Did CBC invite tenders from garment manufacturers (coats, parkas and pants) for the purchase of sportswear to be worn by its organizers, journalists, analysts and officials during the 1992 Olympic Games in Albertville and, if so, (*a*) Were there any Canadian bidders and who were they (*b*) If a contract was awarded (i) to whom (ii) what quantity of clothing was involved (iii) what was the dollar value of the contract?

Hon. Henry Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications):

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation:

The CBC issued no formal invitation to tender to garment manufacturers for the special clothing it required for its employees covering the 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville. (Uniforms are mandatory on Olympic sites.)

As required for Olympics' coverage, CBC consulted the Olympic Trust of Canada to ascertain which supplier it had selected to provide uniforms for Olympic athletes. The trust advised the CBC that a Canadian company, SKIAN, had been chosen.

The CBC then contacted SKIAN for costs and samples of the product available. CBC compared those costs and samples with others from a Canadian distributor, Robert Christie Sports and Fashions Inc., a company with which it had formerly done business.

During the period when the Corporation was assessing the two product lines, SKIAN went out of business. Because there was at that point insufficient time to approach another supplier for quotations, CBC awarded the contract to Robert Christie Sports and Fashions Inc.

*Question No. 327—**Mrs. Marleau:**

With respect to the government's announcement of the new look to the unemployment cheques, what was the total cost to print the announcements?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): The new cheque announcements sent to UI claimants with their cheques costs $24,000.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Sir, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

[*English*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There are some Orders for Return on the Order Paper, notably one I put down on May 6 of last year. Twice I raised this issue with the parliamentary secretary in June before we adjourned. Both times he assured me he would look into it to see if something could be done to expedite the matter.

It is now September and it appears nothing has been done to expedite this matter. This information must be readily available and I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would undertake to present the House with this information next week.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite correct in that he has asked about this matter before. I would just plead that events have intervened between June and the present, notably summer.

I can assure him, in all seriousness, that I will look into the matter immediately and report back to him at the earliest opportunity.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs) moved:

That, pursuant to the act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of a referendum question:

"Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

_____ _____"

yes no

That a message be sent to the Senate accordingly and request that the Senate concur in the same.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think I might be forgiven for expressing my appreciation of the unusual generosity which has been extended to me by members of the House not only today but also over the last several weeks.

As my friend and colleague the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra will know, that is a treatment reserved for former prime ministers. It is not very durable, I am sure, but I will not spend it quickly.

• (1550)

I have to say that no minister could have carried out the challenge I was asked to carry out without the advice, the support and the loyalty of my colleagues in this House, in my caucus and in my cabinet. Of course, no one has given me more support in carrying out these responsibilities than the right hon. member for Charlevoix, the Prime Minister.

His intense commitment to this whole country and, I have to say as someone who was there, his unparalleled negotiating skill in this last critical month served this country and all those who care about its future in a selfless and determined way. Yesterday he quoted Sir John A. Macdonald. By his nature and on his record no one has a better right to quote Sir John A. Macdonald.

To a degree never known before in Canada, these constitutional discussions have been open to the public. Literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians have been involved directly in town hall meetings in Valleyfield, Whitecourt and Markham, in communities large and small all across Canada, in public hearings by two national parliamentary committees and several in the provinces, by the Spicer commission, by the extensive process of aboriginal consultations in six national policy conferences, in the media, across kitchen tables and on open-line programs. That public process profoundly shaped the decisions made at Charlottetown.

It led to the rejection, for example, of the government's original proposal for a council of the federation. It led to a rejection of our first proposal for an economic union. It added a social charter. It added the inherent right to self-government. It added a Senate that was equal and not just equitable, and it brought more Canadians directly into debate about their country. So did the spontaneous gestures of affection for Quebec, the newspaper advertisements, the hockey tournaments, the exchanges, the gift from Toronto to Montreal, the citizen driven billboard campaign proclaiming: "My Canada includes Quebec". Nothing like this has ever happened in Canada before.

[*Translation*]

Three major steps remain. The first is to invite the judgment of the Canadian people in a national referendum on October 26. If Canadians vote yes, Parliament and legislatures would then act immediately to debate and, I expect, adopt the specific resolutions. Then we would seek the unanimous agreement of the provinces to shorten the period of final ratification, in a way that could have these major constitutional changes approved and ratified and effective in law within a matter of months.

In Charlottetown we agreed to renew the Canadian federation. As this House agreed when it passed the referendum legislation, the question was circulated last week to the leaders of the other parties in Parliament and then to the provincial premiers and territorial and aboriginal leaders. This question will be asked of every Canadian in every province and territory in October. The question is precise, direct and fair. It allows Canadians a personal voice in the future of this country and it invites all Canadians to read the constitutional package, to judge it, to consider whether any alternatives are practical and then to express their view.

[*English*]

For months, for years, this House and this country have been discussing the Constitution of Canada. We have sought agreement before and failed too often. We have sought unanimity before and have seen it slip away. We have pursued reform in slices and in so doing required some Canadians to stand in line for reform.

At Charlottetown two weeks ago that pattern was broken and a new pattern was set.

For the first time in our history, and at the most inclusive Canadian table ever, 17 Canadian leaders came together to support each other, their country and our future. For the first time in our history those leaders were able to agree unanimously on a comprehensive package of change that addresses every major constitutional issue of this past decade.

It is appropriate that we should quickly bring this package to Parliament and then to the people because in a very direct way this agreement is a product of this Parliament and this country. It would not have happened without the leadership, understanding and willingness to trust and take risks demonstrated by members of this House.

Individual members of Parliament put their careers on the line to make this happen: the member for Yorkton—Melville, the member for Winnipeg South, the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, the member for Jonquière, the member for St. John's East, the member for Macleod, the Prime Minister and other party leaders, and many more here and in the other place. This was the Canadian political process at its best.

It revealed a country that most of us do not know nearly well enough. Many of our current conflicts exist because we do not know well enough the history of our country, the defining impact of its geography and size, its diversity, or its success when compared by almost any standard to any other nation.

Canada is the community that most of the world wants to become, yet we take our advantages for granted and so we risk losing them. This is not because our differences are so deep but because what we share in common is not valued enough. Most of us profoundly hope to put this constitutional issue behind us but we cannot put aside the need to know our country better.

If I have learned two lessons in the last 17 months one is how destructive prejudice and misunderstanding can be and the other is how much we Canadians can do together when we reach beyond those barriers of anger and fear.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): We are all aware that there is a danger that a referendum will excite that anger and that fear, that it will cause Canadians to dig in behind old lines. However, it can also be the means by which individual Canadians come to the understanding that we have come to in this House and that the leaders came to in Charlottetown, which is that if we want to keep this country we have to see it whole.

Yesterday the Prime Minister quoted Sir John A., who described the first Charlottetown agreement as bearing upon its face the marks of compromise. Canadians who find some fault in the Charlottetown agreement that was signed three weeks ago should look again at what was cobbled together to create this country. Beyond the compromises then and now were decisions that were bold, sensible and, in many cases, overdue.

[*Translation*]

We have agreed on a new partnership between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians that would close the circle of Confederation and put the energies of aboriginal peoples to work for themselves and for Canada.

We have adopted the concept of Quebec as a distinct society and given that province the instruments it requires to be confident and secure in Canada forever.

We have agreed to improve our Canadian democracy to reform this House so that it would reflect the will of the people more fairly and to create a new Senate that brings the voice of the regions into the centre of national decisions, a Senate that would be elected, equal and very effective. We have agreed that both Houses of Parliament should respect what Clyde Wells has called the third equality, that between English and French speaking cultures.

We have agreed on a new federal partnership, on a more sensible, more realistic division of powers that recognizes that Ottawa does not always know best. We have found ways to end the corrosive abuse of the federal spending power. We have agreed to strengthen our common commitment to those programs that define the very essence of Canada—like equalization and regional development.

• (1600)

Finally, we have agreed on a common and inclusive statement of Canadian characteristics, Canadian values of democracy, the rule of law, Quebec as a distinct society, the rights of native peoples, linguistic duality and the equality of races, of individuals, of gender and of the provinces.

[*English*]

We have never before been able to agree together on reform like that. These are not small changes, they are fundamental.

During these long discussions we sometimes fell into the habit of comparing Beaudoin–Dobbie with July 7, with August 28. That is not the comparison. The comparison is with any constitutional proposal that was ever agreed before.

In 1990 aboriginals and others felt left out. In 1982 Quebec was left out. In previous constitutional proposals the division of powers was left out. This agreement keeps the promises that were made before: promises to aboriginals, to Atlantic Canada, to the west, to the north, the promises at the Paul Sauvé arena. It does so as Canadians together with unanimity in the Canada round.

Of course, there were differences around the table as there are around the country. That should not surprise anyone. This, after all, is after Russia the largest country in the world, crossing a continent, facing three oceans, formed from every culture and tradition on earth. Differences define this country. So too does how we deal with difference. We do not erase it. We do not outlaw it. We embrace it and we accept it.

The Charlottetown agreement does that. It reflects the equality of individuals and of provinces, the unique place of our French and English cultures, the obligation we have to our aboriginal citizens, our Canadian commitment to seeing equality, not as sameness, but as respect for different needs, different realities.

The Canadian achievement, the achievement of Charlottetown, is to take those different views and reconcile them fairly, freely and justly. The results of that agreement are now before the Canadian people for their decision.

[*Translation*]

The details of this agreement are important, but equally important is the underlying vision.

The Constitution we have today comes, by and large, from another time, more than a century ago, almost another country, a country that was mainly European and white, a country concentrated on the eastern seaboard, a country that treated its aboriginal citizens as savages or as children.

As we responded to the Depression and to World War and to growth and to the temptation of the federal spending power, we became a country increasingly run from the centre, a federation where the provinces were not trusted.

But that is not the country we are today. Canada has changed and our Constitution must change too. The Charlottetown Agreement allows the Constitution to catch up with the country.

It ends a view that federalism only works if it is controlled closely by Ottawa. It ends a view that strong regions mean a weak nation. It puts in place a new partnership between the provinces, the national government and the aboriginal people; a new partnership among all Canadians. It says that strong parts can make for a strong whole.

[*English*]

It is very important that Canadians judge this agreement by what it actually says, not by what others say it says. This is not written in Morse code. Canadians owe it to themselves to read it so that they can judge it themselves. It will be available to Canadians across the country.

Canadians should also judge this agreement on its own terms. Threats or fear or false choices have no place in this Canadian debate. This is not a loyalty test. This agreement should stand or fall on its own accord. I believe the central question is does this agreement move the whole country forward? Many members of this House and many Canadians might have written this agreement differently. I might have done that if I had been in a room alone, but I was not alone. No one was and no Canadian is today.

The goal here was agreement. The purpose was to come together. That required give and take. It required that everyone give a little ground to move to common ground, higher ground. The strength of this agreement is that it is not the product of one set of hands or one way of thinking. It was the result of different needs, different visions, different priorities coming together in one community. There is nothing new about that. If the Fathers of Confederation a century ago had insisted on either

perfection or some preordained plan, there would have been no agreement then, no Canada.

That is not what happened at Confederation, not what has kept us since, not what distinguishes us still. More often than not, more often than most, we have succeeded in Canada in balancing views, balancing interests and in moving this country steadily forward, not to Utopia but to improvement. A new Senate would bring democracy and diversity and the influence of the more distant provinces into the centre of national decision making. It would have real power. The power to reject the appointment of the Governor of the Bank of Canada is real power. The power to force the House of Commons into joint sittings, the power to initiate bills on controversial matters is improvement.

The agreement on aboriginal self-government can begin to repair the ravages of the past and put aboriginal Canadians on the road to dignity and development in the country they share. That is improvement.

Respecting the nature of Quebec, welcoming the distinct society, and respecting its difference can take us beyond the corrosive doubts about whether Quebec wants Canada, whether Canada wants Quebec. That is improvement.

Approval of this agreement can put the Constitution on the back burner out of the headlines where it belongs. That is improvement.

We have been at this far too long. We have to break the back of this problem before it breaks us. I believe this agreement can do that and do it fairly. There are serious and sensible Canadians who have substantial reservations and misgivings about the package. They have the democratic right to vote this down if they think that would be best for Canada. Before they do that they should look carefully at what it means and at what the consequences might be. This, after all, is probably the most important decision Canadians will ever make about our country and our future together. There are serious questions to ask and to answer.

If this is turned down, would there be another agreement, a better agreement around the corner, some kind of plan B for Canada? I have learned not to say that anything is impossible. Remember, 17 of Canada's leaders met for hundreds of hours over dozens of days after two years of conversation and consultation and deliberation. We looked at literally hundreds of other options, other models, other measures and none worked as well as this. I suspect the real choice is not this agreement versus another, but this agreement versus no agreement at all. Canadians should consider the implications of that, of continuing with the status quo, the impact of more uncertainty on the economy, the sense of betrayal that would arise among aboriginals, the neglect that would continue to mean for other issues that matter and the perpetuation of debate, of disorder, of disunity.

There are other questions to ponder as well. If this is accepted in Quebec but turned down outside, what conclusions would reasonable Quebecers draw? Having been promised reform in 1980, having been left out of reform in 1982, having seen reform fail in 1990, how would they react in 1992? What if this agreement is supported in the rest of Canada but turned down in Quebec? Canadians should think about all of that, about how we would react the morning after.

• (1610)

We have been at this now for over 25 years, bickering while other countries have been building, focusing on the past and its wrongs rather than on the future and its promise, looking inward rather than outward and glaring at one another rather than taking on the world.

It is time to bring this issue to a close. It is time for Canadians to choose. It is time for this country to come together at last. We need each other here more than ever and on more than the Constitution. We need each other tomorrow too, on everything else.

If we are unable to agree on Canada, would we ever be able to agree on anything else? If we are unable to agree on Canada, would anything else matter after that? However if we can agree, if we do agree, what does that say for the future?

As the Prime Minister will attest I did not exactly volunteer for this assignment. However, none of us chose to have our country look in upon itself for so long with such anger and such misunderstanding. Yet through this process each of us has come to learn more about this extraordinary country and to appreciate it more.

[*Translation*]

Very few people were surprised when the United Nations judged Canada as the best place in the world to live. That is not a reason for complacency. There are problems here, prejudices, injustice, inequality. We are not a perfect country, but we are very successful.

Much of our success comes from our ability to work together. Our economy is generally stronger because our country is very large. We have influence in world trade because Canada is large, strong and very stable. Our social and medical programs are the result of a social conscience you do not find in the United States, a result of a respect for one another that you do not find everywhere.

In the end, this is not a national decision but a personal decision each of us must make about our country. I am only one Canadian. I am proud of my own roots and happy to have had the opportunity to know my country better. I am not a Quebecer and no one will be surprised to learn that French is not my first language. Yet I have come to know Quebec, as much as an Albertan can, and there is no doubt in my mind that sharing a great country with Quebec makes Alberta better, just as sharing a country with Alberta makes Quebec stronger and better.

We are brothers and sister here, not identical twins, but part of a family that is becoming more generous, more confident. I want our children to grow up in that large family. We will all be better off for it, but that decision is for each individual Canadian to make.

[*English*]

I have heard a lot of wise things said about our country in the last several months as I travelled across the nation. Let me conclude by referring to two of them.

On Canada's east coast, in Nova Scotia, lives a young girl, a new Canadian, who came to Canada four years ago from Holland. Andrea Eelman is a high school student from Tatamagouche.

She won a public speaking contest there earlier this year, in which she said the following:

> Even before I came here, Canadians to me meant the people who liberated my country of origin from the Nazis. Not the British, not the Russians, not the Americans, but the Canadians. Canadians. Canada meant a country that brought forth heroes, willing to fight, not just for their own, but for someone else's country. If Canadians are recognized as heroes in other countries, isn't it time that we recognize them as heroes here? And shouldn't we, like those who fought for my homeland so long ago, now fight for our country in its hour of need?

The other observation comes from my own foothills, from the Indian Elder Peter O'Chiese. His prayer opened my first meeting with the Assembly of First Nations. He referred to all of the differences in Canada, all the reasons we could find to disagree.

"Those differences", he said, "can divide us and make us weak, or unite us and make us strong". His prayer was that we would find the will to lift each other up. That prayer has been heeded by the aboriginal people. It has been heeded by this House of Commons. It has been heeded by the leaders in Charlottetown.

I hope it will guide the judgment of the millions of Canadians who will decide on October 26 whether we Canadians will let each other down or lift each other up.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke on the referendum bill last June, I told the government: if you can reach a unanimous agreement, fine, but if not, do not hesitate to submit a constitutional revision proposal to the Canadian people by means of a pan-Canadian referendum.

Today, on behalf of my party, I would like to congratulate the Minister as well as all those who worked for so many months to get a unanimous agreement. It is obviously the result of much work, compromise and sacrifice in certain circles and certain regions of the country.

Politics is the art of the possible, and this agreement reflects what is possible today. Those who will oppose it will have to prove that, under the circumstances, they could come up with a better agreement, an agreement which would also be unanimous and which would truly be in the interests of Canada as a whole. It is important to note that, in a federation such as ours, we must always think about national interests first, sometimes at the expense of special, local or regional interests.

Once more, this agreement is probably the best possible under the circumstances. I wish to assure the Minister that, in the interests of this country, we Liberals agree to participate fully and actively on the yes side in the referendum campaign during coming days and weeks.

• (1620)

From the very beginning, the position of the Leader of the Opposition has been that a referendum should be held to allow the public to approve any major constitutional change. There is no need for me to remind the House about the uneasiness of the government at this suggestion. One of the government backbenchers even introduced a private member's bill on the referendum, but the government finally understood that, if there was to be a referendum in one or more province in Canada, it would be quite normal for all Canadians in all the provinces to be asked to vote on an agreement dealing with constitutional renewal. This is therefore very satisfying for us, Liberals, and for our leader, it means that a very important objective has been reached, because we are convinced that, from now on, our Constitution can no longer be amended without the entire population being asked to ratify any proposed constitutional change.

It will certainly be wonderful when all Canadian citizens are asked to vote democratically to determine their political and constitutional future.

I urge Canadians who will be asked to vote on October 26: Set aside your individual and personal interests; think about the interests of the nation and generously say yes to constitutional renewal.

I forget who said that a society will be judged by the way it treats its minorities.

I believe that the proposed constitutional agreement vividly illustrates the extraordinary spirit of compassion, understanding and tolerance of Canadian society, because it must be admitted that the major winners, the major beneficiaries of this most recent round of constitutional negotiations are our minorities. Let us deal first of all with the First Nations.

The agreement proposes to amend the Constitution to recognize that the aboriginal peoples of Canada have the inherent right to self-government in Canada. What is greatly to the credit of those who negotiated the agreement is that the recognition of the inherent right to self-government shall be interpreted as meaning that the aboriginal governments constitute one of the three orders of government in Canada. This did not come about without apprehension or reluctance in various quarters.

[*English*]

I take great pride in saying that we Liberals never hesitated. We stood firm on this issue and at the very beginning called for the recognition of the inherent right to aboriginal self government. This achievement is a major step forward. In the eyes of the world, in the eyes of history, this measure will distinguish Canada as a nation of tolerance and respect. It is a new beginning that will help to end the cycle of poverty and dependency for these people.

For this and this alone I will venture to say that this accord should be accepted. If it is worth doing the referendum and winning it in order to secure such an historic breakthrough, let us do it.

I want to extend congratulations on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada to Ovide Mercredi, to Rosemarie Kuptana, to Yvon Dumont and to Ron George for their skilful work on behalf of their respective peoples.

[*Translation*]

It is not by chance that our party is so receptive and so open to the legitimate aspirations of the aboriginal peoples. I would like to pay homage today to Senators Len Marchand and Charlie Watt who have long defended the interests of the First Nations. I also wish to emphasize the exceptional contribution of the hon. members for Western Arctic and Nunatsiaq to these constitutional debates. These hard working members of our party were able to inspire and influence us so that we would support what I would describe as a visionary policy for our future relations with the First Nations.

I must say that I was especially impressed by the untiring and even colossal work of the hon. member for Western Arctic, who did so much for her people. I sat with her on the Charest committee and on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee. I shall never forget her fierce determination to put forward the aboriginal point of view. Her influence within our party was such that that I have no hesitation in saying that, today, of all political parties, ours is the best prepared to deal with the First Nations as between equals to implement the negotiating process resulting from this agreement.

I can tell the First Nations that a future Liberal government, under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, and with the assistance of the hon. member for Western Arctic will complete the work already begun for aboriginal peoples.

[*English*]

We Liberals are also very happy to see that a new Canada clause will recognize that Canadians are committed to racial and ethnic equality in a society that includes citizens from many lands who have contributed and continue to contribute to the building of a strong Canada that reflects its cultural and racial diversity.

[*Translation*]

Throughout the years there have been profound changes in Canada. Our nation comprises much more today than the descendants of French and British settlers. The contribution of new Canadians from all corners of the earth has enriched our society. It is appropriate to recognize this in our Constitution and it is also a clear way to tell new Canadians that this country also belongs to them while assuring them that they will enjoy respect and equality in this country. My colleague for Mississauga East, who sat with us on the Beaudoin–Dobbie parliamentary committee, was determined to have this clause included and I am sure that she is very happy that it has been.

I would now like to say a few words about the guarantees provided for official language minority communities under this agreement. For us Liberals, no constitutional reform would have been acceptable if the way these minorities had been overlooked in the Meech Lake Accord had not been corrected in the current constitutional round.

We are therefore pleased that the Canada clause will also state that the Constitution shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the fact that Canadians and their governments—and I emphasize the word governments because it is very important—are committed to the vitality and development of French and English speaking minority communities throughout Canada.

• (1630)

I think congratulations are in order for the representatives of associations of francophones outside Quebec who were determined to present their point of view and who, as the minister well knows, insisted on being invited to these constitutional talks although certain parties would have liked to ignore them.

They had a number of natural allies within our own party, including my colleagues from Ottawa—Vanier, St. Boniface and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who played a major role in convincing the Government of Canada and a number of provincial governments of the need for this clause.

I say bravo, mission accomplished. We now have a legal text. We can only hope that governments will now no longer hesitate to protect and also promote official language minorities.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the six legal and political advisers who guided and helped us during the whole process of the past weeks and months, throughout the lengthy proceedings that culminated in the constitutional agreement we have today. I would like to mention Michel Bastarache, Eddie Goldenberg, Eric Maldoff, Guy Pratte, Bryan Williams and Sheila Purdey.

During the remainder of my speech I would like to focus on Quebec's place in Canada. I see, Quebec as part of a modern and renewed Canadian federation. I agree that as French speaking Quebecers on a continent with 300 million anglophones, we have entirely legitimate reasons to be concerned about our cultural security.

The question is whether our language, culture and traditions will be better protected in an independent Quebec than if we remain full members of the Canadian federation. To those who want Quebec's independence, I say that 125 years of Canadian history have certainly not emasculated our language, culture and traditions. Members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste may not agree, but our cultural institutions in Quebec are stronger and more dynamic than ever, and new Quebecers are better integrated with the francophone majority in Quebec than they ever were in the past.

A linguistics professor at the University of Quebec in Chicoutimi would have Quebecers believe that French is on the way out in Montreal. This is a crass misrepresentation of the facts and an insult to all those Italians, Greeks and Haitians who feel thoroughly Quebecois and to others living in the Montreal area who have become part of the francophone majority and are sick and tired of this futile bickering about language which is undermining Quebec's economy and prosperity.

Aware of the fact that they form a distinct community, Quebecers have always in some way expressed the need to be masters of their own destiny. In the past, Quebec's premiers have relied on a series of slogans to express that awareness, that profound awareness we as Quebecers have of being different. For Duplessis it was provincial autonomy, for Jean Lesage it was "maître chez nous", for Daniel Johnson it was equality or independence, but Quebecers have always wanted to ensure they would be able to control their own destiny.

Not surprisingly, in Quebec the Government of Quebec enjoys a status we do not find in the other Canadian provinces. To the Quebecer, the government in Quebec City is more important than the government in Ottawa, while in the rest of Canada it is generally the other way round. However, this does not mean we should get rid of the federal government, although unfortunately, that is what some people would like to do. Because of this preference, some Quebecers would like to see the federal government disappear altogether. I say it would be a serious mistake, because although it is very important for the National Assembly to have all the powers it needs to defend and promote Quebec as a distinct society, it is every bit as important for Quebecers to be able to rely on the Parliament of Canada to defend and promote their interests.

It is obvious this new accord cannot be acceptable to those who no longer believe in Canada. However, for anyone who thinks Quebecers should continue to be fully associated with Canada, this new constitutional accord has great merit and, I insist, constitutes an adequate response to the recommendations of the Bélanger–Campeau commission.

I had the honour of sitting on the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec from November 1990 to March 1991, at the invitation of Premier Bourassa. After conducting public hearings throughout Quebec, this special commission published a report that started the constitutional review process in which we are involved today. We must therefore ask ourselves whether what we are proposing now reflects the commission's recommendations. My answer is yes. Since some of our friends in Quebec City may want to put a different interpretation on all this, I will be more specific. On page 52 of the report it says:

> To break the stalemate and redefine its political and constitutional status, Quebec has only two choices. Under the first, Quebec would seek acceptance of the redefinition of its status within the constitutional framework of the Canadian federation. Such a course of action presupposes that its integration in the Canadian political system be maintained, but significantly modified. The second solution would entail Quebec's withdrawing from the constitutional framework of the Canadian federation, with or without the consent of the rest of Canada, with a view to acceding to full political sovereignty and becoming a state independent of the Canadian state, open to the establishment of economic ties with the latter.

I may remind Mr. Parizeau, Ms. Larose and their friends that they signed this report, assuming there would be no agreement.

• (1640)

There is an agreement to renew Canadian federalism and that is one of the two options mentioned in the Bélanger–Campeau report.

First, Gérald's gang accused the Bourassa government and the federalist members of the Commission of not respecting the conclusions of the Bélanger–Campeau report and of betraying their signature. Ghislain Dufour, president of the Conseil du patronat du Quebec, issued a press release on this subject, which I quote:

> Such an accusation is unworthy of our colleagues. Besides the fact that the Commission's report leaves open the two constitutional options being debated in Quebec, namely renewed federalism and sovereignty, they know very well that the four business people on the Commission—in addition to Mr. Dufour, they were Marcel Beaudry, Charles–Albert Poissant and Cheryl Campbell Steer—and others always rejected the sovereigntist demand that any referendum deal only with sovereignty. On the contrary, they always said that they would only sign the Bélanger–Campeau commission's report if any referendum to be held could also deal with the federal offers, or sovereignty in the absence of such offers.

I invite those who may have any doubts to check the newspapers of March 21 and March 22, 1992 which reported these positions at length.

I conclude the quotation from Mr. Dufour with this:

> One must be in bad faith or suffer from collective amnesia to say as certain sovereigntist former commissioners do that we have gone back on our signatures. Such an attitude augurs badly for the kind of debate we can expect in the coming weeks. Instead of concentrating on the substance of the issue, namely the constitutional offer and what it is worth, they are resorting to unfounded and deceitful diversionary

tactics. Such an approach can only taint the very credibility of those who put forward such lies.

If it was desirable, as the Bélanger–Campeau commission said, for the people of Quebec to express themselves on their political and constitutional future in a formal democratic consultation, this is as valid for the first option as for the second. Of course I know that the advocates of independence for Quebec would have wanted a referendum on total and complete sovereignty for Quebec. Then they would have been better not to sign the Bélanger–Campeau commission report, which says in its conclusion on page 73: "Two courses are open to Quebec with respect to the redefinition of its status, i.e. a new, ultimate attempt to redefine its status within the federal regime, and the attainment of sovereignty. Some people feel that the first course must be adopted and, should it fail, that Quebec should achieve sovereignty. Other people prefer to adopt the second course of action immediately. Should a final attempt to renew federalism fail, sovereignty would be the only course remaining".

Even if our separatist friends do not like it, the attempt to renew federalism was successful and sovereignty as far as I am concerned could be put off indefinitely because the constitutional agreement essentially respects the required constitutional changes set forth on page 48 of the Bélanger–Campeau commission's report.

I need not remind you that those who sat on the Bélanger–Campeau commission were deeply influenced by the circumstances at that time. Quebec felt rejected by the collapse of the Meech Lake accord and the passions stirred among the people led the Parti Quebecois to say outright that there was nothing more to do with Canada, that the English and the others in the rest of Canada would never understand them, and the Liberal Party of Quebec, not wanting to find itself in an impossible situation, decided through its policy committee to ask a lot from constitutional renewal. In that context the members of the Bélanger–Campeau commission drew up what they thought could be the basis of a renewed constitution. I tell you again that this document was signed by our friends in the Parti Quebecois and by those who want sovereignty for Quebec. When I read you some paragraphs from this report, you will understand that the demands were quite considerable, given the context in which they were made.

This is what it says on page 48. These changes vary in nature but have in common, among other things:

> The necessity of creating a new relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada, based on the recognition of and respect for the identity of Quebecers and their right to be different;

That is the first demand. It recognizes Quebec's distinctness and the first article of this new Constitution contains the distinct society clause and the role of the legislature and government of Quebec to protect and promote the distinct society. That is the first demand met in this agreement, quite rightly, I think.

The second point is:

> A division of powers and responsibilities which assures Quebec of exclusive authority over those matters and domains which already fall under its exclusive jurisdiction, which means among other things eliminating in these domains federal spending power and overlapping interventions;

Item 25 of the new agreement covers this aspect. The federal spending power in fields of exclusive provincial jurisdiction is now limited, circumscribed and contained. It is not abolished as they would have wanted it here. It is impossible to abolish the Canadian government's spending power. You can have pipe dreams, but no government on earth will give up its spending power. If it has the power to tax, it must also have the power to spend. Nevertheless, I think that this agreement admirably meets the desired objective of ensuring that in fields of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, the Government of Canada will no longer be able to spend without having discussed, reached an understanding and decided to follow provincial priorities.

When I say that this document now limits, circumscribes and contains, I add that as item 25 indicates this should help reduce overlapping and duplication and respect provincial priorities.

• (1650)

The third demand was to give Quebec exclusive jurisdiction and responsibility over its social, economic and cultural development and in the area of language. Items 27, 28, 29, 36 and 37 of the new agreement meet these demands. Of course, some will claim it is not sufficient. Some will say this agreement does not meet all the demands listed in the report of the Bélanger–Campeau commission. Personally, after having reviewed this document, I think it offers substantial gains to the Quebec premier. And I trust Mr. Bourassa more than I trust Léon Dion.

Another point is the transfer of tax and financial resources associated with responsibilities assumed by Quebec. Items 25, 26 and 28 in particular guarantee the transfer of funds as planned or reasonable compensation.

Another demand is the preservation of Quebec's representation within common institutions to fully reflect its particular status in Canada. Item 21 guarantees that Quebec will be assigned no fewer than 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons. This is in fact an extraordinary gain showing the remarkable generosity of our Canadian partners who thus recognize Quebec's distinctivess.

That is not all. Item 18 specifies that the Supreme Court is to be composed of nine members, of whom three must have been admitted to the bar of Quebec. This constitutional guarantee could not be amended without Quebec's consent, which Quebec would of course never give.

Third, item 14 of the new agreement gives francophone senators an absolute veto over any bill affecting French language or French culture. This is another exceptional gain for the French fact which is in my opinion, one of the great Canadian realities. Some Péquistes do not like the fact that there could be francophone senators from other provinces. Get real. This is a country where we are fighting to keep our language, our culture and our traditions, and they want to deny the fact that some residents of other provinces share our French heritage. How narrow-minded can they get?

Another point is the guarantee that Quebec's consent is required for any constitutional amendment. Some have proposed that, whenever appropriate, Quebec should have the right to opt out of a transfer of jurisdiction to the federal government with reasonable compensation. Such a right to opt out with compensation would then replace the right of veto.

Items 57, 58 and 59 of the new agreement largely meet these two demands since unanimity is required to amend the Constitution. We could say that Quebec wanted an absolute veto on any constitutional change. Was it so important? I think Mr. Lévesque even said back then: "The important thing is a veto on institutions, especially one that would allow us to receive some financial compensation in case certain provinces, but not Quebec, would be willing to relinquish their power to Ottawa".

The proposals of the Bélanger–Campeau commission, perhaps the least favourable to a renewal of Canadian federalism, would then become a reality. I say that the report as presented meets expectations Quebecers had set at a very high level never dreaming the rest of Canada would accept them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: Obviously those hoping Quebec would be given the exclusive power to legislate, collect taxes and establish international relations cannot accept this agreement. It is clear they will never accept any agreement renewing Canadian federalism. Their opinion on the value of this agreement can never be objective. On the day the constitutional agreement was reached, when some of the first ministers had not yet left the conference room and before we even knew any of the details, Gérald Larose was saying on a Montreal TV station that the agreement did not take into account Quebec's aspirations.

An hon. member: He had not seen it.

Mr. Ouellet: He had not even seen it. He did not know what he was talking about, but he was sure it was bad for Quebec.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: To my Liberal friends in Quebec who think the Allaire report may be acceptable, I say that Quebec's interests will best be served through a close co-operation with the rest of Canada.

To be the most economically profitable for Quebec, this association should also be political. It is logical that, if Quebec wants to make decisions within this political association, its representatives must be able to exercise real powers. If too many areas of jurisdiction are transferred to Quebec, as some would like, Quebec members would lose their credibility, their influence and their ability to defend Quebec's interests at the national level.

Let us look at this agreement for what it is. It does not give many more powers to Quebec but it accomplishes something very important. It strengthens Quebec's representation at the federal level. It also strengthens the role of the Quebec government and National Assembly in areas crucial to the preservation of Quebec's distinctiveness. It is an undeniable reality, and I invite all sensible Quebec citizens to say yes to this agreement next October 26.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1700)

Mr. Ouellet: In closing, I would like to caution against two things. I am very pleased that our new partners, the Prime Minister and the minister responsible, are here to listen to what I have to say, because I must tell them that we are facing two risks. The first one has to do with the legal documents. We Liberals support this deal based on the Consensus Report on the Constitution dated August 28, 1992, described here as the final text. It is very important that the legal documents be in accordance with this final text to make sure that, at no time, any one could get the feeling of having been deceived or betrayed.

I appreciate how difficult it is to ask the public to fully comprehend and digest legal documents. In fact, the Government of Canada has not completed its task. It has yet to provide us with the legal documents. That is quite a deficiency. It is no insurmountable obstacle, but a major deficiency nonetheless. Basically what the government is asking for is an act of faith on the part of a great many people. It is taking a chance and will have to be careful not to allow the supporters of this deal to read into it what they want, each their own way. In the absence of any legal text besides this one, some time down the road yes supporters could have a different interpretation, depending on where they live, in Quebec as opposed to other parts of the country or in western Canada as opposed to Ontario.

That is one danger we are exposed to. Just think of how many problems the various interpretations put on the Meech Lake accord have caused as the months and years went by. Our party and its leader back then, the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, had supported this government move, and so had the New Democratic Party. After a while, it became extremely difficult to know what we were talking about because the documents were interpreted one way in Quebec and another way elsewhere in the country. You will argue that any legal text can lend to interpretation, but I simply wanted to give this warning so that we are all perfectly aware of the importance of a coherent message, the tightest message based on the very wording of this constitutional deal, as it appears in the final text from August 28, 1992.

My second warning deals with the non-partisan approach to making this deal. This course of action must be maintained throughout the referendum process. The future of this country must come before the future of a party, a minister or even a prime minister in politics. This government could not have put this deal together on its own and it has said so. It has enrolled, as was graciously mentioned over and over, the outstanding co-operation from the two major parties in the House of Commons: the Liberal Party of Canada as well as the New Democratic Party. This deal would not have been possible without the considerable input of the Liberal, NDP and Conservative provincial premiers.

This deal is therefore born out of concern for objectivity and non-partisanship as well as for the higher interest of our country, irrespective of political affiliations.

I am telling you all this because I know the Prime Minister well. He is a former classmate and a long-standing friend. I know about his partisan instinct. I know he can get carried away sometimes in the heat of debate. In the interest of this country, throughout the referendum process, we should all strive to win this referendum in every single province with the three major political parties working together. The government party cannot win it on its own, but with the full and sincere support of the Liberals and NDPers, it can and that is what we must do in the interest of Canada. Let us embark upon this campaign with determination, in a non-partisan spirit, a spirit of thrust and harmony and we will manage to change in a major and remarkable way the Constitutional Act of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you will find there is unanimous consent to suspend Private Members' Business on Wednesday, September 9, 1992 and on Thursday, September 10, 1992 to continue with Government Orders, and that both

items retain their order of precedence in the list of Private Members' Business.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that we do give consent. We agree to defer, both today and tomorrow, the hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business in order to pursue the debate on the referendum question.

Mr. Plamondon: We appreciate having been consulted by both government and the opposition. We agree to defer the hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, for the last couple of years we have been dealing with constitutional issues. It is one of those rare times in Parliament when we set aside our partisan differences and try to work for the benefit of this country.

At the outset I would like to say very clearly to all members of the House how much I appreciate the work of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs for his leadership on this issue over the last 17 or 18 months.

I also want to extend congratulations to my colleague from Papineau—Saint-Michel for the work he has done on behalf of his party. I would like to mention to the Prime Minister and others the work of the member for St. John's East on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee the Beaudoin-Edwards committee and the Charest committee a couple of years ago.

This is a rather historic week in Canadian history. It is only the third time in the history of our country that we are going to have a national referendum. The first was in 1898, the second in 1942, and now the third will be on October 26, 1992.

It is also the first time in Canadian history that the people of this country will be consulted about their Constitution. I want to associate our party with the national referendum. It is the proper way to consult people about the Constitution. The Constitution belongs to the people, not the politicians, and they should have an input and a say on the package we are about to approve.

I also want to associate our party with the approval of the question that is before the people of this country.

• (1710)

It is a short question, it is concise, it is fair and it is balanced. We will be there campaigning on the yes side of the referendum along with the premiers, the aboriginal territorial leaders and members of the other two parties in this House.

The package is a good package, although it is not perfection. I suppose the only way you could achieve perfection is to stand by yourself in front of a mirror and negotiate with yourself. I do not think that there is anybody in this country or in this House who would not make some changes to the document. At this time, that is the best document that we can come up with. It modernizes our Constitution in a new vision of federalism that I will argue reflects what the Canadian people have said to us they want in their Constitution.

This is a Constitution built on the basis of public hearings by a national parliamentary committee, six national conferences that were televised across the country, an aboriginal process and by committees in almost every province and territory.

What we have here is a good reflection of what this country is all about. What this package is about is the story of nation builders. It is people coming together, negotiating, making trade-offs and climbing to that common ground that unites us as a great nation. It is the best effort, it is the best accommodation. I hope when the time comes on October 26, all members of this House, with a few exceptions, will be on the right side of history in terms of pulling this country into the future.

Does it mean that people do not have the right to disagree or to ask questions about what is in this document? It is important that the people of this country have a chance to study the document, to discuss it, to see what is in it, to try to understand some of the trade-offs and some of the compromises that were made for the sake of the country as a whole.

I want to spend a few minutes this afternoon mentioning seven or eight of the key points of this document that are so important. The most exciting new thing in the document is the right of inherent self-government for the aboriginal people of this country. If this Constitution is amended in accordance with the accord in Charlottetown, we will have the most progressive constitution in the world bar none for aboriginal or indigenous peoples. We can be proud of that as Canadians.

We have to congratulate the aboriginal people, the leadership and the ordinary aboriginal people across this country for they are now the true mothers and fathers of Confederation. They have been involved in the process. They are inside the loop. Justice will be done to them and we can all be proud of that. There will be self-government. There will be recognition of aboriginal languages and cultures and the recognition that aboriginal people can look after their affairs within Canada.

[*Translation*]

Second, we have here with this package a promise of reconciliation with the province of Quebec. I remember clearly that night in the Paul-Sauvé arena 12 years ago, in May 1980, at the time of the Quebec referendum when the then Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Pierre Trudeau, made a political commitment to the people of Quebec. He said that a no to sovereignty-association was a yes to renewed federalism in Canada. Now, 12 years later, we have a very positive deal to offer the province of Quebec. It incorporates the five conditions set in the Meech Lake accord regarding: first, the distinct society, which is important for the province of Quebec; second, the Supreme Court of Canada, with the nomination of three civil law judges from the province of Quebec now entrenched in the Constitution, such an important feature; third, the agreement on immigration; fourth, the limitation of the federal spending power, a major point as well as yet another of the conditions in the Meech Lake accord; and fifth, the power of veto on federal institutions for Quebec and every other province in the Canadian federation. However there is more than the essence of the Meech Lake Accord and the five Quebec demands in here. There is the guarantee of a minimum of 25 per cent of the membership in the House of Commons coming from the province of Quebec from now on. That is an important factor for a minority in our country and in North America.

Third and last, there is something on the division of powers. It may not seem like much to some Quebecers, but it is a step in the right direction. We have obtained changes in nine jurisdictions. More flexibility is now afforded to Quebec and Quebec as well as the rest of the Canadian provinces will now have more powers.

[*English*]

We have also, for the first time in our country, the proposal to enshrine in our Constitution a social and economic union that will say the goal of this country is to have medical care. It is to have the five principles of medical care enshrined in our Constitution.

The mention of the environment in the Constitution and in the social charter is very important. There is the goal of providing every Canadian citizen with not only primary but secondary and post-secondary education. We have the goal of collective bargaining and the right to organize for workers as parts of the social covenant or economic and social union in the Charlottetown accord.

We also have other social, economic and community values that are part of the socio-economic union such as the goal of full employment and other goals that are important in terms of building this country.

We have the Canada clause which, for the first time, will be a description in our Constitution of what we are all about as Canadians. It mentions the valuable contribution of our minorities. I know there are some of us who wish we had stronger language in terms of protecting minority rights, particularly for visible minorities, something we mentioned in Beaudoin-Dobbie as an NDP amendment.

There is mention in the Canada clause as well of the aboriginal people, the distinct society, the diversity of our country, the equality of the provinces and the linguistic duality. These are the things that define us as a nation and will help the courts interpret the Constitution of Canada.

We have, as I said a few minutes ago in French, some progress on the division of powers. I am very pleased about what has happened in the division of powers. I think now we have more flexibility in our country to allow the provincial governments to do more things that are relevant in their domains and at the same time keep in Ottawa a strong, central government for national goals, national programs and national aspirations.

The division of powers allows more flexibility. The division of powers allows us to recognize what we are, a country that is very diverse. We have different needs and different interests in different parts of Canada.

It is not always possible, relevant or even wise to design a lot of programs in Ottawa that are precisely the same in Kamsack, Saskatchewan or Chicoutimi, Quebec as they may be in Toronto or Montreal. We have those differences in this country.

I think the movement now in terms of the division of powers allows for more flexibility and diversity to recognize the country as it is. I think that is a positive step.

Number six of the seven points I want to mention is the reform of Parliament, the House of Commons and the Senate. We have here a different arrangement than some of us would have preferred that was recommended in Beaudoin–Dobbie, but I think the arrangement we have is one that is going to work and one that is good for this country.

I can support an equal Senate with the powers that are now being prescribed for that particular Senate. I can support the guarantee that Quebec should have at least 25 per cent of the members of the House of Commons. That reflects the democratic weight of the province of Quebec.

I say to people like the member for Beaver River that it is not only Quebec that gets the guarantee of members in the House of Commons, but Prince Edward Island gets a guarantee of at least four seats in the House of Commons despite the fact that by representation by population it would get only about one seat in the House of Commons.

The same thing is true of New Brunswick which is guaranteed 10 seats in the House and the province of Nova Scotia which is guaranteed 10 seats in the House. New Brunswick now would not have 10 seats if we had pure representation by population. The territories would not have seats. Yukon only has about 28,000 people and the Northwest Territories has about 40,000 or 45,000 people. They are given guarantees of representation in the House of Commons. They are part of the tradeoffs that are good for Canada and make a national deal or national compromise possible.

• (1720)

At the same time we have a commitment that we will have a formula for distribution of seats that will be a greater reflection of representation by population. That will help British Columbia in the future, as well as the province of Alberta, which keeps growing, and the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. At the same time the small provinces are protected.

For example, Saskatchewan, my home province, has 3.8 per cent of the population of this country. In a joint vote of the House of Commons and the Senate, with six senators and fourteen members of Parliament, Saskatchewan will have 5 per cent of the members with 3.8 per cent of the population. That is not a bad deal for a small province.

[*Translation*]

Finally, I would like to touch on section 36 of our Constitution on equalization and regional development. The Charlottetown agreement will strengthen section 36, which will give more powers to the small provinces, provinces with economic problems. I am referring to the four Atlantic provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Thanks to the support of Messrs. Romanow and Filmon and the Premiers of the four Atlantic provinces, there is now a proposal to increase the powers conferred by section 36 of the Constitution regarding equalization and regional development. It is a way of distributing the wealth within this great country of ours, Canada.

[*English*]

Therefore, the accord reached by the first ministers and aboriginal and territorial leaders, and supported by the three national parties, is not a perfect deal. It is not possible to achieve perfection but it is the best deal we can get at this particular time.

I hope that when the Canadian people read the accord and understand the amendments to the Constitution they will support it in a national referendum.

We have to put this issue behind us and start dealing with the important social and economic issues facing this country today, such as free trade, NAFTA, the economy, jobs, the farm crisis and taxation.

If we get a nod of approval from the Canadian people on October 26 maybe we can then put this issue to bed and turn the collective energies, wisdoms and riches of this country toward solving the social and economic problems haunting this nation today.

If that does not happen, what is the alternative? More years of study on the Constitution? More consultation? The division of this country? Chaos? I ask the people of this country: What is the alternative?

In the province of Quebec there is a movement—the Parti Quebecois and the Bloc Quebecois—that wants to separate and divide this country. We say: "No, this country must remain one". We have a document here that can bring this country together.

I say also to the Reform Party of this country that I hope that Mr. Manning, after a couple of weeks of reflection, will put aside some of the rigid ideology he believes in, which is his right, and be on the right side of history and stand up with the rest of us in asking the people of this country to look very positively and favourably on the accord negotiated at Charlottetown.

As the minister said, it is a time to put aside intolerance and prejudice. It is a time to set aside suspicions in this country. It is a time to set aside divisions in this country.

It is the time to ask not what is in it for Saskatchewan, Newfoundland or Quebec, not what is in it for me or my family or my community, but what is in it for Canada. What is in it for Canada is the important question.

The time has come to hold out a hand to heal the divisions in this country and to build a nation.

[*Translation*]

The time has come to act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I should remind the House that, under the order passed earlier by this House, we are now beginning the period when all subsequent speakers will have a maximum of 15 minutes each and there will be no questions and comments afterwards.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. By this I mean that the debate will deal with the Charlottetown agreement. We must therefore immediately get to the heart of the matter. The question is whether or not this agreement is acceptable. To know the answer, we must first clear the way and get rid of the smoke-screens behind which the government and its allies are trying to hide their agreement. They do not want the discussion to deal with the agreement. They want to have a debate on the apocalyptic vision of a choice Canadians would have between chaos, as we have just heard, and the agreement, or else on being on the side of responsible Canadians, as the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was saying, or on the side of the others. We refuse to be confined to such alternatives.

In fact, the debate will not deal with sovereignty. Sovereignty will not be put on trial. We would have liked the debate to deal with sovereignty. As we are well aware, as long as the question of Quebec sovereignty has not been settled, no decision will have been made about this country. We have to deal with it. Until we have done so, it will always remain in the background and at the centre of our thoughts.

We have always wanted this debate. We have been demanding it for two years. We were able to get legislation passed in Quebec stating that the debate would address necessarily and legally the matter of sovereignty. However, since the federalists, namely this government and its allies including Mr. Bourassa, have decided that the referendum would not deal with sovereignty, the question asked will be on the agreement. Fine, let us reply to the question about the agreement.

There is another thing which should be cleared up. Canadians and Quebecers will not be motivated by fatigue or weariness in this referendum. They will be motivated by the need to decide whether or not the agreement is good for the future of their children.

It is quite strange, that Quebecers and Canadians should be asked to sign with their eyes closed. On this point, I must say that the government and its allies are right. You could only sign such an agreement with your eyes closed.

Recently, Canadians and Quebecers have been told: "You are tired; you are fed up with discussions. Why not sign now? The agreement is not very good and is not what you wanted, but why not sign and then everything will be settled." However such is not the case. Nothing will be settled. The situation will be more unsettled than ever before because the agreement establishes, not a constitutional system, but a system for negotiations. Canada and Quebec as well as all federal departments and provincial governments will be condemned to negotiate forever.

Hon. members may know that Jean Allaire, who is still a member of the Quebec Liberal Party, the architect of the Allaire report, the man who engineered the democratic adoption of this report by his own party, the Quebec Liberal Party, is now saying to the newspapers that he has found at least 60 contradictions, instances of weakness or matters for dispute in the agreement. In other words, there is some unfinished business. We are being given a package with all kinds of loose ends. There is still some unfinished business.

This is why the question is worded in such a way. This is why the question speaks about a basis for renewal, that is a basis for further negotiations. That is going to be the basis for further negotiations, for an attempt to deal with the many loose ends that remain. The worst part of all this, is that we are being asked to sign a blank cheque. We are being asked to continue to negotiate a number of essential and fundamental aspects which have not been finalized. They are saying: "Later we will negotiate whatever we please and then we will not have to ask you for permission to sign the agreement we want to sign." People will never agree to a blank cheque where their future is at stake.

• (1730)

What does the question really mean? It means: "Citizens of Canada and Quebec, do you trust Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Mulroney to decide what the future of your children will be?" We are being asked to trust them to negotiate, without knowing what the consequences will be. I referred to a draft, and it is a draft because we do not even have the legal text. When Canadians and Quebecers buy a fridge or a car or sign a lease, and when they are asked to sign a document involving sums of $1,000 or $500, for a period of one or two years for minor items, they always want to see the small print first.

Today we are talking about a contract that will be forever, firmly secured by all kinds of nuts and bolts. Today, we have a contract that will be decisive for our own future and that of our children and grandchildren. Today, Quebec's heritage based on nearly 400 years of sacrifice, effort and hard work is about to go down the drain, and they tell us: "You will not see the contract before it is signed. It is not ready. We are in a hurry. We cannot afford to wait. Sign right there, on the dotted line, and we will draft the contract later on. Trust us." That is the kind of question we have here.

It is immoral, undemocratic and totally irresponsible to even consider asking people to go through a democratic referendum process to adopt a constitution that has not even been drafted. There is not a single nation in the world that would agree to such a proposal, and certainly not the people of Canada and the people of Quebec.

Let them draft the Constitution and bring us the agreement so we can read it and know exactly what it contains. We do not want any of those press releases drafted by press secretaries after three days of talks in a smoke filled room. No, we want to see the small print. Where is the text of the contract? They say it is not ready. They say it will be ready after it has been signed. On October 26, the only thing that will be ready will be Quebec's signature and the signatures of those who want to sign, if the answer is yes. Then they will start writing the Constitution in reverse, starting at the bottom, just above the signature, like they do in Arabic. People will not buy that. Let these people do their homework, and otherwise we should appoint people who can do a better job.

The agreement is the main thing. The agreement is unacceptable. In Quebec, as the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel said earlier, everyone agreed there were two options: sovereignty or a thorough renewal of federalism. What we have to ask ourselves here is whether this agreement does, in fact, thoroughly renew federalism. In Quebec, the agreement must pass two tests. The first test is this: Do we find all the conditions in Meech in this agreement? The second question is: Are all the additional powers Quebec has been demanding for over 30 years reflected in the agreement? The answer is no in both cases. Any sovereignist or any federalist in Quebec who does not go along with the agreement will tell you, from what they have

read of at the text, such as it is, that we must consider the intent of Meech Lake.

The Meech Lake accord was only a first step. It was about bringing Quebec back to the constitutional table, so that Quebec would have the right, after signing the Constitution, to get down to more pressing business. However, before embarking on this process Quebec set five conditions, saying: "I am not signing and I am not coming back to the negotiating table to discuss the important issues unless five conditions are met." You can look for those five conditions, but you won't find them. There are a few, but most of them are not there. Take Quebec's distinct identity. Nobody but nobody will convince me or anyone else who reads the draft agreement that the wording of the recognition of Quebec's distinct identity is the same one as Meech.

For example, read the legal opinion. I will spare you the details; we will pursue it when we have the time. My time is limited, but I could show it clearly if I had five minutes. Just read the legal opinion published last week in the Quebec press and signed by Quebec's eight greatest experts in constitutional law.

I hear insults from the other side. I hear insults. I would like those people to repeat those insults if they have the courage to do so.

These eight recognized experts from Quebec, people who have published textbooks, who teach in universities, who have taken part in all the legal debates in Quebec in the past ten years, signed a legal opinion saying that this distinct society clause is meaningless; it is even a setback from the *status quo.*

The same goes for immigration. The proposed constitution does not contain the immigration clause found in the Meech Lake accord or the veto right on the process to appoint judges. It is now 7/50 instead of unanimity. Neither is there a veto any more over the admission of new provinces. We could go on. Very clearly, Meech is not there. Therefore the first condition—never mind all the rest—has not been met. It is not just the first condition, but also the division of powers now, because they claim today to do in a single step the two steps that were planned when Meech was begun. Now they claim to settle Quebec's powers until the end of time.

We know the demands that have been made regarding Quebec's powers. It started with Jean Lesage. He has inspired all of Quebec for 30 years. Jean Lesage was a federalist, not a sovereigntist. He was not a wicked separatist or heretical. For 30 years Jean Lesage has inspired Quebec on the basis of being masters in our own house. The hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, who is politically aware, recalled that himself. For 30 years, we in Quebec have been going on the slogan "masters in our own house". That means more economic powers and complete jurisdiction over culture, language and other fields. We do not find that here. Not a single one of them is here. On the contrary, every apparent gain for Quebec is always subject to administrative negotiations and is never guaranteed in the Constitution and in many cases we find the federal government invading fields where it does not belong.

Take manpower, for example. The federal government is granting itself two new constitutional powers that it did not have before. First is the power to spend on job creation programs, which it did not have before. It will be clearly and finally entrenched in the Constitution. There will be no more negotiations about it. Secondly, there is the power to set national objectives without even spending anything or having cost-shared programs. Those are two additional powers that the federal government is getting in a field where we in Quebec should have made a breakthrough, as everyone involved in the field agrees, especially in the employment forum, including Ghislain Dufour whom the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel quoted.

It is the same for culture. For the first time, the federal government grants itself power over Canadian culture in the Constitution. It never had that before. It will get it now.

Then they talk about the six powers, the six related jurisdictions, that the federal government is giving up. The federal government promises to sin no more, not to invade the areas of jurisdiction we already had: recreation, housing, the family, tourism, forestry and mining. We already had those powers in 1867. Georges-Étienne Cartier had negotiated and obtained them and the federal government has been sneaking into them for years. Now it tells us that it will not do that any more. What a gain, because in the same breath it tells us that for new programs it will invade these same fields and any others that exist by using the sacrosanct spending power. I think of the crocodile tears shed today by the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, saying that the

federal government abused the spending power. Come on. That is how the federal government has invaded every jurisdiction. That is how it has plunged Canada into bankruptcy: the total debt will soon be $500 billion.

I will speed up because you are indicating to me that my time is running out. If Quebec were to say yes, we will continue to negotiate, although Quebec will be sorry if it says yes. If Quebec says yes, it will send premiers to Ottawa to negotiate on their knees, with no clout, after having Quebec sign away its hopes and its strength. They will find themselves at the mercy of federal negotiators and federal mandarins. Is that what we want for Quebec's future? I say no.

Topping it all is the Senate where Quebec will count for as much as Prince Edward Island. My region is as big as two Prince Edward Islands. Proportionally to Prince Edward Island, my region would need 12 senators. In other words, 20 per cent of Senate seats would have to go to the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region. However they are those bad separatists. It would be awful, yet this is what is being proposed.

• (1740)

Then there are the Senate appointments. There will be 9 per cent of us in the Senate to approve the appointments. Do you think that there will be many French-speaking governors of the Bank of Canada, many deputy ministers, many important ambassadors, many CRTC or Canada Council appointees if the decisions are to be made by a Senate with 90 percent anglophones? I shall conclude quickly.

Then there is René Lévesque. People always talk about René Lévesque. I thought it was a mistake, because his name is always being brought up by federalists. René Lévesque wanted the Quebec charter to have precedence over the federal charter. He wanted Quebec to have exclusive power over linguistic matters. He wanted the existence of the Quebec people to be recognized. He wanted all powers over manpower and employment insurance. He wanted exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce. He wanted the role of Quebec to be recognized internationally in its own areas of jurisdiction. René Lévesque wanted many things. Not one of them can be found in this agreement.

I shall conclude. The people of Quebec will not want to sell their approval cheaply. They do not want to give it away for mere crumbs. The people of Quebec will want to make certain that the vote is not held out of boredom, out of a wish to give up, out of weariness. Quebecers will not want such feelings to be the basis for the future of their country. Quebecers will never again sign any document if they cannot do so with enthusiasm and honour.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, next October 26 Canadians throughout Canada will be asked to vote on the agreement signed on August 28 by replying to a clear and specific question. They will thus have an opportunity to say whether or not they agree with the vision of the country proposed to them and whether or not they are willing to renew the compromise of 1867 in the context of a modern Canada.

For my part, I not only support this agreement, but I also mean to defend it, both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. I shall therefore reply yes to the question.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): The vision of Canada proposed in this agreement remains realistic and open to a recognition of the interests and needs of all those party to it. In a way it is an effort to reconcile the interests and aspirations of Quebecers, aboriginal peoples and Canadians in the rest of Canada.

I am a member from Quebec representing a riding, that of Roberval, which thoroughly reflects, I believe, the realities of Quebec. If I may, I shall therefore speak first of all to my fellow Quebecers to explain why I feel that this agreement is good for Quebec and why they should support it on October 26.

All of us members from Quebec know how profoundly the failure of Meech hurt Quebecers, how deeply, whether or not we admit it, this was viewed as a rejection of Quebec by the rest of Canada. Since June 1990 Quebecers have been waiting for offers, for proposals reflecting a clear vision of a renewed federalism.

I would like to note in passing the courage of the Canadian Prime Minister who decided to begin again the process of renewal in spite of major difficulties, at a time when so many people were talking about a moratorium. I believe he knew that such a moratorium would only have made Quebecers more impatient and opened the door to the only other possible option, namely independence.

No prime minister would preside over the destruction of his own country. This is why, with the constant support

of the members of his party, especially those from Quebec, who deserve a lot of credit because they have lived through difficult times, and the stead fast assistance of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. The Prime Minister looked for a compromise, a compromise which we have now found and which proposes a choice based on a federation renewed in those areas it can live up to today, but without precluding the possibility that others might decide to go further tomorrow. Its components are brittle, but they meet the priorities of the various parties.

Reactivating the constitutional debate and broadening its scope to include a Canada Round necessarily implied in Quebec's case that the original conditions set by the Quebec government for entering into the 1982 constitutional accord. Distinct society, veto right, control over immigration, control over spending powers and the guarantee of three Quebec judges on the Supreme Court would have to be met.

The Charlottetown Accord, and I want to make this quite clear gives Quebec the five elements of Meech Lake in their entirety.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, we can put all kinds of interpretations on this. People can have all kinds of reservations, but the fact remains that in the present negotiations, Quebec has recovered every single one of those elements. For me, for many of my colleagues, and I imagine for many Quebecers, this has always been central to any new agreement. In fact the Government of Quebec decided to go even further, and that too was fundamental. The Charlottetown accord gives Quebecers a greater role in our central institutions by adding 18 members and a 25 per cent guarantee, meaning that in the future, Quebec will never have less than 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons. This guarantee provides Quebec with a long-term safeguard that should not be underestimated. As far as spending powers are concerned, Quebec has made major advances in 11 different sectors: manpower, culture, immigration, forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, municipal and urban affairs, regional development and telecommunications. However, it seems that for some people that is not enough.

Quebec's society is among the most dynamic and most extraordinary we know. It is a society whose economic, social and cultural policies have made an exceptional contribution to its own development as well as to that of the federation in general. Thanks to the actions of responsible governments and the administrative agreements some people find so appalling, the past 30 years have witnessed outstanding achievements like the Caisse de dépôt and the Quebec Pension Plan.

Furthermore, by guaranteeing control over manpower training, immigration and education, the Charlottetown Accord gives the Quebec government control over the tools it needs to develop a comprehensive human resources policy that is indispensable to Quebec as a distinct society. As a result, Quebec would be even better equipped to protect its distinct identity than it was in the past. The province would also have new essential powers to develop existing resources.

Of course, this will never convince people who want to see this accord as a step backward for Quebec, as a surrender by the Premier of Quebec. To them, any excuse is a good excuse for perpetuating the myth that the Canadian federation is a strait-jacket that has always prevented Quebec from developing its potential and that the Charlottetown accord will merely consolidate that situation.

Every day, Quebecers can see what their quality of life is like within the Canadian federation. I am not interested and they are not interested in the option of leaving Canada without knowing where or why and, above all, without being promised any more than they have already.

• (1750)

I am deeply convinced that Quebecers will prefer our proposals because they offer a vision of a country with a future.

The agreement is far from perfect. As we said before, it is only the result of a compromise and it rests on a basic principle: the existence of a country called Canada. We can either admit this reality of a country called Canada or we can deny it.

We must recognize that this country where we are living today is the result of a wonderful compromise that, for 125 years, despite numerous hardships, frustrations and disagreements, has given us one of the best societies in the world.

[*English*]

Since entering politics I have been amazed by the tremendous potential of this country and its people. I have discovered the realities of Canada outside Quebec. I have discovered Canadians who love their country. I have discovered Canadians who are proud to be Canadian, but not denying their regional roots.

Canada is first and foremost a land of diversity. We cannot exist in this country without a compromise. We should celebrate the fact because Canada was born of compromise. On October 26 Canadians will have to make a decision if they are still prepared to recognize the diversity and if they are prepared to renew our founding compromise.

Quebecers have faced this choice and they have been disappointed twice in recent memory. In 1980 Quebecers gave Canada a vote of confidence but they did so on the basis of promises which for us have never been fulfilled. Again in 1987 the Quebec National Assembly was the first legislature to ratify the Meech Lake accord, expressing the desire of Quebecers to rejoin the Canadian Constitution. We all know what happened to Meech Lake.

It is the third time for Quebecers and more than ever we need to know that the rest of Canada can share this vision upon which a renewed federation can be built. Canada is a remarkable country that will only fulfil its promise to the extent that it can achieve a generous and open understanding between the francophone and anglophone and native components. The future of this country will be built on this understanding culturally, socially and economically.

We are at the frontier of great challenges which will show the world the stuff that we are made of, whether we are a people to succeed in taming a hostile environment and building a modern country or a people who have failed to reconcile their differences and ended in disintegration. We are entering a phase of globalization in which it is vital that we take our place. To get there we have to stop being entangled in endless debates about our future. The time has come to make a decision. It is time to get on with our future. That is the most pressing message Canadians are sending us.

On October 26 Canadians will be voting on much more than a dry legal text. They will have to affirm a renewed vision of this country, a vision that includes among other things a fundamental expression of the distinct nature of the French fact in Quebec and the right to self-government for the aboriginal people of Canada, our original founding people. We will have to say yes to the aspirations and contributions of people and regions which were not part of the original compromise, the north part of Canada and the west. All these people, particularly those from western Canada, who play such an important role in maintaining our prosperity and our future must find their aspirations reflected in this agreement and choose to vote for a renewed Canada.

[*Translation*]

My last words, will be for my fellow Quebecers. For 125 years the people of Quebec have emphasized their distinct identity within the Canadian federation as one of their most basic values.

They have been willing to face the risks, the constant frustrations, the often daunting challenges. They have exhausted themselves trying to explain what is so easy to understand: Quebec is a distinct society, proud of what is it and conscious of its particular role within the federation.

Quebecers have fought against isolation, against constant denunciation; they have made progress at the provincial and federal levels and have marked this country to the point where Canada would not be Canada without Quebec.

Are we going to give up this heritage just because Quebec did not get all it wanted? No.

I think a clear, unequivocal yes would allow us to get on with the future, conscious of our role and our importance. The experience gained will help us build a better Quebec within a renewed Canada.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be here with the hon. member for Roberval. Like him I am a Canadian. The question is now before us. The referendum of October 26 will ask all Canadians not only to exercise their democratic right, but also to reflect seriously on the future of our country. The text of the referendum question is simple: "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?" In my opinion this question contains nothing which could be controversial. For myself I would have preferred one word to be added, the word "political": "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the *political* agreement reached on August 28, 1992?"

Let me explain. This political agreement is something new; it opens up new avenues for our country, new avenues which will lead to a Canadian agreement through public consultation. It represents a series of compromises, as pointed out by the hon. member for Roberval, of national compromises between the various parties involved, including national, regional, cultural, English speaking, French speaking and aboriginal communities, between the propronents of centralisation and those of decentralisation. They all participated actively in the development of this agreement. The governments will therefore have to respect their commitments and not spare any efforts to improve the social, cultural and economic conditions of Canadians.

[*English*]

Following the demise of the Meech Lake accord on June 25, 1990, an accord which I supported, it was widely believed that public resistance to the accord was, for the most part, a result of the perceived absence of public influence and input toward the conclusion of this Meech Lake accord. The executive federalism approach, in other words discussion reserved to federal and provincial ministers, was rejected as the only process to amend our Constitution. In order to avoid future failures, increased public participation had to be achieved. Co-operative federalism, if I may use that word, may be becoming the order of the day.

• (1800)

As the member of Parliament for Ottawa—Vanier, concerned with the views of my electors, I rejoice in this development.

The national referendum on October 26 will be our first test of formally involving all Canadians in the process of amending our Constitution. To paraphrase my leader, we are giving the Constitution back to the people.

I want to join with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the New Democratic Party and my fellow parliamentarians in congratulating all those who contributed to the consensus report on the Constitution. I do not forget my good friend the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. I say to my friend: "Thank you very much. It is much appreciated".

I acknowledge the important contributions made by several provincial committees on constitutional matters and federal committees that sat many days and months here in the House. Native people, territorial authorities and many organizations representing varied interests also reported to their respective authorities after due consultation with their members. In other words, public dialogue and wide participation in the process was encouraged. This increased public involvement in the constitutional process will culminate, I hope, in our first national referendum on amending our Constitution. I hope and pray that it will be in the affirmative.

[*Translation*]

In a federation such as ours, we have to respect both levels of government. We should also perhaps tell political and aboriginal leaders from all government orders that they have made a political commitment to respect these constitutional rights.

Thanks to the public consultation process I mentioned earlier, we shall be able to acknowledge and to put before the public the difficulties faced by certain groups in achieving self-fulfilment in our federation. I am thinking, for instance, of the aboriginal peoples, who have long been neglected and who will now become partners in the renewal of our federation. I am also including the official language minority communities, the cultural communities, women and so on. They have all had an opportunity to express their views and to voice their concerns. I congratulate all of them for their

participation which will do much to create a better life for all Canadians.

I had no hesitation when the agreement was signed, or at least made public, in writing immediately to all Premiers congratulating them on the consensus reached, on their good understanding of the issues involved and on their excellent contribution to the collective search for solutions acceptable to all Canadians. Sometimes, we have to recognize the work of politicians. Admittedly, this is a political agreement which is not worded in legal terms yet, but which still provides a solid basis for legal wording to reflect the agreements reached.

This long and difficult process will be ratified through a referendum on October 26. Since Confederation there have been only two consultative referendums in Canada. The first in 1898 was on the consumption of alcohol, or what was called prohibition, and the second in 1942 on conscription. This most recent experience, that of 1942, left a bitter taste in the mouths of Canadians. We must avoid such a negative effect this time.

This agreement will allow Quebec to take part in the renewal of our Constitution. The serious problems caused by the failure of Meech showed the need for Canada to vote on the 1992 proposals, including the special status of Quebec and the Canadian linguistic duality.

It is also important to provide popular support for the constitutional amendments, which popular support the governments, both provincial and federal, will have to see as a political will, a clear expression of the desire to recognize certain constitutional rights.

The lack of political will shown by provincial governments in implementing the legal and educational rights recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is unacceptable.

It is unbelievable that, ten years after adopting section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this country in 1982 and considering court decisions, the latest of which is the Supreme Court decision in the Mahé case, the right to manage school business in the language of the minority has not yet been granted in some provinces, namely Alberta, Newfoundland, Labrador, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

It is unbelievable that 10 years after adopting a constitutional right, the political will to allow linguistic minorities, to let them manage their own educational institutions is still not there. It is unbelievable that following the adoption of section 11 of the Official Languages Act, 1969, section 19 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, and section 15 of the Official Languages Act, 1988, French speaking defendants still have a hard time getting to be heard by a judge who speaks their language in several provinces, namely Newfoundland, Alberta and British Columbia. We have this in 1992, ten years after the adoption of the Constitution.

This needs to be said. In my view, from now on, the people will dictate their governments a political commitment, a clear and precise direction, which in turn may give them the political will to put in place the systems and services our minorities are entitled to.

I recognize that major progress has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done to facilitate access to criminal courts in French: identification of French-speaking juries, information provided to French-speaking defendants regarding their right to services in their own language, language training for judges and court staff. This right does exist. It is set out right there in our Constitution. However, the political will, in terms of means of access, is horribly lacking.

In the devolution of powers to the provinces—we are familiar with them; there is no need for me to list them all again. There are at least six of them: mining, tourism, et cetera. It should be remembered that in some areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction there is an important factor in favour of national unity, and that is the need to respect institutional bilingualism. In other words it is the obligation of every level of government to provide the people of Canada public services in both official languages of this country. The level of services shall not go down after intergovernmental agreements provided for in the Charlottetown agreement are entered into. The provinces must be committed to providing services in both official languages of the country. It sounds reasonable to me to expect, in the case of provinces interested in taking over training and manpower development, that the agreements foster respect for institutional bilingualism throughout the country. Regional development, tourism, forestry and mining are all areas where continued respect for both official languages must be fostered. Institutional bilingualism should not be abandoned because of political pressures exerted at the time of transferring certain federal powers to the provinces.

Other linguistic issues will also call for careful consideration. For instance, how to identify a French speaking senator for the purpose of the double majority? It might be a good idea to give it some thought. Will a seat be set aside for the francophone representatives when senators are elected or appointed? Will provinces with a predominantly English speaking population be so gracious as to nominate a francophone? In the final version of the legal text of the Canada clause shall commitment be translated by *attachement*? Are we going to start squabbling over translations? We did not in 1982. I do not see that we should in 1992.

• (1810)

As far as I am concerned, all we have to do is to read over again section 23 of the Charter. In French it says "établissement d'enseignement", while in English it reads "educational facilities". We did not squabble on that. We just took the text as such, because section 57 of the Charter states that: "The English and French versions of this act are equally authoritative".

The ultimate goal of constitutional reform is to allow Canadians to share a dream in a land inhabited by citizens who are proud to be Canadians.

[*English*]

The current constitutional process will not end with a referendum. It is important that we take steps to ensure the process ends successfully.

It is all very well to ask Canadians to support the consensus report and it is all very well to have a popular expression of support or non-support, but politicians will be bound, morally at least, by the results of this referendum. I must tell them that we must recognize once the people of this country have spoken on this subject matter, they must follow the direction set by the popular vote. They must follow what people have said must be done. There must be a political will to act which we must respect. This country must be built on generosity, must be built on understanding and must be built on the things that we stand for. They are justice and equality.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first allow me to state that I deem it a distinct pleasure to take part in this very historic debate in this place.

As Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs I have the privilege of dealing each and every day with the veterans of Canada and their families. No one knows better than our veterans the value of a free, prosperous and united Canada. Veterans know all too well the price of preserving our nation and the awful consequences of allowing our unity to be broken.

Each day that I meet with them they remind me that they fought so hard and sacrificed so much for our Canada. As they answered the call with unfailing loyalty and determination, so now they set the same high standard for this generation to preserve the nation and to keep united that which was forged with the bonds of blood and sweat in times of conflict.

The Royal Canadian Legion was one of the first national organizations to form and finance its own national unity campaign, much to its credit.

[*Translation*]

Veterans risked all they had for Canada. Now, they are asking us to take a risk. It is a heavy responsibility that I take seriously.

[*English*]

Canada is so vast geographically and so diverse in its peoples it is impossible to impose upon her one narrowly defined vision about how we define ourselves as a country. We are composed of many visions, visions that incorporate social justice, economic vibrancy, individual freedom and collective responsibility.

The compromise that was reached in Charlottetown enables all of these visions to flourish. This is the Canadian way, to compromise and to find solutions amidst an array of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

I believe all Canadians are united in the hope that we can resolve this issue and move on. Our nation pays a

heavy price when the threat of separation hangs constantly over our heads. It erodes investor confidence, draws our attention from other problems and saps our goodwill.

Now is the time to stop the bickering and get on with the building. It is time to turn from the disappointments of the past to the exciting promise of the future. With this in mind, I would like to convey my congratulations to all of the participants in the Canada round for a job well done. No one doubts the enormity of the task they faced. The remarkable consensus they have achieved is a testament to the sincerity and goodwill of all of those who took part in that long and arduous discussion.

The result of a process so gruelling and extensive is never perfect, but it is truly remarkable how many advances have been made in the true Canadian spirit of common sense and honourable compromise.

As a representative of Atlantic Canada in the federal cabinet I would like to highlight some of the aspects of this agreement which might be of special interest to citizens back home in Atlantic Canada. However, before I do so I want to emphasize our love for and our commitment to this nation.

Atlantic Canadians are Canadians first and last, and we rejoice in any agreement that strengthens our Canada. We do not expect or request special treatment and hopefully we will not be dissecting this agreement to look for major winners and major losers. An agreement to preserve this great nation makes winners out of all of us. I suspect that most Atlantic Canadians will say without hesitation that what is good for Canada is good for Atlantic Canada.

Were this country to separate into something smaller no one would feel the isolation and the loss more keenly than the Atlantic region. I know that in this hour of decision Canada can count on us to stand by her.

That said, there is much in this agreement that will be very encouraging to Atlantic Canadians.

First, we have the preservation of the federal government's ability to act decisively in the national interest, to introduce new programs where needed, and to maintain our national standards. There are strengthened provisions for national cost shared programs, allowing more stability and predictability in areas of shared jurisdiction.

Thus Atlantic Canadians are assured of a continued strong federal presence to ensure that we receive a fair share of Confederation's benefits and largess.

However, at the same time, this agreement allows for a new degree of flexibility with more room for made-in-Atlantic Canada solutions. The success of ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, has shown Canada has little to fear and much to gain from improved regional responsiveness and greater sensitivity of government initiatives to the areas they seek to serve. Giving our regions room to stand on their own where needed will benefit all of Canada.

Second, the Charlottetown agreement emphasizes again and again our commitment to equality: the equality of women and men, of races, of ethnic groups and the equality of provincial communities. Our diversity is acknowledged and celebrated for what it is, and that is one of Canada's great strengths.

This commitment to equality is more than mere rhetoric. Through concrete entrenchment of the government's commitment to equalization and to the provision of regional development assistance Atlantic Canada is seeing equality of opportunity fully entrenched in our Constitution for the first time.

It is quite unprecedented and is a very major step forward in strengthening the ties of our region to the nation.

[*Translation*]

As for the Acadians who fought bravely and proudly to gain recognition as equal partners in New Brunswick, they should be doubly happy. First, they know better than anyone how tragic it would be to split this beautiful country of ours and, second, the recognition now afforded to the equality of their rights is stronger than ever before.

[*English*]

Third, Atlantic Canadians can celebrate because this commitment to equality has found new expression in a strong voice for our region in Canada's national affairs. The Charlottetown accord acknowledges the principle of provincial equality as a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

Atlantic Canada will hold nearly 40 per cent of the seats in the new Senate. This provides opportunities to ensure that our needs, our concerns and our aspirations are understood and addressed in Parliament.

Finally, all Canadians will benefit from the strengthened economic union, and some lowered interprovincial trade barriers, which will allow our country to move ahead to face the challenge of global competition through quality education, improved competitiveness and strengthened partnerships among all Canadians.

This agreement does justice to many submissions that Atlantic Canadians, many of them, made throughout the extensive public consultative process. This indeed has been the Canada round and the result is an agreement that typifies all that is so great about Canada.

• (1820)

This has been a very busy and moving year for me as Minister of Veterans Affairs. We have just observed the 50th anniversary of the Dieppe raid and before that the 75th anniversary of our astounding victory at Vimy.

The men and women who gave up so much and did so much for Canada did not feel their sacrifice in vain for so great a cause.

[*Translation*]

The French people we have encountered during our visits had no doubt about the role of Canada, neither in the past nor in the future.

[*English*]

I will only say I wish all hon. members and all Canadians could have joined us on this year's pilgrimages. To stand at the Vimy monument beside 93 year old veterans, some in wheelchairs, many bearing the physical scars of that battle, to gaze at the beaches of Dieppe and remember how many young Canadians gave everything in the cause in freedom caused one to acquire an overwhelming sense of perspective.

It is tremendously humbling to look at row upon row of headstones and be reminded of the heavy prices paid for so many of the things we all tend to take for granted.

At the same time there is an exhilaration in the knowledge that to be Canadian is to be part of something greater than ourselves, something historic, something noble and courageous, something very special, something worth fighting for, something worth even dying for.

Thankfully our history is not one of civil war or bloodshed or brother fighting brother. Events around the world remind us of how fortunate we are in this case, how we have built this history through openness of mind, through generosity of spirit, through broadness of vision and above all by trying to understand and accommodate the views of others which may differ from our own.

We must resist the efforts of those who would make our vision, our nation and thus ourselves something narrower, something smaller, something less.

In the next few weeks all Canadians will be asked to keep faith of those who went before. Thankfully the sacrifice of those who went before means the test of this generation will come at the ballot boxes and not on foreign battle fields. That happy fact does not make this test any less important, however, nor does it diminish the tragedy if it were to fail.

I am reminded of the charge of Sir John A. Macdonald who stated: "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".

The torch is now passed to us. I urge all Canadians to give sincere consideration to this agreement and pray they will stand by me in giving a resounding yes to Canada's bright future. God bless Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to consider the consequences of the historic choice Canadians will be asked to make on October 26. In fact, in public life, the greatest responsibility one has is making decisions that will affect the future of the country at a decisive stage in its history.

The constitutional talks which have kept Canadians busy for the past two years go to the very heart of certain problems that are starting to become critical in the rest of the world: how to reconcile different language groups, how to reconcile five strong regions whose geography, attributes and ambitions differ widely, and how to make people who come from all corners of the globe live together in harmony.

These are some of the major problems confronting the rest of the world—in Europe today, in America tomorrow. Here in Canada we have a chance to finish these discussions well before anyone else. We can do that because we have a federal system, we know how it works and we know how to make it work. In the world today there is a rapidly developing trend towards federalism. Sovereignists must realize Canada represents the future. Why in heaven's name should we regress?

The referendum question before the House today deals with the most profound constitutional change undertaken the birth of Confederation. This renewal of our federation is in line with a tradition of great historical compromises that made it possible for Canada to become a nation, to develop and to be respected and envied by all the peoples of this earth.

All in all, the proposal reinforces Canada. For aboriginal people, it means the recognition of their inherent right to self-government, by which Canada recognizes its true history. For Quebec, it means recognition of its distinct society and its ability to protect and promote that society. Quebec's distinct identity is a fundamental characteristic of Canada's personality. For western Canada it means a stronger voice within our central institutions in order to better promote its vital interests. For the Atlantic provinces this accord guarantees a central power that can sustain the fundamental social and economic programs that will help them reach their full potential.

Furthermore, this agreement creates a framework for a more cohesive relationship between the regions and the centre. In the world today, where ultimate decision making is increasingly shifting to the international level, greater internal cohesiveness will strengthen Canada's position internationally.

A number of people have expressed disagreement, concern or disappointment with parts of this agreement. That is not unusual because of its scope and consequences, the accord is not a perfect one. Personally, I am disappointed no significant agreement was reached on establishing a genuine economic union within our borders. At a time when we are seeing the globalization of markets and economic borders are coming down throughout the world, it does not make sense to maintain domestic economic barriers. However, despite these flaws, generally speaking this historic accord leaves us with only two options: Live with the benefits of an honourable compromise or take a gamble on an uncertain future. We have to accept the fact that the new Constitution will not be the answer to all our problems. There will always be the kind of political bickering and differences that cannot be regulated away. However, these are problems that have to be solved through discussion, mutual understanding and a willingness to compromise. We cannot afford to get into a constitutional strait-jacket that would keep us in a state of perpetual crisis and rob us of the flexibility we need in a changing world. A constitution is merely a framework for the future development of the country. It should only provide certain sign posts along the road to unity, prosperity and the ideals we all cherish.

Each and every one of us must realize that we must put an end to this national paralysis and we must do it now.

• (1830)

We must complete this necessary political revolution before we can tackle the urgently needed economic and social revolution whose success is the key to real national unity.

Let us face it: if we reject this new constitutional agreement we will be forced to undertake a political and economic revolution at the same time. We would then fail at the latter because it is impossible to conduct two revolutions at the same time.

No Canadian will find in the agreement everything he or she would have liked to see in a new Constitution but Canada will certainly find the framework and the model it needs to face the challenges of the next millennium.

I myself share this vision and it is for this reason that I will support this new constitutional agreement.

[*English*]

In the next month and a half Canadians will be asked to decide whether we remain united or whether we begin the debilitating march to fracture. Achieving consensus in a country with so much geography and so few inhabitants with different conceptions of its beginnings, parts of its economy pulled toward the Asia-Pacific, another part to the new Europe, part of the nation philosophically committed to individual rights, another part to the rights of the collectivity, achieving consensus in a nation such as this is not easy.

To reject the Charlottetown accord is to affirm with certainty that one can achieve better, and at this time I do not believe that to be the case. I will for these reasons support the proposal.

However, that being said, let no one think that the mere rearranging of our legal structure will in itself heal the wounds in the nation. The deep sense of alienation, of historic injustice in many parts of the country, the destruction of the nation's industrial and agricultural base, the poverty among our aboriginal peoples mean that once the Constitution is resolved, the real task of nation building begins.

Our future does not only hinge on resolving the age-old obsession of how the two senior levels of government in this country, federal and provincial, relate to each other. Increasingly it hinges on answering an even more basic question of how any level of government in this country relates to the people it is supposed to serve.

For instance, how do we ensure equality of education that is internationally competitive? How do we reduce the crushing burden of taxation inflicted upon Canadians? How do we stem the rising tide of racism, of violence against women which is afflicting the nation? These are the questions we ought to be asking in the current national debate. These are the questions that concern Canadians.

It is because this House is not answering them satisfactorily that some of our fellow citizens are prepared to put their country into play. The crisis in national unity and the failure to face up to the problems of the nation are not unrelated.

We must debate the Constitution, but if that is all we do, then we will be negotiating a legal reform which mirrors a country in decay. We risk becoming a nation in which hearts and minds have fled to other places. We risk becoming a nation in which illiteracy becomes our legacy and in which apathy becomes our patrimony.

The problem of national unity is not going to be solved by debating the nation we were. It is going to be solved by determining the nation we must become. Why? It is because at the end of the day a country lives in the hearts and minds of its people, not in the paper and parchment of its Constitution.

I believe with all my heart that Canadians must look outward to a world beyond our borders. When our fellow countrymen and women are presented with a vision of what this land can be, when they can see a nation facing up to the fundamental challenges before it, then and only then will the long night of our national soul-searching be over.

For instance, while our federal and provincial governments argue over political sovereignty as between themselves, the world's major trading nations are undergoing a fundamental transition in which the notion of economic sovereignty will be redefined forever. The principle that countries can interfere directly into the economic lives of others has gone far beyond the traditional bounds of trade disputes. The United States and Germany lecture each other on monetary policy. The United States seeks to change the internal distribution system of Japan. Japan revolutionizes American manufacturing methods.

The consequences of world-wide interdependence have attained a level few would have thought possible a short time ago. This revolution will have a far greater impact on whether or not our children prosper than will any debate over the commas in the Constitution.

What does this mean? First it means those who seek the independence of Quebec are living in a world that no longer exists. It also means those of us who would build a country rather than ripping it asunder, the actions we take or that we fail to take in the next few months will determine whether we begin the great advance toward progress or whether we begin a long period of decline.

Make no mistake, Canadians are equal to any challenge a government chooses to set before them. There is nothing as a nation we cannot do if we put our minds to it. Our history is one of great achievement against great odds but we have only accomplished these things when our objectives were manifest and our sights high.

Thus I would say in conclusion that today and for the month and a half to come our task is very clear. We must answer those who say that our greatest days are behind us, that all of our history has been written. We must

demonstrate as a people that we have not run out of steam, run out of ideas or run out of conviction.

I support the Charlottetown accord, but we in this House owe the Canadian people much more than that. We owe them a vision of a country prepared to triumph culturally, socially, economically, environmentally and in every field of human endeavour. Why? Therein lies the only lasting solution to the crisis of national unity.

[*Translation*]

National unity is not an end in itself. It is the natural consequence of a country that knows where it is going and how to get there, not by accident but because it wants to. We must stop fighting among ourselves and become once again a country united behind a great goal: to become the best of the best.

The time has come to unite all Canadians from coast to coast, to regain control of this country and make it move forward. After this referendum I hope Canadians, including the people of La Salle and Montreal I am so proud to represent, will be able to tell themselves they would not live anywhere but in Canada because only in this country can such big dreams come true. This is the vision we must promote. This is the motivation that should guide us, the proposed society we should all support.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, allow me to first make a digression and congratulate the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard for the content of his speech to which I listened in my office as well as here in the House. I also want to tell him that his personal contribution to the debate on national unity was appreciated. I want to say this to the hon. member because today, during Oral Question Period I was harsh with him. Occasionally, we think about things we said and we wonder if we could have said them in a different way. This is one of those days. In any case I will stop here because I do not want to impose on your patience. What is important today for me is to rise in this House to participate in the debate on the future of Quebec and Canada.

• (1840)

Today I want to express myself as a citizen, as the member representing the riding of Sherbrooke, Lennoxville and Fleurimont, and as minister of the environment. Indeed the fact that I was elected by my constituents gives me the privilege to also be a minister in the federal government.

First, I would like to make a comment on the tone of the debate. I must tell you frankly that at times I am concerned. I believe we must be honest and tell those around us that nobody has a monopoly on truth in a debate such as the one that is being launched today. Also I must admit with some regret that there are days when our discussions are at a low level. I dare make this comment because I sensed in the last few days that people primarily want us to talk to them in an intelligent and honest manner; and they also want us to treat them with respect.

I must admit to sometimes making remarks that are not as objective as they should be, but I think we should all make an effort in the coming weeks to preserve these three elements, namely intelligence, honesty and respect for our fellow citizens.

We must remember that after October 26 comes October 27, followed by October 28 and so on, and that whatever the outcome of the current debate we will have to continue living together. It is in this spirit that I am entering today's debate.

A few seconds ago I said I was very happy to rise today as the member representing the people of Sherbrooke—Lennoxville—Fleurimont who have put their trust in me. Today's context is very different from that of 1980. I think it is a fact worth mentioning. We must remind our fellow citizens that the debate on our future is not the same today as it was 12 years ago.

Let us go quickly over the new developments without going into detail: in the last few years the communist system has collapsed in much of the world; tremendous progress has been made on the political and social front; Europe 92 is taking shape; various economic, social and political alliances are being forged all over the globe. Today's world is very different from that of 1980.

Our personal lives on a daily basis have also changed a great deal. When I got elected in 1984 we did not have cellular phones, fax machines or computers like we have today. In a few short years our personal and work lives have changed dramatically. We must remember this

because as the circumstances of the debate have changed so have our options and the way they are presented.

What I have learned in the meantime is that Canada is a privileged country and I do not think anybody can deny it. You can say what you want; everybody knows that we live in the country with the highest standard of living in the world. We have this standard of living for several reasons. Our country is rich in natural resources and very rich in geography but relatively poor in population, however. The reason we have such a high standard of living is that our forebears, our ancestors, the pioneers of this country, worked very hard to build it.

I am thinking of seniors, for example. In my riding, I am always amazed every time I meet them and ask them how many children they have. They tell me eight, nine or ten. I have three children at home and that is a big family. When I meet people of my generation who ask me how many children I have and I tell them three, they say that is a large family.

Some people have made absolutely tremendous sacrifices. There were two great world wars in the century that is now ending. We forget because our memory does not extend that far back, but the First World War decimated a whole generation of young Canadians at that time. They are people who paid dearly to build our country, and that must be recognized.

Furthermore, we enjoy a privileged position internationally. We are a bicultural, bilingual country.

We are a North American country that has signed a free trade agreement with the United States and is now proposing one that will include Mexico. In addition, our country plays a leading role in the Commonwealth and the Francophonie and we are a member of the Organization of American States. One does not have to travel much outside of Canada to realize how appreciated Canada and Canadians are. Those who have trouble believing that need only take a trip. They do not have to go far. They can go just a little outside their country to realize how much Canada and Canadians are appreciated throughout the world. There is a reason for that. This is because we have a society based and built on democracy and freedom and because Canadians have created a country founded on tolerance which also provides one of the highest standards of living in the world. We have been well served by our federal system.

It is a very sensible political system even more so today than in the past. Why? The answer can be found in one word, the word global. This word seems to come up whenever people try to define a situation or a problem. It seems to me that we always hear words such as global, globally or globality in such cases. We now hear about the global economy, global communications, the global environment. This is because the 1992 reality, unlike, or perhaps even more so than the reality of 1980, is that we depend a lot on other people. The situation is quite different from what it was in 1980. More than ever, our future is defined and determined globally. A federal system has the advantage of coinciding with this trend.

It is important to remember, in deciding what our future and that of our children will be, that relationships between states, governments and individuals will be just as important and determining for our future as the decisions made individually by the various states, governments and individuals. This is even more true today than ever before. We must therefore establish, develop and maintain close relations with those around us, which is why the word global is now heard so often in all our major debates. Such is the reality in 1992. This unavoidable reality will definitely influence the future of Quebec and Canada.

What about Canada? This country, which has been so successful, has institutions which are already 125 years old. This year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of what we call Confederation. To show the state of our institutions I would like to use a simple analogy. It is somewhat like a solid 125-year old house in need of some repairs. Certain rooms are too big, others are too small, the roof might be leaking in certain spots or certain things might need to be changed. My colleague is anticipating my words. He can guess what I am going to say. Some people, faced with a solid 125-year old house, will say: "pull it down; it is not good enough." Others will want to move elsewhere. Others still will want to renovate. Others, and this is a new idea that seems to be surfacing today, will say: "Why not wait a while? There is no need to do anything yet. Let us wait a few months or years and then we will see."

I must say that faced with this magnificent old house which has been so successful and has served its purpose so well, my own choice is quite clear. I prefer to renovate, to make a few rooms bigger or smaller, to change the heating system. My colleague for La-Salle—Émard would be the first to make this house as environmentally efficient as possible. This is what the agreement before us proposes. In all honesty we have to recognize this. There has been a lot of talk about the agreement. I have heard many statements, and I must say that I have found some of them surprising.

• (1850)

What this agreement contains, without the shadow of a doubt, is what was proposed in the Meech Lake accord. Some people will say that the words are not the same, that this sentence, this phrase, this comma should be changed, that it is not good enough. It must honestly be said that this agreement contains all proposals made in the Meech Lake accord. What would that be? It is Quebec's recognition as a distinct society, a definition which is not restrictive. It is more powers in the field of immigration. It is the veto, the nomination of three judges from Quebec at the Supreme Court, which is constitutionalized and which gives Quebec a 33 per cent representation in a context where the courts will become more and more important in taking fundamental decisions because the charter is there. Therefore, we can say that as there is a change in the powers of our institutions, Quebec is guaranteed a presence equivalent to more than one-third in a federal institution. The federal spending power was also provided for in the Meech Lake accord, and it is part of this agreement. More so, some will say that this is status quo, that there is nothing new, and even that it is a setback.

Let me say you briefly, because it is important, that the agreement contains new powers for Quebec. There is a guaranteed minimum of 25 per cent of the seats in the House of commons. Nobody can say this is a minus, a loss. It is a permanent guarantee when we know perfectly well that the growth rate of the Quebec population is low compared to other parts of the country and the world. This is a very important point, but there is more. There are substantial gains in the area of manpower. Unemployment insurance was mentioned today. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean said that Mr. Lévesque requested unemployment insurance. I am not sure of that. As a member I witnessed my first conference of first ministers in 1985 when Mr. Lévesque was in attendance. Do you know what was the main success of this federal-provincial conference of 1985? The creation of the jobs strategy program by the present federal government. That was the great success in which Mr. Lévesque, premier of Quebec, participated.

There are additional powers in the area of culture, manpower development and training, which I already mentioned. The power of disallowance has been eliminated; the declaratory power has been restricted. Then there are the telecommunications which could not be envisaged when our Constitution was drafted 125 years ago. Who could guess then what was going to happen? This is the kind of change we anticipate in this agreement. In the area of regional development, Quebec gets additional powers. The federal spending power is restricted. All that is on top of what I was mentioning at the beginning of my remarks. We do not live in isolation, that era is over.

This is more or less the trap in which independence supporters in Quebec are caught today. They are living in the wrong century. We are no longer living in a world where sovereignty was defined only by a territory, a king, a queen and their army. That era belong to the past. We have to keep up with the times, and federalism is today's system.

It must be noted that there are other issues in this round that were not a factor in the Meech Lake accord, and it is important to recognize them. I am thinking, among other things, of the demands made by western Canada and by aboriginal peoples. When you live in a world where people are so dependent on each other, you cannot forget about the others. You have to consider their needs. For a long time, the constitutional debate in Canada was based on the relationships between French and English Canadians, from the Laurendeau-Dunton report to the Meech Lake accord. We must also recognize that the problems of the aboriginal peoples were just as serious 30 or 40 years ago as they are today. The difference is that they were not taken into consideration in the debate. They were avoided. Our relationships were defined differently.

To be honest, today we have to recognize that they have serious problems, that they too have the right to have a place in our country. I regret that some people would lead Canadians to believe that by inviting aboriginal peoples to participate we are taking away somebody else's place. Just as if somebody else was losing their place because we are making room at the table for people who were excluded for a very long time. That is not true. I for one do not want to live in a society where people are excluded in that fashion. Let me be honest with you. I think people are right to say that it will be a difficult debate for the next 10 to 15 years. Why? Aboriginal peoples will want to take their place, to assert themselves. Obviously they are going through a period of self-assertion that other groups have gone through, but they have to do it in order to take charge of their future and to define their place in the world. They too have the right to do so, and it is not an easy debate.

Yes, I sympathize with Quebecers who had a pretty hard time a few years ago. I know, because people are still talking about it. In spite of that experience no one wants to deny aboriginal people the right to take their rightful place in this world. Why should this suddenly stand in the way of a constitutional agreement? Why should the present agreement be rejected because they also want to live their lives in a way that is satisfactory to them?

Similarly western Canada has always felt alienated and far removed from the central government. Basically we are proposing changes that would increase their involvement.

I would like to say a few words about certain myths around this accord. The first one concerns language. Attempts are being made in certain circles to arouse people's concerns that the agreement would jeopardize the Quebec government's authority over language.

The notwithstanding clause, served its purpose in 1988, whatever people may think. I am not going to make any kind of value judgment because this is strictly the business of the Quebec government, but the question is whether the powers of the government and the National Assembly of Quebec with respect to language are protected. The answer is yes.

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Charest: Yes, in no uncertain terms. We can discuss the finer points later on. In Quebec the debate will continue on individual and collective rights but the answer is yes.

Does a yes for the accord mean no further discussion is possible? Does it mean that from now on, this is it? Of course not. It is pretty obvious that voting for the agreement will not eliminate all our problems. I will get back to that in my conclusions.

I see that my time is running out, but with your leave and with the unanimous consent of the House, I would like to take a few more minutes to finish my comments.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Charest: Thank you. I will go quickly; I do not want to cheat on the time.

When we say yes to what we are offering Quebec, we are not closing the door to change forever. Obviously in this world of continual change we will want to make adjustments at some point. Besides, that is the advantage of the federal system of government.

On the other hand let me put it another way. Can anyone guarantee that a yes vote will mean the end of all debate?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Charest: I cannot give that assurance. No one can. However, if you vote no I can guarantee you one thing: the debate will go on for a long time and with greater intensity. Just project into the future. If Quebec independence were proposed, imagine how long and intense the debate about that would be.

I am rather puzzled by those who argue that we must not vote yes because we will go on discussing for a long time and have endless debates, when these same people know very well that a no vote ensures interminable debate, not just for months but for years when the people have had enough of it. They know very well that we have been through it and that they have been offered an honest political agreement today.

Incidentally, we must not be naive in this debate. We must know that those who will vote no, who try to defend their option while at the same time pretending they do

not share the same views will have a hard time making us believe that it is indeed the case.

There can be no Immaculate Conception in this political debate and they cannot create a no without sleeping together.

An hon. member: There will be marriages.

Mr. Charest: There will be marriages at that level and I think we must take an honest look at this. Similarly the independentists must also be honest.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. How much more time do you intend to give to the minister, because there are other very interesting members who would like to participate in this debate? I wonder how much more time you will give to the minister.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member heard the minister ask permission, and he got that permission, to carry on for what will surely be a very limited time. I am sure that the minister is about to conclude.

I ask the hon. member to bear with me for a few more minutes. The hon. minister has the floor.

• (1900)

Mr. Charest: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a coincidence that the hon. member for Longueuil is with us. I was just talking about the contradictions of those who are proposing independence, and that concerns him directly. We have to be honest.

No agreement on a renewed federalism will ever satisfy Jacques Parizeau, Jacques Brassard, Gérald Larose—

An hon. member: Lucien Bouchard.

Mr. Charest: Or Lucien Bouchard. No agreement will satisfy them. If there is, they should stand up and tell us. The hon. member for Longueuil will have a chance to speak. Maybe the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie will rise to tell us what form of renewed federalism his party prefers. I would really like to hear that from him. I say this just to show you that their option is not sound. All we know about their proposal is that, for them, Quebec's independence means that they would have the same rule, the same citizenship, the same army, a common market—

An hon. member: The same passport.

Mr. Charest: The free trade agreement would also apply, and they would have the same money. Talk about a golden opportunity, the same money. Imagine how the federal government would be ridiculed if it made a proposal for us to have the same money as the United States. That is what separatists are proposing to us. The funniest thing is the constant complaining we hear about duplication in the present system, when Jacques Parizeau comes here, in the area, and promises that the 100,000 federal civil servants will all keep their jobs. Is there duplication or is there not?

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. minister asked to be allowed to carry on but he is starting a new debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. minister will want to conclude.

Mr. Charest: Indeed I will conclude, Madam Speaker. If I were in the situation of the member for Longueuil, I might also try to end the speech because it must not please him to hear what I have to say, but it is the truth.

I would like to end by saying that it is not the present Constitution that created the problems that we are experiencing. We have serious problems such as unemployment, a huge debt and all kinds of other difficulties. At the same time it is not the settling of the constitutional issue that will solve those problems. Those who think so are mistaken. Similarly those who that independence is the solution to all their problems are seriously mistaken. The population senses that. It knows very well. It also knows that we have an opportunity to make a step forward, and that is what this agreement is all about. For the people that I represent here in the House of Commons, and for my children and their grandchildren, I will vote yes on October 26.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, you will have noticed that I voiced no objection when the minister exceeded his time so significantly. However, I was really rather curious to see the outcome of strange bedfellows producing an immaculate conception. I hope he will be as generous with me, as I might inadvertently exceed my time but I would hope not.

I want to take note also of the fact that the minister took some pains to apologize to the member for La-Salle—Émard for a remark he made to him during Question Period. One of the aspects of that to which attention should be called is that it was part of an atmosphere of harmony and conciliation in this House during this debate, which must please most Canadians.

In fact, one of the outcomes of the resolution of the constitutional issue for Canadians will be the realization that politicians can, after all, come up with solutions, even though those solutions are not ideal, to the problems that vex our country even when those problems seem to have taken so long to resolve, the constitutional issue having been with us almost constantly for 30 years and constantly for the last ten years.

One of the advantages of bringing this all to an end is that it will help to provide some credibility to politicians because they have resolved a problem. It also should help to demonstrate that when politicians of various stripes from various parts of the country with various ideologies and various concerns come together to attempt to agree on anything there can be a considerable spirit of compromise. Therefore we must all understand the Charlottetown accord, in respect to which we are debating today a referendum for its approval, is not a perfect accord.

Even in its imperfection the Canadian people will be happy to say: "Get on with it". They want to ensure national unity. They understand the destruction of a country is not going to be a contribution to their greatest concern, and that is the economic status of this nation expressed in their terms as jobs and a greater sense of security that there will be jobs for them in the future.

They will know that when we have finished this debate we will still not have settled the question of Canadian survival, of taking back this country in accord with the principles that Canadians want to see pursued as their vision of Canada.

After this is all over we will have to debate, as has been called attention to earlier, where Canada will be in the new global economy and how we will reconcile our vision of this country with a vastly changed economic reality in the rest of the world.

It would be in error to suggest there has not be substantive and significant progress made by virtue of this constitutional accord. Certainly all of us who have been participants in the process, which was a process far more acceptable I think to Canadians because it did involve vastly more consultation with the people through the special joint committee, the six conferences that were held, the various committees in the provinces, the committees that heard the people in Quebec, this referendum itself, will convince Canadians there has been as much consultation as could be reasonably expected in reaching this accord, and that I think is to signify the substantial difference between this and Meech Lake.

We have achieved a great deal and I do not think there can be any denying that. As someone else has said, probably the most admired step that was taken in this accord will have been the recognition of the inherent right of aboriginal peoples to self-government. It is a groundbreaking step forward in the position of aboriginal peoples throughout the world. Canada has once more tread new ground that others I am sure will be forced to follow by the merit of what we have achieved.

All Canadians will be most pleased that we have managed a reconciliation with Quebec. In accomplishing this, concessions will have been made by English Canada, the premiers that represented that part of Canada, that will be criticized by certain elements in English Canada. It will also be recognized that Premier Bourassa will have entered into an agreement on his part that already has been the object of considerable criticism.

I am especially pleased by the contribution of the premier of Ontario to both of those elements of this constitutional accord. I am also proud of the part my party at the federal level played, as well as the premier of Ontario, in making a contribution to the economic union and its partner, the social covenant, expressed in the deal as a social and economic union that provides a basis on which the social programs and the harmonization of

social programs throughout the country can be to some degree assured.

It is not quite what we would have liked but it is more than we had before. To have found the economic union refers to full employment as a goal must surely be something that we as social democrats can take pride in, in having convinced others those are worthy goals on all sides of this House. Full employment and social programs which are harmonized throughout the country have now become the positions of both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. We can be pleased with that. There is much else in the deal with which we can be pleased or about which we can be proud. I think most Canadians will be inclined to say that this is good enough.

• (1910)

I could not be true to myself, nor could I be true to those in my own riding who are members of neither of the two founding peoples nor of the aboriginal peoples, the Ukrainians, the Italians, the Filipinos, the Germans, the Italians, the Afro-Canadians and the South Americans who are newly come to our shores to become citizens, if I did not note the utter failure of this accord to enhance the equality of the Canadian people as has been suggested that it has by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, that the member for LaSalle—Émard referred to as the crisis of racism in our country that is going to plague us in the future and for which we should have a resolution.

It is clear if we are concerned about equality and if we are concerned about the plague of racism in our country, then surely it would have been fundamental to have included some form of recognition in this accord that in fact all Canadians are equal before the law.

Quite frankly I do not anticipate, given the circumstances of the constitutional deal making, that those who are going to be affected by this failure are likely to vote no because of it, because they have been denied the basic information that would allow them to make the judgment of whether or not this accord is their accord or not.

In debating whether or not there should be a national referendum I took note of the fact that there is no form in which the question could be posed that would allow the electorate to understand completely what they were voting for or against. All will have available to them adequate descriptions of what is being provided to the aboriginal peoples. They will understand what a distinct Quebec is within the constitutional framework that is being proposed here. They will understand the social and economic union. They will understand a reformed Senate. They will understand all of those things that the typical politician and the typical media have made their focus of concern.

The fact is however that not in this House and not in the media has there been attention to this single failure, a failure to take into account what I myself regard as one of the fundamental ideals of all Canadians. That is that all Canadians are equal and all Canadians should be recognized as equal before the law.

There is a danger in this referendum, as there is a danger in all referendums. Yes, I am talking about those who will nit-pick about certain parts of the deal, whether it be distinct society, the recognition of minority language groups and all of that. There will be those who will perhaps mount opposition to the constitutional accord during the referendum vote in those isolated situations. However, it would be fundamentally dangerous, or let me say it is a fundamental danger that at some point vast numbers of those who constitute a significant portion of the Canadian population will recognize they have been left out.

What then would I do? I feel strongly about this country. I have supported a constitutional accord that would do all of those things which it has accomplished at least in some measure but not perfectly. I agree this is the greatest country in the world. I love this country more than anybody else, I suppose, in many ways.

But how could I be true to myself if I were confronted with a serious rise in opposition to this deal on the basis that nobody, apart from the party I represent, nobody, except the New Democratic Party, Ovide Mercredi, the NCC and yes, indeed the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs and Bob Rae would support a constitutional non-contingent provision guaranteeing ethnic and racial equality.

I could be faced with a serious choice at some point as to whether I should be true to myself, my status here and the status of so many Canadians as opposed to the issue of whether this deal is the right deal for Canada. I want this country to stay together. I want to get this over with. I do not want to see us burdened any longer with this constitutional debate.

I am faced with a dilemma. I hope that I am not confronted with it. However, one way of getting around this problem would be for those who have been responsible for negotiating this deal to give a clear and unambiguous undertaking, that they have so far failed to give, that they will address this question immediately.

I think one of the saddest things in this whole process is that he who originated in the 1982 Constitution Act section 15(1), which did at least recognize the necessity for equality and non-discrimination and who was subsequently forced to append to it the notwithstanding clause, should have his dream offended by his own party and the leader of that party in the utter rejection of a non-contingent equality clause.

There is a danger out there. Most Canadians I am sure are going to say: "Let us get this over with. This is a deal that can be lived with. This is a deal that demonstrates that Canadians, when they get together to consider certain issues even when they have differences of opinion, can come to an agreement that tries to respect all of their interests".

There is only one problem here. Thirty-five per cent of the population had their interests utterly ignored. Therefore, we are in the middle of a referendum process that could be jeopardized by the refusal to do just one simple thing. That is to say, clearly and unambiguously, it is the job of governments as well as Canadians to promote racial and ethnic equality so that there will no longer be a question in the future under any circumstances that I am as much a Canadian as anyone else.

That is my dream for my country, and I am so sorry, I regret so much that those who negotiate this deal did not share that dream. That is a dream, however, that I will continue to fight for.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I really look forward to participating in this debate tonight.

Right here in this place and, indeed, in the Senate next week and across Canada for the next four or five weeks the biggest issue in 125 years is going to be facing all of us. It is about yes to Canada. It is about yes to 10 provinces. It is yes to two territories, to the aboriginal peoples and, most important, to tomorrow's generation.

The Charlottetown agreement which was unanimous—it was a unanimous consensus—reached on August 28 was the result of months and months and months of public consultation all across this country. The proposals that came out of that meeting in Charlottetown are intended to serve as a reasonable—I really underline reasonable—compromise.

They are going to be the basis for a renewed federalism that will and indeed can secure our future together in one of the most successful countries in the world, the one that the United Nations rates as being the best place in the world to live.

Albeit, as most members have acknowledged today, it is not perfection. We know that and we understand that, but I also say that perfection is unattainable. It is a good package, it is a compromise. It was give and it was take for all those involved. Yes, people gave a little, but Canada won in the end.

• (1920)

I really want to emphasize that over the past few months and during the past 17 months there has been extremely extensive consultation: the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, the Spicer commission, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee and six national conferences: one in Halifax, one in Calgary, one in Montreal, one in Toronto, one in Vancouver and a special one here in Ottawa on aboriginal peoples.

The provinces all had committees. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians have spoken their views or had the means to speak their views outlining their concerns. In Calgary Southwest, my riding, I held six town hall

meetings and I want to thank each and every individual who came out and participated.

These six national conferences across Canada were really well publicized. At each conference there were men, women, disabled, the minorities were represented, the aboriginals were represented, their voices were heard, their opinions were given, and I know many thoughts were made known.

All of us who followed those conferences learned that this country is huge, it is vast geographically. It is diverse in its views and its demands. It has a history that most people either did not know, did not study, or tend to forget. It has successes that we rarely celebrate. We also learned that we are a group of people from all parts of the world who live together in tolerance, we live together in understanding and we live together with a great deal of patience.

Once we all take just a bit of time to learn a little more about each other, understand each others' differences, consensus can be obtained. All of us have to reach out, all of us have to listen, all of us have to communicate. Canada, you have so much to offer to all your citizens, we must work together to keep you whole.

All we have to do is look elsewhere, in what was Yugoslavia, in the Baltic provinces, in Kuwait, in Iraq, in the Middle East or in China. Nobody has what this country has to offer and yet we fight among ourselves. I think the time has come for all of us to put a little more time and a little more energy into understanding what is on the table today, because it is our future.

One thing some people really tend to forget is that in 1982 the Constitution was patriated and set down the criteria for an amending formula. In simple terms that amending formula said if there were difficulties, the first ministers would sit down, resolve the issue, and if they came up with a package it had to be ratified in both Houses of Parliament and in all the legislatures right across Canada.

Last September this government tabled in this House 28 proposals for change. After all the months of consultation that I reviewed, the premiers, the territorial leaders and the aboriginal leaders met with the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. Demands, different views and many concerns were all outlined and negotiations took place. By listening carefully, some give and take from all 17 people involved sitting around that table, that consensus, this package, this Charlottetown agreement was reached.

This Charlottetown agreement, this agenda, is the only offer that is plausible. Rejecting the deal, thinking that there is a better one that can be negotiated is not possible. It cannot happen. We have an amending formula that we have to operate under and that is what we have been doing.

I want to outline a few areas that are contained in the accord. Senate reform originated in Alberta. I am from Alberta. My two colleagues here are from Alberta. It is 10 or 12 years old. The new Senate is going to be elected. It is going to be equal and it can be very effective.

It will be able to block appointments. It will be able to veto any tax policy changes that directly relate to natural resources, and that means no more national energy programs which devastated us in 1982.

The House of Commons is going to have more seats: 42. Lots of people disagree with this, actually I do, but it is a compromise. The Senate is going to be based on equality of provinces and this House will reflect the representation by population which was set down in 1867.

The Supreme Court: with nine members of the Supreme Court, three are going to come from Quebec. That is nothing new. That has been in the Supreme Court Act since 1949.

Immigration: bilateral agreements on the immigration for all the provinces, not just one province. It is quite interesting to note that the province of Alberta is undergoing negotiations today with regard to a special immigration agreement.

All the provinces are equal. All the provinces have been offered the same thing. All the provinces are different. This agreement is flexible. It allows Canada to face reality today, to grow up and see how we have changed, to meet global demands and move ourselves into the 21st century.

The transfer of powers; there are seven areas. Those transfers can go to each and every province. Those who want to reject it can. They are offered to all the provinces and they allow the provinces to make their own decisions. That is where the decision should be made on specific issues.

There is one thing that I am disappointed in. It has to do with the economic union and the fact that there was not more consensus reached in the area of bringing down interprovincial barriers. We move into trade with our colleagues south of the border. We will even be negotiating NAFTA, debating it in this House. We see Europe 92 coming together and yet here in Canada we have over 500 barriers that cost us about $6.5 billion a year.

It is provincial jurisdiction but only by working together are we going to be able to break down those barriers and have free trade in Canada.

I do believe the aboriginal constitutional reform that is contained in the package is extremely historical. The inherent right of self-government is long overdue. There will be a five year delay in the justiciability of any right that is given. We are treading into new territory. I ask all Canadians to be patient. I want them to be understanding. It is new territory. The aboriginal people will finally be able to take their place in Confederation. It is long overdue. We are treading new territory. This will be worked out through negotiations and arbitration with the provinces, with the aboriginal peoples and with the federal government. The progress to self-government is going to be through an agreed, orderly process.

I wish to emphasize that all Canadians throughout this 17-month period have had ample opportunity to make their views and their concerns known, whether at the open meetings, through their members of Parliament, their senators, their aboriginal leaders or their territorial leaders. They have had an opportunity.

We are asking them to do one more thing, to make themselves a little more knowledgeable with regard to the Charlottetown accord. This country has to stay together. We have to put our differences aside. It is so very important.

One thing I want to mention has to do with all Canadians, specifically women. We are very concerned with equality, health care, education, social services, housing and the environment. These concerns have all been met in the Charlottetown accord. Canadian women were widely consulted and they were actively involved. I know that some of you here and read the press today think that perhaps that did not take place. They were invited. They did participate and they were involved.

• (1930)

In conclusion, I offer my sincere thanks and my gratitude to all those involved, first to the Prime Minister and to all the members of the House of Commons and the Senate who participated in all the conferences and all the federal committees. I thank the provinces and the members of the legislatures right across the country who worked so hard to come to a consensus on what would be right for their province and would help the unity of our country. I thank the staff and the assistants, all the men and women who participated. This is everybody's Constitution. It is the Constitution of the people of Canada.

Most important, I would like to give, not only for myself but on behalf of my fellow colleagues from the province of Alberta, my sincere thanks to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs who has, over the past 17 months, devoted himself and given his all to this country. I ask that people really take a tough, hard look at this because it is only by voting yes that we will be able to keep this country together so that it will still be successful in 125 years.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the issue put before us today, which we will be debating for a day or two in this House. Many of the members speaking appear to be addressing the accord itself. The actual subject of the debate is the question that will be put on the referendum, in the very Canadian way of ratifying or giving consent to the arrangements, constitutional and other, that have been agreed to by the Prime Minister, the premiers of the provinces, representatives of the two territories and representatives of the aboriginal peoples.

I want to begin by noting all the work that has been done on this issue by Canadians, including members in this House and members in the Parliament that preceded this one. The names read like a litany. Much of the work involved commissions and a series of hearings to which we have attached the names of individuals. Those individuals themselves have done a lot of work, but so have many other people who worked with them: non-parliamentarians, members of the House of Commons, members of the Senate and, I should not say countless, the many public servants who worked with them to make those exercises an effective reality in discussing our constitutional future.

I would like to mention the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee, the Charest committee, and the Spicer commission, and in Quebec the Bélanger–Campeau commission and the Allaire report. There are others as well. We have spent a number of years now discussing the need to revise our Canadian Constitution to meet the needs of a modern Canada and we are close. It has, to be sure, been a very rocky road and at times there have been many Canadians who have suggested that the process we had adopted lacked legitimacy. Many Canadians felt excluded. They felt that perhaps the elected politicians, or even more specifically the premiers and the Prime Minister, were hijacking the Constitution and the country and not giving adequate heed to the real wishes of Canadians.

We went through the whole process. As I look back at it I can see that while it might not have been perfect it really was all we had. The process that we went through was the best we were able to do.

Some suggested earlier that we should attempt a constitutional convention, one which would bring together Canadians from all walks of life and all regions in an attempt to reconstruct our Constitution. It is not that it was not considered at some point, but I would point out that we were not creating a Constitution from scratch, we were simply revising a very old one.

It has been tough. It took us over 50 years simply to patriate the Constitution from Great Britain. The patriation occurred in 1982 and it opened the door to 10 more years of fun and games.

We seem to have reached a watershed today. Subject to the views of Canadians, we think that we are going to be able to put the Constitution to bed for maybe another generation. Perhaps we will invent what I might call an evergreen constitution. Maybe we are going to change our Constitution and update it every five or ten years. That is not really what a Constitution is supposed to be there for, it is supposed to be a foundation document on which to build a country. You do not go back and change your foundation every five or ten years. However, we will see where we go from here.

The goal of the exercise now, if perhaps the process did want some legitimacy by giving Canadians a role in putting the pieces together, by consenting, commenting, sanctioning and acknowledging, is to hold a referendum. My party has consistently supported a referendum almost from the beginning. We feel a sense of pride now that we in this House have been able to give this referendum to Canadians.

We are now debating what the question will be on the referendum. I recall that this round of constitutional reform was called the Quebec round some years ago. There was an attempt to address the views of many people in the province of Quebec that the Canadian Constitution, as put in place in 1867, was wanting in some respects and did not serve the constitutional needs of that province. Ottawa began responding by getting through the patriation, which took 50 years. We apologize for that delay. That was 10 years ago.

We then began attempting to address the expressed views of certain groups in the province of Quebec. Eventually, in my recollection, we had difficulty because a minority of the people in the province of Quebec really did not care much about Canada. Therefore, we began to confuse the expressed views of separatists who really did not give a damn about what happened to the country, with the legitimate, expressed views of Quebecers who did see the need for constitutional change.

For some period of time there was a blurring of the Quebec voice. During this time there was a provincial government in Quebec whose expressed objective was to take Quebec out of Confederation. This made the discussions and the negotiations a little more difficult than perhaps they should otherwise have been. However, all through that period there were Quebecois who were Canadians, who were expressing good faith and solid reservations about the existing Canadian Constitution. Ottawa and the other provincial premiers made efforts to address those. There were difficulties to be sure, but the process began.

• (1940)

Some of those issues involved those who should have final authority for appointing judges to the Supreme Court of Canada, how many judges on that court would come from Quebec or would be related to the particular set of laws that come from the province of Quebec. There were proponents of Senate reform from the

perspective of Quebec which had its own Senate in the province until not too many years ago.

There were the requests, demands or views of aboriginal Canadians that they had been excluded from the original Constitution. I think most Canadians would agree they were. I have often heard reference to the two founding peoples or cultures in Canada. Whatever was founded back in 1867 was certainly done with the consent or acquiescence of the aboriginal Canadians who were here long before the "two founding peoples".

In any event, as time went on the constitutional train got very crowded. We were not only addressing Quebec-focused issues, we began to address a whole cart-load of other issues as well. In fact, the train got so crowded that unfortunately, after the Meech Lake accord the train derailed. It just got too busy, too complex and we had to pick up the pieces and start all over again.

I want to say that I also had concerns about aspects of the Meech Lake accord. Now that we have gone through the exercise again, I believe we have a much better document.

All of these issues we have to address in this referendum evoke many questions. Unfortunately, we are not going to be able to have a referendum that has many questions. We have to address a modification of the definition of Canada which would make reference to aboriginals, the distinct society in the province of Quebec in a defined way and the French and English speaking minorities across the country.

We have the issue of economic union which I understand and Canadians will come to understand simply has not been adequately addressed. That is a little embarrassing in face of the current North American free trade agreement which we have not adopted yet. We are looking at the agreement. We certainly have free trade with the U.S.A. but we do not have free trade among the provinces.

Senate reform, the Supreme Court, the whole area of first ministers conferences, jurisdictions and powers, air transportation, disease control, communications did not exist in 1867. Our country has changed a great deal since 1867. We badly need a redefinition, a reworking of the powers.

My leader has said we are happy to discuss these jurisdictions and these powers. You have to do that in a federal state. In his words they must not make Canada more difficult to govern. The changes must facilitate adaptation to the new economic realities. They must not paralyse the role of our national government. Those were the criteria he used. I believe they are good ones.

Those are some of the many questions that come out. There are also the changes to the amending formula and changes in the evolution of the way aboriginals govern themselves in this country. That is an extremely important issue and aboriginal Canadians have been reaching out for decades demanding their right to organize their affairs and govern their peoples in a way that was appropriate to their culture. I do not think any Canadian would say that is inappropriate. That is a challenge we have addressed. We have not nailed it down completely yet, but we have taken the first major step.

With all of those questions, do we ask 10 or 20 questions on the referendum? Are we going to have a cafeteria-style referendum? You like this, you do not like that? Yes for this, no for that? It could produce a very complex and inconclusive question on a referendum.

Rather than go with the cafeteria-style package what comes to mind is a dictum I recall hearing from time to time. It is keep it simple, stupid, lest the complexity simply overwhelm everyone. In order to keep it simple we therefore have one question.

While I would really like a chance—and I am sure many Canadians would like a chance—to comment specifically on separate aspects of the constitutional accord, it just may not be possible. I guess it is not because we only have one question.

With all the complexity, all the frustration that Canadians have, and the boredom, there are a lot of Canadians out there who do not want to hear anything more about this. There is a certain ennui out there. They do not want to hear any more. Amidst all of that we will try to keep it simple with the one question that asks Canadians whether they will agree to the principles contained in the Charlottetown accord of August 28 reached by the Prime Minister and the premiers.

Answering yes to that question permits Canada to move on. If the answer should be no, those who wanted to see the end of constitutional debate in this country

may just see the beginning of a whole new thing which may not involve Canada as we know it now.

There is the question. I support it and I intend to vote yes during the referendum.

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the question that is before the House today:

> Do you agree the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

When I speak to my constituents of York—Simcoe at different functions people ask me: "Why are you spending all your time on the Constitution? Why are you not spending more of your time on the economy?" That is a fair question for people to ask because people are concerned about their individual lives and about how they are going to cope with this world economy that Canada is entering into.

I think it is fair to recognize from the public's perception that this has been a very hot media topic over the last year and a half or two years, and for very good reasons. I will discuss them a little later on.

We must recognize that the government is continuously negotiating freer access to trade because trade is the life-blood of this country. The ongoing negotiations with GATT, the NAFTA, the free trade agreement, and negotiations that are taking place internationally are going to help build this country.

When we examine some of the other aspects of the economy that this country and this government has addressed, it has put us in a position of improvement and gain. We are gaining a greater resolve in the international market.

We cannot forget that this uncertainty facing Canada at the present time is hampering our economic recovery. It is detrimental to investment because foreign investors are not sure where Canada is going to be in a couple of months or three or four months down the road from today. It is also costing us when we borrow from international markets. The fact is that we do have to borrow there. We do not like to but that is something we must address.

By resolving this long-standing constitutional discussion we can put Canadians in a position to take advantage of all the things that Canadian federalism has to offer.

• (1950)

The other question that I am asked most often is whether this is just Meech Lake all over again? Is this Meech Lake 2? I do not think that is the the case at all. There were two basic problems we faced in trying to put together the Meech Lake accord. They concerned process and mandate.

The process was very limited. There was very little opportunity for Canadians to have input into that process. This process has been exactly the reverse. There have been public forums. There have been national forums. There have been committees that have travelled the country. There have been local committees. There have been opportunities for virtually every Canadian from every walk of life, from every corner of this country, to have input into this process.

As a result of that we have changed the mandate. The mandate of Meech was very specific and very limited, and rightfully so because it was addressing the difficulties that the province of Quebec and the people of Quebec had faced since 1982.

Now we have really gone into a Canada round. We have gone into a Canada round because that is what the people of Canada have asked us for. They want to address the issues that are fundamental to them, to the way this country is governed and to the future of this country.

We looked at the things that Canadians and the people who were conducting these negotiations and discussions have asked us to address. We think of the Canada round, and the Canada clause in particular, as demonstrating what it means to be a Canadian, of showing that Canadian identity. It is the unity that brings us all together and our diversity that makes us different from all the others.

It was mentioned in the House earlier today that we are a family, but we are not identical twins. We have our own characteristics and our own needs. Those have been addressed in a very fundamental statement that is straightforward, which everyone can grasp, and that really defines what we are as Canadians.

We had to address our institutions. At the centre of the Canadian federation we have an institution that needed change. It had not been substantively changed since it was originally founded in 1867, but it is much more responsive now. We have an elected, equal and effective Senate that recognizes the provincial differences and the differences in geography in this country. On the other hand we have better balanced the House of

Commons so that it provides representation by population.

That is good stuff. That is the basis of democracy.

We have recognized our aboriginal community. For so long, for 125 years, for longer than that, our aboriginal community has been neglected as a part of Canadian life. It will now have the opportunity, as I discussed with my native community in Georgina, to stand on its own, to create an economic base, and to really show and protect its culture and heritage. That is what those people want.

We can go through the whole package. There is the reduction in friction that will occur because we can now separate federal responsibilities from provincial responsibilities in a way that will reduce that overlap. That is important to all Canadians.

There are many other points in the package that are extremely critical, but time does not allow me to discuss them. I want to return to one final point, which is the process. We recognized the difficulties, as I mentioned earlier, with the previous process. We are now going to the ultimate consultative process. We are going to have a referendum that all Canadians are going to be able to take part in. I hope that all Canadians do go out and vote on October 26.

When we have a referendum, when we have this consultative process that asks every Canadian to make up their mind, it is critical that every Canadian understand what they are voting for. What they are voting for is a package of constitutional renewal, a revitalized federalism, a revitalized Canada. It is critical that every Canadian take the time to read the constitutional package, to understand what it means to them and not be influenced by some rumour that they heard in the coffee shop next door.

They should not be influenced by a newspaper that has written an editorial to try to gain some headlines or a TV writer who is again feeding on rumour, on innuendo, on these kinds of things.

Every Canadian should take the time, and I believe they will take the time, to read that package. If Canadians read that package they can decide for themselves. I firmly believe as one Canadian who has read that package that I understand it. There are questions about it that I have and I am sure I will always have but it is an opportunity to revitalize this country.

If everyone reads that package, they will say yes to a renewed and revitalized federation. They will say yes to a new Canada.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I just want to point out something to the hon. member for Laurier–Sainte–Marie who is rising. The last speaker had notified the Chair that he would share the 15–minute period with a colleague. Therefore the hon. member for Calgary West has exactly 7 minutes left.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for sharing his time with me and for his truly Canadian attitude, which we all share in this House.

I really love my country, Canada.

[*English*]

When I arrived in this Chamber close to 14 years ago, if someone had said that to me I would not have understood what they were saying. It is coming to this Chamber as a member of Parliament that gave me the opportunity to learn the other official language of this country, to experience the culture that is involved in that other official language and to enhance my understanding and my feeling for this country in all of its parts, with all of its people.

As someone born in the city of Calgary, in the west, I had a French teacher in high school who could not speak French. We took French for four years in high school and there was not a word of it spoken because none of the teachers could speak it. That is my world of the late 1940s and the early 1950s in one of Canada's larger cities then and now. It is a city that has grown a great deal.

I guess whatever feelings I had for my region and my country when I came to this place were enhanced 10 times. The experience and the opportunity to share 14 years of my life with colleagues in this Chamber who come from every corner of this land has been an enriching experience that far too few Canadians have an opportunity to experience and to enjoy.

When the United Nations recently said this was the number one country in the world in which to live, that would come as no surprise to anybody who had served in this Chamber and who had travelled on behalf of this country to some other parts of the world on the kinds of things that we are charged with the responsibility to do.

I ask myself sometimes why this country would be number one? I try to contrast it with other places I have been. I have been to France, England, the United States and Asia. There are places I have not been but I have not encountered another nation like this one. This nation is encouraged to believe in an idea, a dream that is really built on the celebration of diversity.

When I look at other countries to a greater or lesser extent, there is a tendency among the people to narrow down and say, "we are", and to try to define it with a few sets of words. When we look at our geography, from the far north to as far south as we go, from east to west, it is inconceivable that it could be more diverse. When we look at our people, it is inconceivable that there is a country in the world with a more diverse population, with cultural traditions that come from every corner of this globe. They enhance the lives of all of us because of the celebration of diversity. It is not viewed as a negative or a detriment, it is viewed as a positive.

• (2000)

In immediate terms, Madam Speaker, we have just been through an exercise which began with the constitutional change in the early eighties. I arrived here in 1979 and lived through the enormously emotive protests we had in this Chamber, and through changes where the courts said that we could not do it this way, we had to do it that way, and finally nine of the provinces agreed. That left us with some problems, and this is the third attempt in the last five years to resolve some of them. Three times we have come to unanimous agreement to change the Constitution of Canada in positive directions. We have lived through the Spicer commission and different parliamentary committees, provincial committees, ministerial committees, and finally the first ministers' committee.

I just wanted to make those few comments and to make a commitment to the people of my riding. My commitment is to tell them clearly, absolutely and without equivocation that I will vote yes on the referendum question. I believe it is important to the future of this country I love so much.

I make commitment number two, to make myself available throughout the referendum period to any group, no matter how small or how large in my community that would like to sit down and discuss the proposal in detail. I pledge that my own behaviour will be as non-partisan as possible in explaining the words and what they mean, and what I see as the possible outcome of the adoption of those words in the Constitution of Canada. In that way people can exercise not only their democratic right but their democratic responsibility.

My experience in this Chamber has taught me that the big enemy of democracy and the kind of life that this country stands for is apathy. If people do not understand what it is that is being proposed in terms of the change in arrangements for this country, then they are much more likely to stay home. I would much rather lose this referendum vote with 90 per cent of the people voting than I would win with 20 per cent of the people voting. What we need in this country is a celebration of the reality that we are in a phase of renewal which will see us into the next decade and the next century in a more harmonious way.

I say to those people who are listening tonight, who are worried about the economy and worried about jobs: resolving our political differences will enable us to take an enormous step forward in terms of the economy and the availability of jobs. The world community is watching us and a 65 per cent vote or a 70 per cent vote in favour of this agreement will have more impact than a 51 per cent or a 55 per cent vote and so will the voter turnout.

I will be doing my best to encourage the voters in my riding to support this proposal and to accept their responsibility in a democracy by getting out to vote.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Madam Speaker, we have in front of us an agreement which is not based on legal texts. Can you believe it? After all, it is the future of Canada and of Quebec that we are debating and yet, we have no legal texts.

I was once a union negotiator and I would never have told a union assembly called to renew a collective agreement that I had an agreement but no text. I got you a raise but I do not have the numbers. There is not one businessman who would close a deal without having it in writing. There is not even one landlord and one tenant who would sign a lease without seeing it in writing. What it boils down to is that they would like us to sign a blank cheque. When I think of the process which took place in Quebec with the Bélanger-Campeau commission which was rigorous and transparent and which recommended a referendum on sovereignty, there can be no comparison.

Yet, the Quebec government and its federalist allies here in the House refused to hold that referendum on sovereignty. The debate will therefore be on the agreement, on those general principles of the agreement which we know about but not on the legal text since we do not have one.

The proposed question refers to a renewed federalism and a covenant based on the agreement. It means, therefore, that once the legal documents have been written, the agreement could be different from the one we will vote upon and we will be thrown right back into a debate which will end only when Quebecers, and nobody else but them, will decide to choose their future through a referendum on sovereignty and nothing else.

We also hear about a renewed federalism. It reminds me of a an old Campbell soup ad that was popular a few years ago: soup like Grandma used to make but served the modern way. It is slightly the same: an old-fashioned constitution served in a modern style, but Quebec's soup bowl is smaller. Out went the two founding nations concept; now we talk about ten equal provinces. The over-all veto for Quebec disappeared; now we propose a series of narrower vetoes, trifles, which do not concern—

An hon. member: What do you mean by trifles?

Mr. Duceppe: Look it up. It is in the dictionary. Maybe you do not understand; it means trivialities, insignificant things.

Trivialities which say nothing about the right of veto and the creation of a new province. Some say that the vetoes concerning the institutions such as the House of Commons, Supreme Court, and Senate, is as if everything was to be decided even before we obtain the right of veto. It is equivalent to entrusting ecologists with the management of a forest just after it has been cut bare.

We also hear about new powers such as forests, mines, tourism, housing, recreational activities, municipal and urban affairs. However, all of that already exists in the 1867 Constitution. There is nothing new there.

There will be a series of administrative agreements limited to five years concerning immigration and training. Most of all, the federal spending power will be enshrined in the Constitution. Therefore, the federal government will be able to intervene in all fields. Indeed, we are told that the provinces can opt out and receive instead financial compensation. However, there is compensation to the extent that the provincial program meets national standards. In other words, Ottawa will establish policies and Quebec will manage the political will of Ottawa.

An hon. member: It is you who said it.

Mr. Duceppe: There is a Senate with a double majority, a French and an English one. In Quebec, there could be an English senator who also comes from cultural minorities. There could well be two French senators from New Brunswick and two from Ontario, one from Manitoba, one from Alberta and, for some exotism, why not one from Yukon, so that Quebec, which is the national home of Quebecers and French people, could be a minority within the French majority. This would be an equal Senate where Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland would have the same number of senators.

Most of all, some odious scheme would force Quebecers to determine on a racial basis who should represent them. We, the sovereigntists, say that all men and women who live in Quebec are Quebecers, whatever their origins.

There will also be 18 new members of Parliament for a while. What does it change ultimately? In 1942 Quebec members represented a third of the Commons, and the conscription was voted nonetheless. In 1982, Quebecers made up the majority of the Liberal caucus, but that did not prevent the patriation of the Constitution. This morning, the newspaper *Le Soleil* tells us that 54 per cent of Quebecers oppose the deal, but only 8 Quebec members out of 75 are here to fight against it. Ten per cent is hardly representative of the opinion of Quebecers.

• (2010)

The distinct society clause is also restricted to culture, civil law, and language.

An hon. member: *Notamment.*

Mr. Duceppe: There is no equivalent for that word in English, and anybody who studied law knows that it means "of the same nature".

On the other side aboriginal people get not only that but more. For example they get the integrity of their society, of their way of life, of their relation to the environment. I am proud of that, but it can be said that the aboriginal people are thus defined as a nation. They are called aboriginal nations, but there is no mention of a Quebec nation. Under this Constitution, the people of Quebec are not a nation, but the aboriginal people are. I have to congratulate Ovide Mercredi, because he certainly is a good negotiator. The same cannot be said of Robert Bourassa though.

This whole distinct society issue will collide headlong with the development and blossoming of the minority, and this can lead to an attack on Bill 101. It will also lead to attacks on immigration, because some people in Quebec will say: "We do not have a number of English schools proportional to the English population in Quebec". Based on this concept, they will ask that immigrant children be accepted in French schools, and the whole debate will be launched all over again.

There are many questions which will have to be negotiated in this agreement. There are, for example, natives' rights. No one says how much they are going to cost and how native self-government will be financed. Will there be a native income tax system? Will there be an equalization program? Will it come from Ottawa or from Quebec? There is not a word on that.

The door is also open to an interpretation of land rights based on existing treaties and ancestral rights which do not jeopardize Canadian land because self-government will take place within Canada, but which could challenge Quebec land. The power to decide, in case of disagreement between the partners, what rights will be defined in the Constitution is left to the courts. It is unacceptable for Quebec. It is Quebec and the native peoples who must themselves decide what their relations will be within Quebec. That does not contradict the native peoples extra-territorial relations because they already exist. Take the case of Akwesasne, where one part of the reserve territory is in Quebec, another one in Ontario and another one in the United States. The American border was never questioned. I do not see why the Quebec border should be.

Sovereigntists are in favour of the recognition of aboriginal rights, as the James Bay Agreement proves. It is Matthew Coon-Come, big chief of the Cree Council of Quebec, who said in the state house in Augusta, Maine, in 1989: "As a people, we were guaranteed the possibility of preserving our lifestyle in terms of hunting, fishing and trapping, as well as our language and our culture. With the agreement, we got what we never had before: full authority over education through our own school board, full authority over social and health services, land management, as well as a strong voice in the approval of new developments on our territory, rights that respect the resources from the land, entitlement to police protection and a modified justice system and guarantees that we can fully participate in the development of Sub-Arctic Quebec". It was Matthew Coon-Come who said that.

Sovereigntists will conduct these negotiations, and even develop a relationship between Quebec nations and aboriginal nations, on the basis of the 1985 statement of the National Assembly.

At that time the Lévesque government moved a motion saying: "That this assembly (the National Assembly) recognizes the existence in Quebec of the Abenaki, Algonkin, Attikamek, Cree, Huron, Micmac, Montagnais, Naskapi and Inuit nations, their existing native rights and the rights contained in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreements; and that it considers these conventions, and any other future convention or agreement of the same nature, as treaties. That the government reaches some agreement guaranteeing them the right to self-government within Quebec; the right to a culture, a language and a tradition; the right to own and control land; the right to hunt, fish, trap, harvest and participate in wildlife management; the right to participate and share in the economic development of Quebec, in order that they develop as distinct nations having their own identity and exercising their own rights within Quebec, these rights being equally applicable to both men and women; and that the government reaffirms its commitment to protect in its fundamental laws the rights prescribed in the agreements signed with the native nations of Quebec".

This is the way to follow, and this is the way that Mr. Bourassa chose not to follow, choosing instead during the Oka crisis to send the Quebec Provincial Police and then the army, when it should have been negotiating for months. That man does not make decisions, he puts the future of Quebec and of the Quebec nation as well as native nations in the hands of the Supreme Court.

The future will show that in a sovereign Quebec, native peoples will be able to develop their respective nations in an atmosphere of mutual respect, fraternity and progress. Then Canada will be able to learn from our experience.

I urge all federalists to come to Quebec and debate the merits of these agreements, instead of hiding behind the curtains, debate the agreement, and apply enough pressure so we get the texts and they can explain them. This is their duty, and we will judge the fundamental value of this agreement. They want a debate on the agreement and not on sovereignty, that is what they will get.

[*English*]

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the debate on the motion:

> That, pursuant to the Act to provide for Referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of a referendum question:
>
> "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?
>
> _____ _____ "
>
> yes no

I know that I speak for other members of my party in welcoming the opportunity which has been given to Canadians to participate in this meaningful way in our constitutional renewal process. For some time now, the official position of my leader and our party has been that there should be a referendum held so that Canadians could have their say. We know there were many divergent views expressed as the constitutional process unfolded over the past number of years.

The leaders who sat down and drafted the latest accord represent many shades of the political spectrum, but all have had one thing in mind: the preservation of a strong and united Canada. I salute them for their efforts and their vision. I urge Canadians, now that they have been given this opportunity, to ratify the constitutional changes and move forward together as one united nation.

We must always remember those who took part in the process were keeping the best interests of Canada in mind. While we may not agree 100 per cent with every paragraph of the proposal, we should support it as the best possible deal for Canada at this time. I am very proud we are giving the Canadian Constitution back to the people of Canada.

There are things we are not happy with as has been stated by my leader, but I know that as time goes on these things will be remedied.

It is also very appropriate that the final agreement after years of discussion should be reached in Charlottetown a city which I am very proud to represent in this House. I know as all hon. members realize the original conference which led to the confederation of the colonies of North America into Canada was held in Charlottetown in 1864.

I was very pleased to have a motion passed some time ago which recognized Charlottetown as the birthplace of Confederation. Now our citizens can proudly state that our city is the place of the rebirth of Confederation.

• (2020)

There was an interesting coincidence in Charlottetown during the First Ministers' Conference. Great George Street, the street where the original Fathers of Confederation walked while on their way to the 1864 conference, was designated as a special heritage site. I congratulate the people who were involved with that, and especially the minister responsible for his part in it. It was also very appropriate that many of the First Ministers from across the country were there and able to take part in the ceremonies. I know that many years hence Canadians will still be coming to visit this area in Charlottetown and making it one of the very special places in our history.

I feel also that it would be most appropriate when this constitutional package is approved by the voters following the referendum that the first ministers should return to Charlottetown and conduct the formal agreements and ratification. They then can take their places as the new Fathers of Confederation alongside those great men

of 125 years ago whose vision led to the formation of this great nation.

There are those who will condemn this new constitutional deal and who will urge Canadians to vote no. As I said, I do not pretend that this is the perfect solution to Canada's problems, nor am I naive enough to believe that there will ever be a perfect solution to these problems. As I mentioned earlier, politicians from every political stripe were included in the discussions which led up to the agreement, and while it may not be perfect, it is a good basis for the rebirth of this nation.

We must assume that those who campaign against this agreement are those who would like to see this country die or be split into tiny pieces, none of which would be the strong vibrant country that we see today.

We have done well over the past 125 years. We have built in the northern part of North America a nation which is envied around the world. It is a nation of opportunity, a nation of freedom, a nation of fairness and a nation of compassion. We must use every ounce of our strength to preserve what we have built and we must proudly go forward, urging Canadians to vote yes so that the ever evolving country of Canada can continue to grow and prosper.

Constitutions are a guide to the way our country should operate. They are, in my opinion, a living thing which will and must change as times change. No constitution can be written in stone. There must be a flexibility which allows us to adapt and be able to seize ever-changing opportunities. This agreement may not be perfect but it represents an opportunity for renewal and a compromise of which we must take advantage.

One of the most famous authors of the United States' Constitution, Thomas Jefferson, stated in 1789: "No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law". He made that statement in a letter to James Madison, urging that the Constitution of the United States be revised every 19 years so that each succeeding generation of Americans could legislate for itself.

I do not believe anyone would advocate such a drastic proposal here, but it does serve to illustrate that change must come and change will come. We are fortunate that the changes to our Constitution will come about as a result of peaceful discussion, not as the result of violent action such as is taking place in many countries around the world.

I believe that we have to emphasize over the next few weeks the things which bind us together and the things which we share in common.

A young man from Thurso, Quebec, flying down the ice at the Montreal Forum brought joy and pride to youngsters from Newfoundland to Victoria. When a young baseball player from Maple Ridge, British Columbia steps into the batter's box at Olympic Stadium and hits a home run for the Expos he shares that with all Canadians. Finally, when a young swimmer from Montreal loses an Olympic medal because somebody pressed the wrong button, Canadians from coast to coast to coast grieve with her.

I mention these few sporting events because sporting events represent so many things that bind us together. I could just as easily have mentioned our scientists, our two Canadian astronauts and the thousands and thousands of successful business people, the farmers, the fishermen and the artists who make this country their home and who share in our common and very precious heritage. These people are taking advantage of the very special country which we enjoy.

Let us ensure that the forces which would divide us are not allowed to do so. Over the next few weeks we must persuade all Canadians of the true value of this country and in so doing assure that this constitutional agreement is ratified.

I have long held the belief that Canadians do not spend enough time or effort in celebrating the things which unite us and the institutions which bring us together. We could take a lesson from our American neighbours who go to such lengths to honour their nation and their flag.

This year's celebration of the 125th anniversary of Confederation got us off to a good start, but let us make sure that is only the beginning. Let us teach our children about the genuine Canadian heroes who have distinguished themselves around the world.

It is my great privilege to be my party's critic for veterans affairs. Since I assumed that post, and before that, I met many Canadian heroes who served their country at great personal sacrifice because they believed in what Canada stood for. They offered their very lives to protect the way of life we have enjoyed. To turn our

backs on Canada would be to turn our backs on them and this we must never do.

Let us instil in our children and in ourselves a pride of those things which bind us together and make us different from any other nation on earth. Let us forget the things which people say would divide us and let us go forward confidently into the future as united people.

Former Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier said nearly 100 years ago that the 20th century belonged to Canada. Let us urge Canadians to vote yes in this referendum. Let us build on the Charlottetown agreement of August 1992 to assure that the next century, which we are soon to enter, truly will belong to a strong, free and united Canada.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on a matter of very vital importance to our country as a whole and for my province of Ontario, that being the constitutional agreement reached on August 28.

First I will deal with the key components of the agreement, how they improve the *status quo*, and why the agreement is good for the country. Then I wish to take some time to explain why the approval of this agreement is vital for Ontario.

I believe the agreement represents a blueprint for a new, modernized and flexible federalism. It will make the fundamental law of the land clearer, fairer and better able to respond to the economic and social challenge of the future.

A Canada clause expressing fundamental Canadian values would be added to section 2 of the Constitution Act. The clause will guide the courts in interpreting the Constitution. The Canada clause also contains a statement ensuring that the Constitution is integrated in a manner consist with the preservation and promotion of Quebec as a distinct society within Canada.

This distinctiveness is based on Quebec's French speaking majority, its unique culture and civil law tradition. In recognition of Canada's linguistic duality, the Constitution is to be interpreted in a manner consistent with the commitment of Canadians to the vitality and development of the language and culture of English speaking and French speaking minority communities throughout Canada and the role of their governments in protecting the linguistic rights of those communities.

The inherent right of the aboriginal people to self-government would be recognized in the Constitution and confirmed in the Canada clause, as would the status of aboriginal government as a new third order of government within Canada. This represents a new partnership with the aboriginal peoples of Canada, a partnership based on respect, rights and responsibilities. The general principle of the division of powers would be that what is available to one province should be available to all.

• (2030)

This represents a new consensus on how different governments should share responsibilities in the Canadian federation. There would be exclusive provincial jurisdiction in eight areas which we believe are best handled provincially, those being forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, municipal and urban affairs, labour market training and culture.

Federal spending in these areas would not require provincial consent. The provinces would have more power over immigration and would be able to negotiate agreements with the federal government. Culture would be an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction with the federal government maintaining responsibility for existing national cultural institutions and agencies.

Frankly, without these reforms Canada will continue to be an over-governed nation. Presently federal and provincial powers overlap and too many programs are duplicated. With the agreement, it will be responsible to have the level of government which should run a program actually run it.

This agreement represents a new consensus on how different governments should share responsibilities in the Canadian federation. As to the amending formula, unanimity would be required for changes to the Supreme Court and Senate. Each province would have a veto on constitutional change.

The Supreme Court and its current composition would be entrenched in the Constitution. The federal government would be required to name judges from lists submitted by provincial and territorial governments. An aboriginal role in appointments would be developed.

The Constitution would contain a new provision setting out policy objectives underlying the social and economic union. These would include a comprehensive health care system, adequate social services and benefits such as housing, food and other basic necessities and high quality primary and secondary education; protecting, preserving and sustaining the integrity of the environment; working work together to strengthen Canada's economic union; the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital within Canada; the goal of full employment; a reasonable standard of living and suitable and equitable development.

There is also a new consensus on how to make our Canadian federation more predictable for all its members. Canada's system of equalization payments will be protected from unilateral change and the Canadian commitment to regional development and national economic infrastructure will be strengthened.

The Senate will have equal representation from each province. It would be elected either by the people of each province or by provincial legislatures. The Senate's powers would make it effective in that it could defeat legislation imposing new taxes on natural resources, delay supply bills for up to 30 days and force a joint sitting of the House of Commons and the Senate by defeating other legislation.

A government that wants legislation passed in a timely fashion will have to consider the views of the Senate. For Ontario, this compromise on the Senate was secured by increasing Ontario's representation in the House of Commons by 18 seats.

Over the last 18 months, we Canadians have been facing up to the reality that our Constitution needs to be amended. We have recognized that the ground rules under which we operate no longer work properly, that they are incomplete in some instances and outdated in others. The status quo is no alternative and the costs of standing still are too high.

To my way of thinking, this constitutional package responds to the concerns of many individuals, the provinces and the territories, and the aboriginal peoples. It will help in building a more united Canada, a stronger Canada, a Canada ready for the 21st century.

In essence the agreement represents a compromise which secures national unity. It goes a fair distance in resolving many of Canada's long-standing constitutional grievances and achieves fairness for minority groups in our society. The balance that so many Canadians seek between a strong central government and a strong provincial government or governments has been achieved in this package.

These are only a few of the reasons why I believe this agreement is good for Canada as a whole. I would now like to discuss specifically the importance of the approval of the agreement for Ontario.

Trade is Ontario's and Canada's economic life-blood. It sustains our standard of living. Political instability would threaten our economic stability, which in turn would erode our capacity to compete successfully in a highly competitive global economy. In short, domestic and foreign investors are attracted by stable political and economic climates. Instability discourages investment. It denies Ontarians and Canadians opportunities for growth and prosperity.

I believe Canadians and the people of Ontario want to get on with securing their economic future. They wish to put the constitutional bickering behind them. A stable, viable economy in Canada and Ontario will encourage the investment needed to get the engine of economic growth going again in Ontario and Canada.

Canadians and the people of Ontario also want justice for our aboriginal peoples, a renewed social and economic order, and a more effective Parliament. These are the gains in this agreement for Ontario, gains which the people of Ontario do not wish to lose. They do not want to turn the clock back. They are pressuring us to move forward, to use the combined energy of all Canadians to get this great country of ours moving again and in the right direction.

The constitutional agreement will give all Canadians the new tools needed to move forward together with confidence and pride toward the 21st century. If this constitutional package secures our national unity and prevents the breakup of Canada, the agreement is worth all the compromises that had to be made.

The October referendum on the agreement will be the most important vote ever taken in Canada. Come October 26, I believe that Canadians can answer the referendum question in only one way: a resounding yes from coast to coast for Canada and the dream that our forefathers brought into being 125 years ago.

I will be supporting the referendum in every way possible. I will be available to the constituents in my riding to attend the meetings, to provide information in any way possible. I am certainly confident that the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka will come up with a very resounding yes.

In closing, I think back to a meeting some three or four years ago where a group of parliamentarians from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association visited Parliament Hill. It was in the summer recess. One of the questions they were asking even at that time was the Quebec question and national unity. A parliamentarian who was one of the speakers for one of the provinces of India directed a question to me.

• (2040)

He said: "Mr. Darling, can you tell me the cause of the dissension? I live in a country of some 800 million people. We have 50 provinces. We speak 121 different languages and dialects, at least 10 or 11 of them major languages", many more than our English and French. He said: "We wonder when we can get along with all that diversity what the problem is in Canada".

I hope that on October 26 we will be able to show them that there is no more diversity and there is real union.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Madam Speaker, I am honoured tonight to participate in this historic debate.

I was also honoured to participate in two special joint parliamentary committees on the Constitution. The first was the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, which examined the amending formula for the Constitution, and the second was the Beaudoin–Dobbie joint parliamentary committee, which recommended the direction for this constitutional change in which we are now engaged.

Those experiences, combined with the constitutional conferences and the aboriginal process that ran alongside that, ensured an unprecedented level of participation from the public. It was an unprecedented inclusive and open process. All who participated should be commended for their role. If anything demonstrated to me that Canadians cared for their country that was it. The apathy of which we are frequently charged was nowhere evident throughout that process. People appeared in record numbers before the parliamentary committees to give testimony, to give their views on the country and on how the constitutional malaise with which we have suffered could be addressed.

Participants on those committees regularly restrained their partisan instincts. They had learned throughout the process that the patience of the electorate, which had already been sorely tried, was not to be further tried by partisan posturing on this issue which is so crucial to their country.

I want to begin my discussion tonight by talking about the perception of politicians when we are playing politics. I know that there is a lot of derision attached to that view. However, when, as in the case of those parliamentary committees, the politicians actually work toward and succeed in achieving a consensus on tough issues the same degree of notice is not taken. The media does not say: "Oh, they all agreed on something", and that makes national headlines. It is only when we disagree that it seems to be worthy of news commentary. That is what news is. My father is a journalist and it is conflict that makes news, not harmony.

My experience on those parliamentary committees also taught me about the role of an opposition member of Parliament. That is also much misunderstood. It taught me about the positive contribution that an opposition member of Parliament can make in the *politique* of this country. It was a privilege to travel through all parts of Canada—the territories and the provinces—meeting with all sorts of people, listening to Canadians and their divergent views on how to solve this constitutional problem. I confess that at times throughout that exhaustive process I was weary. It made me envious of those countries that did not have a written constitution. Focusing on the Constitution as the salvation for us all seemed to me to be rather ill-spent at times. However, hopefully we are near the end of that path.

Canada is an example for the world in many, many aspects. It has been said before in recent days that this agreement is a compromise. It bears repeating. It is an agreement that is not perfect. It is certainly not perfect. I have real difficulties with parts of the agreement, but my experience on those parliamentary committees and my 45 years of living have taught me that I do not get everything I want and compromise is not a dirty word. As my leader said, compromise is a very Canadian quality. It is not something to be criticized. I think it is a nice quality. Nice is a nice word, compromise ain't so bad. When you look at the nightly newscasts and see what

else other countries are suffering through, compromise ain't so bad.

As I said, I have difficulties with some parts of the agreement but I can live with them. This national psychoanalysis in which we have been engaged must now end. We must stop this introspection and now reach out to those people and those issues that have not received the attention they deserve during this period of self-definition.

My role in the coming days will be to explain and to give information. I will not participate in name calling those people who disagree with my position for the yes side because I have learned a great deal in this constitutional examination in which I participated in that I have confidence in the wisdom of the Canadian people. They will do the right thing on October 26. No name calling is going to change that.

My role has been an information giver. People will know where I stand.

For those people who say that the agreement does not address their concerns, and I know there are many who feel disappointed, I remind them, and I say this with a smile, if anything, our history should have taught us that the solution to our political problems is not found through the constitutional route.

The New Democratic Party believes in an activist government. We believe that if there is a political will, great things can be achieved. For those people who feel left out, I call upon them to get involved. What is not written in the Constitution can be achieved through political will. To the women, to the disabled, to the ethnocultural community, I say get involved. Elect members of Parliament, elect senators, elect members of provincial legislatures and elect councillors who care about what you care about. It is only through political will, not by the fine tuning of legal texts in a constitution, that real change is achieved.

I feel that much of this process, having been conducted parallel to the latest examination of the UN Conference on the Environment and Development, is equivalent to Nero fiddling while Rome burned. While we have been engaged in this national introspection, hundreds of thousands of children have died, hundreds of millions of acres of rain forest have been destroyed, species of plants and animal life have grown extinct and we talk about notwithstanding clauses.

One wonders about the collective intelligence of human beings whose priorities could be so misaddressed. That is why we have to get off, as I call it, national psychoanalysis. We have to get on to those issues. We have to develop and articulate a sense of urgency for our country and for the world. We can no longer have the luxury of more constitutional talks.

That is the reason I am supporting this. It has been a useful process, but we have to consider the alternatives. Last weekend at the Saanich Fair in my riding a constituent asked: "What would happen if this was not agreed to? What is the alternative"? I answered honestly in that I thought if Canada said no on October 26 there would be international curiosity as to what Canada was all about. There would be a declining confidence in the Canadian dollar, declining investment in our economy.

As if that were not bad enough, we would have another 10 years of trying to disentangle from Quebec, negotiating with the aboriginal people of Quebec, negotiating with the Government of Quebec as to what constitutes Quebec and what constitutes Canada. I am not going to an alarmist, but I do not think that would be very neat and tidy.

We have achieved a great deal through this process. My colleagues on the parliamentary committees know as well as I do that this agreement reached on August 28 in Charlottetown is a real achievement. It is a compromise and compromise is not dirty word.

In conclusion I reiterate what I said in my own caucus. I have had it with constitutional purists. I want to get on with debating the issues that propelled me to seek office: to change this country, to make it a more just, fair and environmentally concerned country. I want to stop talking the *c* word.

Countries have curses. We see it every night on the national news. There is famine. There is war. There are natural disasters such as occurred in Nicaragua last week. One's heart bleeds for those countries. Think of Bangladesh, think of Somalia, think of what was Yugoslavia. Our national curse seems to be constitutional ferment.

I assure the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands that as much as I wish we would never have to talk about the Constitution after October 26 we will because that seems to be our national curse. However, as national curses go it is not bad. We just have to watch the nightly news and compare what we have in this country to what other people in the rest of the world have. I add my voice proudly on the yes side, proudly to Canadian compromise.

[*Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Volume B.*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 9, 1992

[*Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Volume A.*]

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Madam Speaker, over the course of nearly 125 years, hundreds of debates held in this House have shaped the history of this country, page after page, day after day and speech after speech.

But beyond these walls, in my riding of Brome—Missisquoi or in yours, Madam Speaker, in the streets, in our living-rooms, around the kitchen table, thousands of others speeches are being made—somewhat less pompous maybe, using everyday words—but nonetheless important because they speak the heart of the people. Politicians, lawyers, constitution experts, plumbers, carpenters, teachers, students, all are concerned with our economy, but at the same time every one is very concerned with the future of this country that we will hand down to our children.

That is why we are looking into the renewal of our Constitution today. Why? Because the promises made to the people of Quebec at the time of the referendum in 1980 have not been fulfilled; because the Constitution signed in 1982 was unacceptable for Quebec; because my Prime Minister promised in Sept-Îles in 1984 that Quebec would regain its rightful place in the Canadian family; because of the failure of Meech in 1990; and above all, because in Charlottetown, a couple of weeks ago, a change in winds brought about a consensus which will be decided upon come October 26.

I am neither a lawyer nor a constitution expert. It is more as an observer of the political scene in Quebec for over 50 years that I asked to take part in the debate tonight.

I can still hear Maurice Duplessis say to Ottawa "We want our booty back", not to mention Jean Lesage's "Québec comes first", Daniel Johnson's "Equality or independence" and René Lévesque's "sovereignty-association".

I have seen all these premiers, regardless of their political affiliation, spend all that energy defending Québec. It is not surprising that some of them died in the middle of their carreer.

That explains why I understand so well, after 50 years of struggle, the impatience showed by my compatriots from Quebec, my brothers and sisters, my children. One of our great writers, Félix-Antoine Savard, taught them that they were of "a race who refused to die". Today, Gilles Vignault sings to them that they "have a country to build".

As for me, here is what I have to say to them: "This race which refuses to die, this country which we want to build, in a word, this future and this heritage we will leave to our children and grandchildren must not and cannot be less than ours".

To my Quebec compatriots I wish to say also that we now have before us a series of offers which are not perfect, I must admit, but which nevertheless reflect a consensus and are acceptable, honourable and realistic.

These offers, if accepted, will enable us at last to concentrate on our economic development; these offers were approved by great citizens like senator Claude Castonguay, the very one who had convinced Robert Bourassa to reject the Victoria agreement in 1971, who said that the July 7 offers were unacceptable, but who, today, believes the new accord contains more than Meech and gives Quebec the guarantees it needs to preserve its distinctiveness.

I repeat, for the benefit of my fellow Quebecers, what another witness and actor in the great constitutional debates, Mr. Claude Ryan, said, and I quote:

> Quebec can still contribute enormously to the growth of a strong Canada. If Quebec is a happy and confident partner, if Quebec feels it is understood and accepted for what it is, there can be no imaginable limits to the aspirations of this country.

Speaking about this country, I would now like to speak to my fellow countrymen and women from outside Quebec.

[*English*]

I know that with translation they will get my message.

[*Translation*]

Because of them, I often suffered in my soul as a francophone when I participated in commissions or read the results of polls or heard some media reports. However, I do not hold it against them, I still respect them and I will tell you why.

How can they understand, and even less appreciate, the attitude of a nation, the people of Quebec, the French speaking Quebecers whom they too often know little about?

During the Meech Lake debate, I saw them cheer on Clyde Wells, Elijah Harper and other political leaders. I heard them express their feelings in front of the Spicer commission. When I travelled outside Quebec, I could feel the distance between us. I heard some of their leaders express for the Beaudoin–Edwards commission, opinions that would make you shiver.

Such an attitude can only be explained by a total ignorance of this country's history, its past, its pioneers, its creators. I hate to use this word—ignorance—but it seems that it is time to admit the fact.

Am I wrong in presuming that the vast majority of the English-speaking people of this country, who automatically oppose all of Quebec's claims, are almost totally ignorant of whatever concerns the francophones of this country?

For a good number of them, our history starts with the Conquest, that is 200 years too late. What do they know of this country's founders, of Cartier, Champlain, Laviolette, Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeoys? Or explorers such as Jolliet, Marquette, La Salle and La Vérendrye, the very same who settled the territory stretching from Lake Winnipeg to the Rockies. This territory was theirs as early as 1733. What do they know about the pioneers whose memory we are still celebrating on this 350th anniversary of Montreal, to name only these among hundreds of them?

As for those who were taught the history of British North America, do they know how hard the French speaking settlers had to fight to survive as a people on this continent? How did we explain the deportation of the Acadians to them? What about the 1774 act? And the 1791 act? And the role the French Canadians played in resisting the American invasions? And the 1837 rebellion? And the Durham report? And the 1840 Union Act?

Happily, I also sometimes realize that highly intelligent and smart Canadians understand the importance of what is at stake. The name of Andrew Brewin, who was a member of this House and who is the father of one of our colleagues, comes to my mind as a case in point. In 1967, he wrote the following in a supplement to *Le Devoir*:

> Indeed, the future unity of Canada does not lie solely in a constitutional agreement. It will demand a lot of common sense, patience and mutual understanding from every citizen all across Canada. But it will also require the will to tackle problems, even a problem as tough as the renewal of the Constitution.

More recently, Mr. William Thorsell of *The Globe and Mail*, when addressing the members of the *Canadian Club*, said last January in Toronto:

> The present constitutional debate is putting to the test the tolerance of English Canada, our faith, our sense of social justice, our understanding of history, indeed our very imagination and our intelligence as a people.

Mr. Thorsell added that "by restricting Quebec's constitutional prerogatives, English Canada deserves to lose its status as a country and to become an annex of the United States".

Yet, if we look back on our country's history, General Murray had this to say about francophones in a letter to the King of England:

> It is a brave and courageous people. If it ever decided to leave the country, it would be an irreparable loss for the Empire.

Would he say the same thing today about Canada and Quebec? I suppose so because it is a view shared by many clear-minded and enlightened anglophones. But unfortunately, those views are still too rare and people are still not ready to listen. Time goes on, debates drag on and on, emotions are high and wounds take a long time to heal.

Twenty-five years ago, Claude Ryan wrote this:

> A thousand times in the last few years we said to the rest of Canada: "Listen to the other voice, accept the other view before it is too late and before the hope of a new dialogue is killed prematurely by your repeated refusals and your indifference.

Those are the sentiments that inspired my intervention here tonight. I would like all Canadians to share those sentiments and not to be blinded by mistrust, ignorance or political interest. I would like them to fully realize what is at stake here, that is the survival of a country, of our country, a country which is the envy of all peoples all over the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Madam Speaker, what can we really say now about this Constitution that has not already been said? What can we do when we talk about interpretive clauses and propose changes that have not already been interpreted by so many people in the press, the commentators, the journalists and by politicians? How do we discuss an issue that has truly dominated and captivated, that has disgusted, mesmerized and yes, even enraged Canadians for over the last three years?

How do you project what might have been if the same efforts that we have imposed to effect constitutional change could really have been directed to our economy, to the creation of jobs and to the economic reality of competing in a global marketplace?

What would have happened if we had put our minds and our efforts in working our way out of this terrible recession? Instead, we spent our efforts and the majority of our efforts on the Constitution and the debate that is before us today.

I hope from this experience which we have gone through in the last few years that those of us in government have certainly learned from it. Not only members today, but those members who come after us as well. The lesson tells us that the people who elect us to public office want us as politicians to concentrate not on constitutional issues, but to concentrate on their hopes, their aspirations and their needs and to concentrate on a united country.

As politicians in this country, I am sure we have all received the message at all levels, federal, provincial and municipal, that Canadians are no longer going to tolerate a government that concentrates the entirety of its efforts on issues that do not unite us but issues that tend to disunite us.

• (2110)

One thing is certain. On the evening of October 26, this chapter of the constitutional debate will be over for a short time.

I am assured by our leader that should the present trend continue and our side of the House form the next government, during any Liberal government, on a ranking of one to ten, the constitutional issue will certainly take up a position 20 to 30 and not be part of the agenda. We think on this side of the House that the debate is over and should be over for a long time to come.

This is welcome news for the constituency of Thunder Bay—Nipigon which I represent. I am sure it is tremendously good news for all Canadians to realize that the issue of the Constitution is once and for all done away with for at least the foreseeable future.

I want to congratulate the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who participated in this process and led the charge on behalf of the Liberal Party. Certainly he represented our party with the highest degree of integrity throughout the whole process.

I also compliment the minister of constitutional affairs and our colleague, the NDP member for Yorkton—Melville for conducting themselves at all times in the very best interests of Canada and all Canadians. They all deserve a vote of thanks from every member of this House.

As members looked at the process going through its terrible stages, I think we all learned to appreciate the virtue of patience. It is a lesson that I hope all members will never forget as we attempt to fulfil our respective duties, not only to our own constituents but to all constituents in Canada.

It is interesting to look for a few moments at the historical events of this week. The two founding nations of our country, Quebec or Lower Canada, had its genesis in France, and Upper Canada with its origins in the British Isles, have such a diverse history of their own constitutional development.

France has written many constitutions since its inception. It is a country that has had a series of constitutional debates. Britain, the genesis of the other founding nation in our country, has yet to write its first Constitution.

Yet the citizens of both countries enjoy a standard of living which is envied throughout the world. Both countries have recently willingly entered into a European common community and they entered that association as equal partners. Over their histories both have created very vibrant economies. Both are truly great nations.

As we talk tonight about the two founding nations of our country, we think of the aboriginal peoples of Canada who have never had a constitution. Much like the English, all of their societies and governments have been based on tradition and precedent.

We cannot help but look at the third of Canadians today who chose Canada as their home, or their parents or grandparents chose Canada as their home. They made that decision because Canada offered and still offers freedoms and opportunities that perhaps their parents or their grandparents or themselves did not have offered to them in their own homelands.

I am very positive, as we discuss the contents of the Constitution today, that not one of the people who chose Canada as their home sat down and read the British North America Act before they made the decision to come here. They did not read the changes in 1982, make a decision based on the reading of that document itself and say they will go to Canada because of that document.

I say unequivocally that one-third of Canadians today chose Canada as their home and their parents or grandparents came to Canada because they knew in their very hearts that what we have here is opportunity, what we have here in Canada are freedoms.

What we have here in Canada is a chance of a better life for their families, themselves and for the future generations. I am sure that is the main reason why over one-third of Canadians we welcome to this country and who have made magnificent citizens have chosen Canada as their home.

What am I trying to say when I talk about the historical significance of the two founding nations, the French and the English, the many new Canadians who make up over one-third of our population, and our aboriginal peoples? What I am trying to say is the Constitution is really only a document. The Constitution is really only a piece of paper that may be tested many times in our court systems, and I am sure it will be. What I talked about is the written Constitution.

What I want to spend the last few moments of my time on is the real Constitution of Canada. The real Constitution document is truly a living and breathing document. It moves with the times and changes with the times. It represents how many of us envisage the way people treat each other. It is a way that those who truly need help and assistance in our country can get help and assistance without going through any demeaning process in order to get that help and assistance.

It is a way people can practise their faith in this country, or they can choose not to practise any faith at all. It is a way that we educate our children. It is a way that lets us care for the elderly and the infirmed in our communities that is better, unequivocally, than the way elderly and infirmed people are treated anywhere else in this world.

It is a Constitution by which all Canadians who are sick can be treated and cured or treated and made more comfortable evenly with all other Canadians and without having any concern about bankrupting themselves or their families in order to get that cure. That is what the Canadian Constitution is all about.

It is a way in which we create opportunities and we must try to create opportunities for all Canadians. It is a way by which we live through a system of law and order. It is a way that is guaranteed and I think this Constitution is guaranteed in the hearts of the men and women of Canada. It is guaranteed in the hearts of the boys and girls throughout this country, from St. John's to Victoria.

The Constitution is really a test of faith. From the very beginning of our constitutional history in Canada, from 1867 with the passing of the British North America Act and all of the changes that were made to that act since that day, to the repatriation which began in 1980 and culminated in 1982 and adopted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this country right up to today, the Constitution is a test of faith that Canadians have in their country and we as politicians have to respect that test of faith.

I am satisfied that with what we have gone through in this process, what we have experienced in the last three years, the real Constitution of this country is not only embellished in what we have here before us today, but is a test of faith of all Canadians to do what is right for all Canadians and I am sure that document will meet those requirements for all Canadians.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): I am happy to have the opportunity to rise in this debate. I must say the limitation of 15 minutes on something so fundamental as the Constitution which governs all members in this Chamber does present difficulties. It is almost as bad as Picasso trying to do a portrait on a postage stamp. We will try to do it justice but because there is a 15 minute limitation I am going to refer a little more to a written script and notes than normally is my custom.

• (2120)

The tone of the debate has been even and positive. I am glad that we are debating the issues. Let us get the poetry and patriotism out of the way. I believe in this country as much as anybody from coast to coast, sea to sea. I respect the opinions of all my fellow colleagues. Almost all of us in this Chamber I think are patriots of this great land and want to keep the land together. Our problem is that on something so fundamental as the Constitution, we obviously have different approaches and different views as to how best to do it.

I must say that I have been wrestling with my position on this. On the earlier problem of Meech I had no problem at all because of fundamental flaws as I saw them in that document. The Charlottetown agreement was arrived at with the best intent from all 17 leaders that the minister of constitutional affairs said earlier produced this document. Quite frankly, it surprised an awful lot of Canadians, including myself, that there was an agreement. Notwithstanding that our duty, because we are talking about a constitution, is to think not just of today or tomorrow. As my colleague in front of me said, we have to think of the future.

Constitutions are very difficult to change. There is a fundamental flaw I feel in this document that makes me come down fairly hard on the no side of the equation.

I have heard a lot about constitutional fatigue. I know we are all tired of constitutions and talking about them. Frankly, the lesson of Canada and the life of Canada has been a constitutional dialogue, whether it has been up front on conferences or whether it has been in between with bilateral agreements. It is part of our very existence. It is part of the tension in the land. In fact, it is a healthy tension in the land.

The only ones that do not have disagreements in terms of human conduct are those who are under the sod, those who are dead. The only countries that do not have constitutional tensions are countries that really are not very vibrant. This country is very vibrant.

I believe that there is a smouldering. One of the factors that has not been mentioned today, that I have heard, is that there is a smouldering discontent of the public, like in Meech. The leaders of the land got so far away from the people, especially because they were sort of in an incestuous incubator trying to resolve all these difficulties and they were not reaching out to the people, that there was a groundswell across the land that said no, we are not going to have Meech.

In somewhat like fashion, but without at the moment the emotional element that was in Meech, I believe there is a smouldering discontent of the public at large basically with politics and/or politicians. One of the biggest questions I have about the document, which of course most Canadians—I agree with my friend—will never read in detail, is the fundamental simple question: "Good gracious, Pat, do we need more politicians. The last thing in the world, do we need more politicians?"

Another question I get on the street from people who will never read the document, and I understand that, is: "Patrick, we wanted less government. We are going to get more government here. Pat, is this going to end constitutional dialogue and debate?" Yet, right in the constitutional agreement there are situations first of a constitutionalized First Ministers Conference once a year, which is going to be an ongoing thing. There are sections in the agreement which are going to have an ongoing constitutional flavour. There are six jurisdictions that have been basically handed back to the provinces which basically decentralize and take away a little power from the federal government.

Yet already in the debate in Quebec we have heard, understandably, in trying to sell the message there that in effect there is going to be even more dialogue and debate to make sure there are more powers that are given to certain provinces because they feel for their reasons they need them.

While some in this Chamber think that this debate and/or even October 26 will close the chapter—and I agree with my colleague—on this section, the fact of constitutional debate and dialogue in some form is an ever present factor in our country. It is something that we should recognize and not try to shy away from.

Let us also not fall into the trap of thinking think that if we settle the issue, albeit for a while, on October 26 that they then are going to settle all the other issues that Canadians quite understandably complain about because that is an ongoing thing.

Time is extremely limited. The first ministers tried to come up with an agreement and eventually confirmed it in Charlottetown. I hestitated to do it but I felt as a member of Parliament with some years experience here that I should let my constituents and/or anyone else interested know what I felt about what had been agreed upon so before the ink was dry I issued a press release on August 21.

It said among other things:

> Even in this summer of constitutional fatigue, all Canadians, and especially new Canadians, should be concerned with some of the constitutional proposals coming out of the incestuous incubator in Ottawa—in the laudable effort of nation-building, and practising the Canadian history of compromise to an extreme, Canada's first ministers, in spite of all the political euphoria, may very well be creating more problems than this country can digest. In particular, the so-called Senate agreement is a Triple-E charade, centralizing even more power in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec and Quebec's guarantee in perpetuity of 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons—

I do not mind a guarantee of seats, but not 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons in perpetuity. There is not a jurisdiction in the world that guarantees a percentage of seats forever and a day in perpetuity. As part of the Charlottetown agreement it will take unanimous consent to change federal institutions. Once we get a percentage involved in a constitution for an amount of seats we are never going to change it.

I suggested that it was a time bomb to federalism and representation by population. Frankly, with all the dilemmas and all the problems, it is even more dangerous in the long run than any threatening referendum deadline in the province of Quebec. I continued:

> And, while all applaud the agreement in principle, to recognize the plight and resolve the exclusion of native peoples in the decision-making process, a creation of an undefined third level of government is fraught with peril for a meaningful federal state—for instance, does the vague and general peace, order and good government power of the federal government, usually applied only in emergency in times of national crisis, mean that this new order is not subordinate to the laws of the federal and provincial governments—and where does the Charter of Rights and Freedoms fit into such a scheme?

I speak as a Nova Scotian whose province is going to lose seats in this agreement. The power is going to be centralized even more and there will be 42 extra members. We have not even talked in the House about the costs involved not only of new members but of the elected Senate.

I am one of those who is for the abolition of the Senate, but I am also one who feels that if we are going to have a Senate it should be elected. I have been wrestling with this problem. I have to compliment those who came up with the Charlottetown agreement on a most ingenious document, sort of a mutation between a parliamentary system of representation by population and a recognition of provinces of equal and yet also special characteristics. In effect they are to have equal senators but then have within the Senate a double majority on issues of language and culture. Perhaps at the most there will be 15 francophone senators, some from Quebec, some from New Brunswick, some from Ontario, and most likely one from Nova Scotia. Those 15 will be able to veto any legislation affecting language and culture.

For the preservation of the French fact and the French language I have no hesitation in terms of language. That is pretty definitive but, Madam Speaker, you have been an expert and have graced the stage in Quebec. You know more about culture than I do.

What is the definition of culture? I could suggest the ramifications of what could be culture and could be affected by this mutated Senate and House of Commons but I do not have the time.

I do not know. There is all this talk about the Senate having no power. We could have an interesting debate on that, but we are going to have 62 senators and in effect a joint session of the House. Where is the equality on some issues like this double majority? There will be the 15 francophone senators or up to 15. I do not imagine there will ever be any more. They will be able to veto legislation and in a joint session of the House the numbers will apply. Forty-two new members is more than what we have in Atlantic Canada today; we have 32 members. There will be 18 and 18 from Quebec and Ontario. Even those 36 members are more than we have in the total of Atlantic Canada. That is one of the reasons.

I know time is limited, but I want to refer to a person for whom I have a great deal of respect although I have never met him. I want to be fair on this. This man, Dr. Michael Bliss, in *The Toronto Star* of Thursday, September 3, wrote one article about the unity deal.

• (2130)

This article is entitled: "All the laws of Meech—and more". Then, to be fair, he said he would write another one, which he did on Sunday, September 6 in which he said in effect: "Opting for constitutional peace in our time". That is the dilemma that members face in terms of this debate. Do we examine this in terms of the negatives or do we try to opt for constitutional peace in our time? He has summarized it and I am going to his little article very quickly.

It is the negative side which I have come down on in terms of this constitutional conference. He summarizes in very succinct detail the problems that I have with this Charlottetown agreement. He wrote this article before Charlottetown. We have not seen the legal text, of course we are not going to see it, and of course who is going to read it anyway? Whether Canadians will even have a chance to see it before they vote is something that we do not know, but the fact of the matter is that we know the general outlines.

In effect, Mr. Bliss says let us assume that the outlines are there and then presents the case for voting against the changes. He states:

> The deal is indeed Meech plus. It contains many of the flaws of Meech plus a few more.
>
> Quebec gets special status. The whole Constitution, including the Charter, is to be interpreted in light of the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society.
>
> Quebec is guaranteed 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons no matter what happens to its population. It might eventually become absurdly over-represented, especially as immigration increases the population of the West.
>
> Moreover, a handful of francophone senators appointed by the government of Quebec will hold effective veto power over any changes to Canada's language legislation and perhaps to a wide range of language-related cultural institutions.
>
> Ottawa surrenders power to all of the provinces. Any province can, and Quebec certainly will, require Ottawa to vacate a wide range of jurisdictions, including immigration, tourism, recreation, mining, forestry and manpower training. The provinces probably will become dominant in cultural affairs and perhaps in telecommunications.
>
> Complex delegation provisions in the deal apparently make possible the transfer of many more powers to the provinces. Limits on Ottawa's use of its spending power will probably prevent new national social programs.

I have not got the time but we well know that in the autobiography of the then premier René Lévesque called *Options* is a statement on page 300-and-something that says: "Give me the power to opt out of federal programs and that is a more important power than a veto for Quebec because if I have the power to opt out I can define my own programs, my special programs, and therefore have my special society within the context of Canada and/or a separate society". I could quote that if I had the time but I do not.

I already mentioned the complex delegation problems and that the spending power will probably prevent new national social programs. We have not really discussed that. I think we have almost given up on that. Every man who ran for the leadership of the Conservative Party when the present Prime Minister took office at a contested Conservative convention, other than the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, was totally against financial compensation for opting out because they said then, and I still believe correctly, that this will negatively affect social programs. We most likely would not have had medicare, and goodness knows where the devil day care is going to fit if we ever even come to that.

Continuing with Mr. Bliss' article. He states:

> The problem with creating a checkerboard country this way is that eventually the provinces will find ways to impede Canadians' mobility. As the possibility of a real national labour market fades, people's economic opportunities shrink. They become clients of their provincial governments, dependent on government handouts.
>
> Atlantic Canada in particular will remain over-populated, poor and absurdly over-governed. Senate equality practically rules out the possibility of uniting the Maritime or the prairie provinces.

Ottawa gave up the best hope of countering some of these tendencies. In the final bargaining the Prime Minister again failed to speak for Canada when he abjectly surrendered Ottawa's position that our Constitution must support a real economic union.

If there was any bottom line in our original Confederation, it was that there must be free trade between the provinces. Power-hungry provincial governments have subverted that dream by erecting literally hundreds of barriers to the movement of goods and services.

By the end of the 1990s there may be freer trade between Ontario and Alabama than Ontario and Manitoba, more trade barriers between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia than France and Germany.

Great builders of Canada these provincial premiers, who got a lot and gave up nothing. Proud fathers of a new Canada—a Canada with no national immigration policy, no national manpower policy, no national education policy, no national common market. Something of a comic Canada.

Perhaps a tragic Canada insofar as its native peoples are concerned. Instead of experimenting carefully with native self-government, we are leaping into constitutionalizing a third order of government bound to keep aboriginal Canadians separate from the rest of us.

This is a type of quota and a form of apartheid. It is something that in every other country we object to, but we are going to put it in our Constitution. I say that is a negative.

The reserve system, which the South African racists used to taunt us about as a kind of apartheid, will be strengthened as the basis for a separate realm of native institutions. The self-governing "homelands" of native peoples are unlikely ever to generate the wealth necessary to create real independence and self-reliance; the children of native separation are always going to see themselves as set apart from the Canadian mainstream.

Does the pride that comes with self-government (at least to the newly empowered leadership class) translate into an end to poverty, illiteracy, hopelessness and social disorganization? Ask the people of Africa.

Are we stronger, though, if we make these concessions for the sake of constitutional peace? In the long run nobody believes that the separatist dream will vanish from Quebec or that separatists will never again get power.

Our grandchildren may also note that we made this new Constitution under duress, when Quebec put a knife to the throat of Canada. They may ask themselves whether this was worthy of a free people. They may ask why we wrote the faddish ideas of the 1980s—inherent self-government, the NDP's social charter—into a Constitution that was supposed to last for centuries. Above all will they ask why we agreed to strengthen the powers of governments to restrain the liberties of individuals. Why did we turn our backs on Pierre Trudeau's vision of Canada, in which the people were more important than the politicians?

When they tell us that a "no" vote is a vote—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member.

Mr. Nowlan:

—is a vote to dismember Canada, remind them that we have a functioning Constitution. Quebec probably would not separate, and if it did Canada would survive. If necessary, it would be better to have two real nations than one pretend country.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion I have a suggestion—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please. Would the hon. member who has been here a long time give the Speaker some courtesy. I wish the hon. member had asked because more than likely members would have allowed him an extra 30 seconds to end his speech. I am quite prepared to ask the members. I have been asking the hon. member to conclude and it is now almost two minutes past the time when he should have stopped.

Do members agree to allow the hon. member a few seconds to conclude?

An hon. member: One minute.

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, I just had to read that. It just summarized so many thoughts and there are so many other things that could be said about this. I have not even gone into general equality in Nova Scotia where my premier says there are going to be three women and three men. Historically we have always had an Acadian senator. We can get into a whole argument there.

I have a positive suggestion for both the no and the yes forces. I think the smouldering disdain of the public is something that is not going to be anti anything. It is not going to be anti-Quebec. It is not going to be anti any one issue in this constitutional agreement. It is really going to be anti-politicians when the public realizes that we have more politicians and more types of government, such as self-government for the aboriginals, where there are over 650 bands that could have forms of government. Are they paramount with provinces or above provinces? From a distance, after you get rid of euphoria, it is a real mish-mash.

I know there are some in this Chamber that want to make sure the country breaks up. I feel the country has a pretty good Constitution at the moment. It has grown from 1867 and has done a lot of things for Canadians in the 125 years we have been here. That is where we can go back to the bedrock. However, if the no forces really want to win, then if they promise Canadians, whether it is in Quebec or anywhere in the country, that if there was a no vote there would be a moratorium on constitutional conferences and discussions for 20 years, I think that would help them.

In conclusion, the yes people, as Premier Getty did today, will have to remove themselves in a political way and move forward to help get a yes vote from the majority of this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I first would like to thank the hon. member for Mount Royal for her courteous gesture in letting me speak after I missed my turn because I was not paying attention.

Like all Canadians, I imagine, and like all the residents of Beauharnois—Salaberry, I am very glad and very pleased today, at long last, to see the light at the end of the constitutional tunnel.

The debate on the Constitution has been part of the national political scene for most of my life, and I must admit there were times when I thought I would never see the end of this debate during my lifetime.

• (2140)

I am particularly glad because I worked as parliamentary secretary to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and witnessed all the hard work done by this gentleman, this great Canadian, whose dedication to his country goes beyond personal consideration. I was very pleased to have this opportunity to work under a truly great minister.

I also take great satisfaction in the fact that the agreement to be ratified by Canadians on October 26 not only gives Quebec its historic place within our federation but also responds to the traditional aspirations and demands of the other great components of Canadian society: the western and Atlantic provinces, by providing a remedy for their feelings of alienation from the central government; and to the aboriginal people by recognizing their inherent and historic right to self-government.

We have before us an agreement that is acceptable and honourable, both for Quebec and for Canada as a whole. It is up to us to take up the torch and say yes to this agreement if we want to leave our children a dynamic and prosperous country. I repeat, we have before us an agreement that is acceptable and honourable.

Madam Speaker, one of the debates in this House which I particularly appreciated was the debate on abortion. I remember that at the time I met people whose position was similar to mine, one I initially supported, and I told them: "There is a flaw in your proposal. It is realistic but it is not votable". We always have to make sure that when we adopt legislation in this House, it will be acceptable to the majority of Canadian men and women. It must be legislation that Canadians and the people in the ridings approve of. The same applies here. We must have a proposal that is votable here and votable by Canadians in every riding in this country on October 26.

[*English*]

I am especially proud of the fact that the interests of all Canadians have been addressed in the August accord. As a Quebecer and as a Canadian I am not blind to the realities of Canada. Just as recognition of Quebec as a distinct society is an important, meaningful symbol for Quebec so an equal Senate is an important symbol for the west, as is the recognition of aboriginal Canadians' inherent right to self-government, a reality that has always existed and will always continue to exist regardless of what a constitution says or does not say.

[*Translation*]

Had it been adopted, the Meech Lake Accord would have had much the same result but only for Quebec. It would have led to a first series of constitutional amendments meeting Quebec's expectations but this first phase would have been followed—as provided for in the accord reached two or three years ago—by a succession of planned constitutional conferences growing increasingly difficult and time-consuming. We would probably still be a long way from completing the constitutional amendment process and meeting the demands of all the parties involved.

But all is well that ends well, as the saying goes, because it is better at this time to settle the constitutional question for a while so that we can turn our attention to economic issues too urgent and too important to be set aside by our little conflicts and family feuds.

At a time when Europe is redefining itself as a monolithic economic entity and the countries of South-east Asia are thinking of doing the same thing, when the former communist states are about to embrace the free enterprise system, when we must learn to live with North American free trade and market globalization, the time has come, Madam Speaker, to start working together to hold our own in an increasingly competitive world.

We have seen plant closures as well as the sudden dissolution or merger of formerly reliable large businesses—as has happened in my constituency of Beauharnois—Salaberry where, as you know, Madam Speaker, the Goodyear company has experienced difficulties. But now Dominion Textile is closing its last plant in the riding, in Valleyfield, after having given birth to the city itself. There have been major plant closures and industrial changes. Unfortunately, the technological progress and unemployment caused by these unpredictable complications are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the impact of the economic realignment currently in progress all over the world.

[*English*]

While all other countries are moving forward and seizing the future we cannot afford to remain riveted to the past, looking inward.

It is no wonder that Canadians, particularly job seekers waiting for the fruits of economic recovery to reach them, are tired of hearing about the Constitution. To be perfectly frank, I agree with them. We must move on to other things and deal with other priorities. Canada is already paying the price of continued uncertainty on the constitutional front.

One thing is certain. All Canadians and Quebecers agree that we need a workable and durable solution to the constitutional dilemma we face. We need it so that all governments can concentrate on building the stronger economy we need to ensure prosperity for all.

[*Translation*]

Last week on the news I heard Quebecers say how concerned they were about their immediate future because they had just lost their jobs. Unfortunately, they believe that the completion of the constitutional process will not improve their own situation. I sympathize whole-heartedly with these people and I would like to tell them that it is perhaps because of the constitutional instability in Canada that they are now in such in a difficult position and that once we have put all these discussions behind us, we should be able to regain the confidence of foreign investors and create jobs for those who want to work.

Positive co-operation between trading partners in Canada has, until now, given us a favourable competitive position in relation with the United States and the other great economic powers of Europe and Asia. The strong business links between Quebec and the other Canadian provinces have done a lot to give us international credibility. Thanks to these strong economic relationships, Canada now enjoys a very high standard of living, indeed, the highest among the world's seven most industrialized countries. In this regard, the purchase of the de Havilland aeronautics company by Bombardier from Quebec, thanks to the support of the governments of Canada and Ontario, is an excellent example of economic co-operation among Canadian partners.

As the chief executive officer of the SNC group, Mr. Guy Saint-Pierre, said:

> No country, no people can guarantee its own social progress and development without economic prosperity.
>
> Economic prosperity and national unity are indeed two indissociable elements which will put Canadians in a better position to meet international challenges resulting from the globalization of markets.

Canadian companies and businesses now enjoy international confidence, thanks to a reputation which took years to build up and which has virtually become a trademark itself.

Also, as we know, this year the United Nations Program for Human Development put Canada in first place in terms of over-all quality of life.

I am convinced that we are all happy of our fate when we compare ourselves to others and also happy to be living here. In fact, it would seem that a lot of foreigners, including some from rich and prosperous countries, are envious of our life-style and our standard of living.

If we were able to get there it is because others before us had the wisdom to invest in economic union and co-operation by signing the federation pact 125 years ago. It is because our ancestors, our grandparents and our parents took over from each other and strived to improve their situation and that of their children. And they were right, Madam Speaker.

Of course there have always been tensions within the Canadian federation, sometimes very strong ones, but Canadians were always able to make the adjustments and the compromises necessary to preserve the gains achieved and continue on the road to social progress and economic prosperity.

Some even feel that it is precisely those tensions between the different regions and the different components of our country that give us our strength and our energy. This is particularly true in the constitutional field.

Indeed, it was not easy to reach the present agreement. On the other hand though, it is the first time that there is a consensus on a package of amendments which, as I was saying, are accepted by the leaders of all governments.

It is the first time there is a consensus on a package of amendments and I want to emphasize that.

[*English*]

I want my children to grow up proud to be Quebecers and proud to be Canadians. I want them to enjoy all the benefits I had of growing up in a large country, large in size, large in spirit, large in generality, large in tolerance and large in opportunity.

• (2150)

This is what this debate is about. It is about saying yes to a future together.

[*Translation*]

Let us decide once and for all if we want to stay one of the frontrunners among the main industrialized nations and to face with confidence and optimism the great economic changes of the 21st century.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on behalf of the constituents of Mount Royal riding in this debate on the referendum and the question to be placed before the people of Canada which will begin that much wider dialogue by Canadians with Canadians and about the promise and the opportunities for a united future together.

Early in this century, Prime Minister Laurier said that the 20th century belonged to Canada. Since then we have grown and prospered as a nation. We have met and overcome many difficulties, many formidable challenges and we are now a nation on the verge of greatness.

Without national unity, however, we will not achieve this potential. The question is whether greatness is within our grasp. As a nation, we have chosen to measure greatness not on the basis of military might or purely on the basis of economic or material well-being, but on our capacity to give all Canadians access to the diverse benefits of citizenship, even as they share in its obligations.

We have identified equality as a central value, a goal still to be attained. We have progressed from a vision of two solitudes to one of a bilingual and bicultural Canada to the real vision of today, a Canada that is a bilingual, multicultural society. That is a truly proud achievement.

The message of this vision is that unity can exist alongside diversity, that difference and distinctiveness are precious, unlimited resources waiting to be tapped for our mutual benefit. Ironic as it may sound, Canada's unity lies in this diversity and I would suggest to you that if we would accept it and build upon it, we would build a strength as a people and a nation that is unparalleled.

The United Nations and the world see us as a wonderful country, but it would be even more wonderful and certainly a model for the world. All of this positive spirit flows from our diversity when fairness and equality are our core objectives. If we can translate this pluralistic vision into reality, the 20th century will surely have been Canada's and the 21st century will be as well.

It is true that there was some malaise in the east, in the west, in the north, among the aboriginals and in Quebec. These various groups felt that they wanted to have some of their concerns addressed once again.

I am not so sure that we needed to reopen this Constitution. I think we would have been far better off if we paid more attention to the economy and to those daily bread and butter issues that affect our country. Notwithstanding that, this government did decide to open the Constitution, and the consensus which was arrived at in Charlottetown on August 28 speaks to this vision and to the values of our nation, its history and its many diverse realities, be they cultural, geographical or traditional.

As we know, a constitution is a living document that outlines the structures, responsibilities and arrangements that help bring order to a society. It is in a sense a primer, expressing the values of a people and how they wish to live and work together in neighbourliness and in understanding.

I do not want to give the impression that this is a perfect document. It is not, but constitutions as living documents must change as the society changes. I think this may well be the best that we could have done at this time.

There was a little disturbance in the gallery today and I think there is some misunderstanding about what has been accomplished in these changes. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms remains in place.

Our commitment to multiculturalism remains in place. Section 15, which is the section on equality and non-discrimination and allows for affirmative action for people who are mentally and physically handicapped, for minorities of all kinds, remains in place.

Gender equality remains recognized in the Constitution. The country holds fast in its commitment to these values and these are not being changed; those things that were brought in in 1982.

What is important in here and what is new is we have amendments that recognize officially the linguistic duality of this country and the responsibility of governments for the vitality and development of official language minority communities throughout Canada.

It puts into the Constitution the Canadian reality of racial and ethnic equality, of respect for individuals and collective human rights, and again for the equality of men and women. It is not perfect, that is true. On that we all agree and certainly our leader, my leader, spoke to that eloquently today as did the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who has so capably handled the dossier on this side of the House.

As a package at this time in our history it is an agreement that I and the Liberal Party are prepared to support. While some say this is a consensus by exhaustion, I say to you I think it represents a degree of progress.

My view of this constitutional agreement comes from many sources as it will for most Canadians; life experience, family experience, community experience. They all form a part of how we see our country and the Constitution.

I say to you I am a proud Quebecer. I am a proud Canadian. I am an English speaking Canadian living in Quebec, living in great harmony with my neighbour in many languages, not only English, or not only French. For me and for most of my neighbours speaking two languages is no hardship, it is an enrichment. Speaking three is better and speaking four is even better. Living comfortably with my neighbours is not a matter of language.

I am very happy to be part of this Quebec family just as I am a part of my own family and, of course, just as a I am a proud member of the Canadian family. Just as we love our family and that love is built on values, on sharing, caring, and respect, so too is our love for this much larger family, that of Canada.

Sometimes we do not all agree. I certainly have heard of the local husband and wife who have had an argument. I too have fallen into that category more than once and I do not always agree with what my children do or say, but they are always welcome at our table and they come loved and blessed, as does anyone who is part of the Canadian family.

I have faith in Canada and in our wonderful country and our ability to build consensus and to live together peacefully and in harmony. If you look around the world and see what is going on in many other nations of this world, you can say this is a very small and civilized way in which we are looking at the concerns that are being expressed and trying to bring them into a cohesive force.

I would hope that many of the residents of my riding will actively participate in the democratic process. I hope they will be encouraged to join in what is the ultimate exercise in democracy in Mount Royal riding and everywhere else in Canada. Get out and vote is my message.

If I were to travel in a helicopter and circle over the riding of Mount Royal I would see a great plurality of cultures, a tapestry of language, faith, colour, and religion. The people in the town of Mount Royal, Côte St. Luc, Hampstead, Snowdon, Côte Des Neiges, come from various backgrounds but what ties them together is their deep abiding appreciation for the freedom to move about and to be associated with anyone with whom they choose, to speak out on issues that concern them freely, unfettered, uninhibited, and to enjoy the benefits of this great country. They may worship or not in freedom and this is a wonderful open society.

To be sure many in Mount Royal still struggle to get by working very, very hard to achieve the standard of living they desire for themselves and for their children. It is for this very reason so many chose to come to this country in the very first place. They have come to Canada. Over a third of this country have come. Actually, outside of the aboriginals, we were all immigrants to this wonderful land.

• (2200)

I am amazed at how day in and day out, where there has been such great unemployment and such large instability and a degree of racism which has raised its ugly head, they have not felt discouraged. But no, these people came here. They are prepared to persevere for themselves and for their children. They came because of this community, their province and this country which holds out so much promise.

They do not realize the full impact or the detail that is in this Constitution. In fact, for them they often say that it is giving them constipation. But they do know it is affecting the quality of their lives and they want to get this over with. They want to say yes to a healthy inclusive Quebec in a strong Canada. They know they have a stake in the decision.

The constitutional agreement at hand, as I said, is not perfect. My leader addressed some of its achievements and some of its concerns in his speech. There are many changes and improvements however that I want to bring to your attention.

There is a reformed Senate. It is equal, it is elected. It may not be as effective as we would want and hopefully there will be ways in which we can improve that. There is a recognition for the first time of the inherent right to aboriginal self-government and for this alone we should be very proud.

The Canada clause in itself is a value statement. Who and what we are and what we wish to pass on to our children is found in that document. I would say there are many characteristics which are affirmed in the new Canada clause. One of them is the distinct society clause. I support the definition of Quebec as a distinct society because it is defined with its language, its culture and its civil code.

I also believe that the vitality and development of linguistic minorities must be recognized as an integral element of Canadian society. Clearly, any agreement on the renewal of the Constitution must place the responsibility on both federal and provincial governments to recognize these realities. This would affirm the idea that the unity of Canada is based on its diversity from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention a matter that is of some concern to me and I hope this is just some draft language that has come out of the consensus report on the Constitution.

In the value section that is in the Canada clause we talk about Canada being a democracy that is committed to a parliamentary and federal system of government and to the rule of law. We go on to talk about our commitment in it to the distinct society, to the vitality and development of the languages, racial and ethnic equality. The word is "committed".

On the French side we use an entirely different word which does not fully translate the meaning of commitment to me. It may well be that I do not have the language skills, but when we say "committed" in English and we say on the other hand—

[*Translation*]

—the fact that Canada is a democracy "attached" to a parliamentary system and that all the characteristics are those of an attachment instead of a "commitment",

[*English*]

I would hope that we have clarity in the final document that will be tabled.

I wanted to just bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, some of the other concerns I have not only with respect to the Senate and with respect to the linguistic minority and the *attachement* and *engagement* and commitment, but as well to the fact that the final legislative document I hope will be *fidèle* to the text that was there before.

Also, as my concern is often expressed around the cultural content in our society,

[*Translation*]

—we must preserve the artistic rights and freedom of expression of Canadian men and women across the country.

[*English*]

I believe that official bilingualism and multiculturalism are the essence of Canadian society today. The cultural community must be able to access doors to enable its creative work at all levels of government and the private sector to be distributed, seen and heard anywhere. The arts are essential to the development of Canadian identity and sovereignty. The Liberal Party believes the role of the federal government must be to ensure Canadian artists have opportunities to practise their art and that all Canadians have access to it. We need that strong federal public role as a complement to provincial, municipal and private roles.

I would conclude by saying to the constituents in Mount Royal riding that I would urge them to get out and vote. I just want to bring to their attention a small document. This is a document which the government has produced which everyone should read to understand better what is going on. They can get it by either calling my office or they can call 1-800-561-1188 and they will be better informed because a 30-second TV clip will not give them the full picture.

Get out, support the referendum, do your work everybody, and participate in the great act of the democratic right to vote.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief as I will be sharing my allotted time with my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Today and in the days and weeks ahead leading up to October 26, we are being confronted with an historic opportunity, a chance to renew the Canadian federation in a way which respects and reconfirms the three essential equalities of our nation: The equality of persons, the equality of provinces and the equality of our founding English and French linguistic and cultural communities. In addition, we have finally recognized in a truly Canadian way the inherent right of our aboriginal citizens to form their own governments within Canada.

This is not a simple deal, nor is it, as many speakers have noted, a perfect deal from any one point of view. This agreement was not reached from just one narrow point of view. It encompasses a careful and public consideration of millions of points of view which were brought to the table by 17 or more negotiators, including premiers, territorial leaders, aboriginal leaders and, of course, our Prime Minister, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I wish to congratulate and thank all of these great Canadians for their dedication and for putting one point of view above all others, that of Canada.

I would like to pay special tribute in this regard to the premier of my own province, the hon. Don Getty, who today has announced that he will soon be retiring as premier of Alberta. Mr. Getty took on a seemingly impossible task during these negotiations when he determined to follow through on the promise of Meech Lake to bring about meaningful change in the Senate. By championing and leading the fight for a Triple-E Senate, he has truly changed forever the dynamics of Canadian politics.

The new Senate will be elected, equal and effective. It will clearly allow the five smallest provinces and one territory to prevent the imposition of another national energy program. Mr. Getty deserves recognition and our sincere thanks for this historic achievement. I wish him, his wife Margaret and his family all the best as they embark on this new phase of their lives and careers.

In the few minutes available to me tonight it is only possible for me to highlight the agreement. I do not expect nor do I advise anyone to make up their mind to support this agreement without investigating it in detail. There are some major achievements for Albertans which I would like to point out.

First, there is the reform of the Senate, which I have already mentioned. By a simple majority, the new Senate will be able to kill federal legislation which taxes natural

resources. It will also be responsible for approving federal appointments to such bodies as the Bank of Canada and other national institutions. Similarly, it may suspend bills for 30 days. Most important, the Senate, whose members will have the credibility which comes from election, will be able to force a joint sitting with the House of Commons if it rejects a bill by a simple majority. The joint sitting must be preceded by a conference to discuss differences and try to reach a satisfactory compromise. I predict that this function, along with the ability of the Senate to initiate legislation, will become one of the most powerful and effective tools in our body politic. When the House and the Senate sit jointly there will be a dramatic shift in the way legislation is treated.

• (2210)

Parenthetically, I would like to note that this is a tremendous improvement over the American process in which disagreements between the Senate and the House of Representatives can lead to gridlock, preventing urgent and necessary action from being taken. History will show that this is another example of the power and efficiency of Canadian compromise.

Alberta also wins in the House of Commons. We will get an additional two seats immediately, and most probably another two after the 1996 census. Fortunately, when this agreement is ratified the total number of members of Parliament, Senators and MPs will be the same as it is now.

Alberta also gains from the recognition of exclusive provincial jurisdiction in the oil, gas and mining industries, not to mention in the areas of forestry, tourism, housing, municipal and urban affairs and labour market training. In the future, if Ottawa sets out a national program in these areas the province can implement its own program with complementary objectives and request its share of the funding. This will bring decision-making closer to home. Alberta, like other provinces, will also be able to negotiate an immigration agreement, giving it better control over people who are coming to our province.

Finally, Alberta has achieved full equality with other provinces in being given a veto on any future changes to our national institutions, namely the Supreme Court, the Senate and the House of Commons. It is important for Albertans to understand both the power and the limitations of this veto.

I have heard people saying that they are disappointed because Quebec got the veto. In my view, this shows a clear misunderstanding of the battle for equality that Triple-E advocates have been fighting so vigorously. Having won the Triple-E Senate, we would not want seven provinces with 50 percent of the population to be able to undo it without our agreement. If we are to truly respect the concept of provincial equality in our federation, then it is fundamental that the make-up of the Senate, the Supreme Court and the House of Commons cannot be touched without our consent or the consent of every other member of the federation.

One of the most difficult tasks in achieving this agreement was the reconciliation of provincial equality, personal equality and the equality inherent in our linguistic duality. I have received a number of comments about Quebec's minimum 25 percent allotment of the seats in the House of Commons, which is a recognition of the equality of our two founding linguistic and cultural communities. It is important to balance this with the guarantees given to other provinces of minimum numbers of seats, regardless of their populations. These guarantees reflect provincial equalities.

For example, when the House and Senate sit together each resident of Prince Edward Island will be represented by 10 votes compared to only one vote for each resident in my constituency of Calgary North. Quebec would be about 3 per cent under-represented in this situation and Alberta would be slightly over-represented. This is a clear indication that at least for smaller provinces the provincial equality that we fought so hard for is well represented indeed.

In closing, I want to again thank everyone: the citizens of Calgary North who attended town hall meetings, answered questionnaires and wrote me letters, all the people in Canada who seized this opportunity to participate in the future of this country and particularly our aboriginal, territorial, provincial and national leaders who worked so tirelessly to draft this extraordinary agreement. On October 26 I will say yes to Canada.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased tonight to speak on this most important matter facing our nation. At the outset, I would like to thank the member for Calgary North for sharing his time with me.

Although many of us have constitutional fatigue we must persevere through this debate in Canada because although the Constitution is distant and seems academic at times, it affects each of us every single day of our lives. The constitution is the basis for how society is governed, structured, and organized. If a constitution is rigid and unyielding, society will experience social stresses and economic strains and perhaps even disintegration. Constitutions should be living documents.

Tonight I will not speak to each and every issue in the Charlottetown accord because of time limitations. However, I do want to endorse many of the comments my Quebec colleagues have made about how the accord affects them, Quebec and the people of Quebec and those who have spoken very eloquently about how the accord deals with aboriginal people.

I will limit my comments to those issues which are of concern to western Canadians and to those issues many of my own constituents have expressed to me.

Constitutions are important because they affect us every day. For example, trade barriers between provinces make goods more expensive and Canadians have fewer dollars in their pockets to spend. This is the direct result of how a society is organized by way of our Constitution. Our standard of living is lower than it should be. Overlap and duplication by having separate federal and provincial departments cost us money. We as a nation have experienced social stresses, most notably in dealing with our aboriginal communities.

Our constitution up until now has not allowed for new approaches to accommodate different needs of French and English Canadians and of aboriginal Canadians; for example, the francophones outside of Quebec and English Canadians within Quebec and minorities and others. This accord, although not perfect, makes these necessary accommodations.

A constitution needs to be a framework for society. It must embody values and provide stability, but it must evolve to accommodate and balance these interests. It affects us every day. One might say that the Constitution, because it had few or no regional checks or balances, allowed a gross abuse of power in the early 1980s which was perpetrated on Alberta through the National Energy Program.

Today's proposals respond to changing needs and now would protect, for example, the interests of western Canadians. A national energy program would no longer be possible under the accord reached at Charlottetown.

I ask Canadians to take a close look at these proposals, to look very carefully. The Constitution affects us every day. It is vitally important for every Canadian to consider their future and their children's future.

The accord is not perfect. It is a compromise. As compromises go, it is a pretty good compromise. I believe this accord will wear well. Today's criticisms, viewed from a perspective of 20 or 30 years experience, will seem exaggerated and perhaps unfounded. For example, a Senate will become a unique Canadian institution. It will be effective. Most members of Parliament do not have their hands on the levers of power but they are effective. They express their concerns through their caucuses, through the House of Commons, through committees, in speeches and in statements to the media. Governments need the support of their members. MPs have influence. We are effective. The new Senate will be effective.

As elected officials, senators will gain a degree of legitimacy never before seen. There will be very few of them, so in using their powers of review, ratification of appointments and the ability to block legislation, they will have plenty of clout.

Some people on another issue have said the west was short-changed by not gaining as many seats in the House as it deserves. This, as the hon. member for Calgary North pointed out, will be rectified. In Alberta we will gain two seats right now and after the next redistribution in 1996 perhaps two more.

As time goes on and the House becomes fully represented by population, this will all equal out. The west will particularly gain because the west has a fast growing population.

Although I support this accord fully, I must sound a cautionary note by loading up the House of Commons. We will sacrifice efficiency and effectiveness if we expand the House indefinitely. The House must continue to evolve to allow members to better represent their constituents.

• (2220)

Tonight I thought I would express my views on one or two aspects of the Constitution. I want to go on to say a few words about the social and economic union. I am disappointed that we did not achieve full economic union. I encourage the government and the premiers to examine the issue of an economic union very closely. The initial agreement of July 7 had 13 exceptions. That is far too many. We need to bring down our trade barriers. We need to organize our economy on an efficient level and this is one of the challenges of the future.

In closing, I want to thank those who contributed to the making of this constitutional accord. First and foremost, I want to thank the leaders of our provinces and the Prime Minister and especially the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the Minister of National Health and Welfare. They did a tremendous job and put in a lot of long hours.

I especially want to pay tribute to Don Getty who achieved a lifelong dream for many Albertans of a Triple-E Senate, an elected Senate. Mr. Getty announced his resignation today. He will be noted in history has having made a vital and outstanding contribution.

I want to also thank those Canadians who participated in the many commissions and who will participate in the referendum. There is a lot at stake for each and every one of us and I encourage every Canadian to get out and vote to support this accord.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to briefly speak on the question of the Canadian Constitution.

I want members to know that I intend to support the constitutional agreement reached by the federal government, by the provincial and territorial first ministers and by aboriginal leaders in Charlottetown on August 28. I will be encouraging people in my constituency to support the agreement and I hope that all Canada will support it when it comes to the referendum to be held on October 26.

Many members have indicated that this agreement is essentially a compromise. Nobody who went to Charlottetown on August 28 really came out of that meeting with all they were demanding or exactly what they were demanding. Like any agreement in a democracy, people make demands, expect to concede in some areas and to gain in others. I believe that what came out of Charlottetown was probably the best that a collection of first ministers and aboriginal groups, representing diverse areas of the country and diverse groups within the communities of this country, could possibly hope to achieve.

As the previous speaker suggested, all Canadians should be congratulated on the effort that went into achieving this agreement and the tremendous amount of time, interest and enthusiasm that was put into it by all Canadians.

As many members have pointed out today, the agreement is not perfection. If any of us were capable of perfection, whether in drafting a constitution or drafting legislation, there would no longer be a use for an entity such as Parliament and we could close down and go home now. Therefore, I do not think we are going to get perfection.

When some members were speaking I was concerned about the fact that they said: "Thank goodness it is all over. The constitutional fatigue that has set in will be finished on October 26". I have a message for those folks as well. This country has probably been involved in the constitutional game a lot longer than any other country on the globe, from the time of the military orders that were passed by Guy Carleton and Governor Murray in Quebec City in 1759, through the Proclamation of 1763, the Quebec Act of 1774, the Constitution Act of 1791, the new Constitution in 1840 and 1841, and the Constitution of 1867 and 1982.

Given the perspective of Canadian constitutional history, I am not convinced that the constitutional issue will be closed when Canadians vote yes for this constitutional agreement on October 26 of this year.

Having said that, it has to be acknowledged that at Charlottetown some very dramatic things were achieved by those who were involved in this constitutional debate. First and foremost is the acknowledgement that Quebec, should the referendum pass in Quebec on October 26, will become a party to this agreement and will become a part of the Canadian constitutional family. Its unique cultural and historic position in the Canadian union will be recognized in the Constitution.

The real progress that has been made in this constitutional document and I think one that held up the Meech Lake accord is the recognition of the inherent right of aboriginal self-government. In recognizing an inherent right this Constitution is not creating a right for aboriginal people. It is doing what is unique among the nations of the world, and that is recognizing aboriginal people have had this right to self-government since before we non-aboriginal people came here, from time immemorial.

It means they have the right to make laws, to govern their own people, to enter into agreements with Canada as to which laws of Canada and the provinces will be binding on aboriginal people. It is quite a unique position for aboriginal people to occupy in a constitution in any country around the globe. As time wears on, the one thing that will be recognized around the world about this Constitution is the revolutionary change that has taken place in Canada with respect to the constitutional recognition of aboriginal people.

This part of the document will become a model for other countries of the world to work on, to improve on, and perhaps those improvements having been adopted in other countries will then be brought back to Canada and Canada may build on those improvements as well. Therefore I think in that part of this document we have created a lesson for all of the world, and it is a lesson all Canadians can be proud of.

Nobody can really understand what aboriginal people in this country have gone through over the last few centuries. When European colonists first came here in the 15th and 16th century they found aboriginal civilizations that were more highly developed than the civilizations they came from in Europe that were just emerging from the Dark Ages. They respected those people and feared those people because of their superior civilization and organization. Rather than conquering them which they did not think they were able to do, they traded with them, entered into agreements with them, recognized them as sovereign powers and signed treaties of mutual friendship and mutual support with them.

Somewhere along the line the Europeans who came to this continent did gain power and were able to exercise that power over the aboriginal civilizations, to suppress them, to colonize them, to marginalize them, and to make them second-class citizens. It is an era of shame that all Canadians, all North Americans, should be ashamed of.

What has been done with this Constitution in terms of recognizing aboriginal Canadians as an important part of our society, recognizing the historic contribution that aboriginal people have played, and recognizing the inherent right of self-government they enjoyed on this continent from time immemorial, is one of the unique things that has ever happened in this country.

As I say, it is going to be a model and a lesson for the rest of the world. That is one thing about this constitutional accord that I am extremely proud of.

It has been mentioned tonight that one of the things we can boast about getting out of this constitutional agreement is the Triple-E Senate. It is one of the things I was most concerned about. Throughout most of the period of constitutional debate in North America the debate has been between democratic institutions and institutions that represent the propertied interest, the landed gentry.

You will remember when the Constitution Act of 1791 was put together, Mr. Speaker. It may have been a bit before your time.

• (2230)

I do not want to suggest that you are that old.

The Governor-General of the day suggested that this constitution of 1791 would be the image and transcript of the constitution of Great Britain. What he wanted to see most of all was a house in Canada similar to the House of Lords in London that would put into place an indigenous landed gentry in Canada that could look over the shoulders of the democratic rabble that would be elected to the legislative council.

At that time democracy was considered the equivalent of mob rule and it was felt that the landed gentry should have their own house to oversee the House of Commons, in which the democratic rabble have their deliberations. If they found, after a period of sober second thought, that it was not appropriate legislation they could veto it.

I think that kind of idea has gone out of currency. However, today we still have in Canada that relic, that appointed house, the Senate opposite. Another of the things that has been achieved in this Constitution is the end of that propertied, appointed house that was set in place to oversee as a house of sober second thought the

democratic rabble and the mob rule that was supposed to be taking place in the elected legislative council.

Fortunately, that concept has gone out of currency and we are now going to see an elected Senate. I would have preferred to see the Senate abolished because I do not think it is necessary. In fact, I think it is an expensive addition to the House. However, if we must have one in order to achieve a constitutional compromise then we have done the right thing here.

What we have not done is what certain elements in Alberta and across Canada were asking for, which is a Senate that represented individual provinces with an equal number of seats per province and ignored the concept of representation by population. It ignored the democratic concept of one person, one vote.

The compromise we have achieved in the Charlottetown agreement is one that recognizes the supremacy of the democratic principle—one person, one vote. Yet it provides for input on a province by province basis into decisions that are made within Canada's national democratic institution.

It is not ideal but it is the ideal compromise that we could get out of those two conflicting beliefs. One is that property should be represented and the other is that people should be represented on the basis of one person, one vote.

The other thing that is a unique achievement in this Constitution is the social charter that was introduced. I think the premier of Ontario should be congratulated for keeping this issue before the public. I know it was endorsed in many of the meetings of citizens that were held across the country.

This charter states that public health care will be a national policy of Canada and that adequate social services and benefits including housing, food and the basic necessities of life should be accessible to all Canadians. Quality education systems, the rights of workers to unionize, environmental protection and the goal of full employment; all of these rights are now stated as policy statements within the Canadian Constitution.

Those statements, while they are not judiciable—they cannot be taken to court—at least can stand in the Constitution as instructions to legislative bodies and to governments in Canada so that they know what the sentiments of the people of Canada were at the time this Constitution was drafted.

I do not share the view that this Constitution is going to stand for all time. Members should not expect that on October 26, once the referendum resolution has been passed in all parts of Canada, the constitutional book is then closed. Canadians love the constitutional debate. They may be tired of this particular one.

There are many things within this Constitution that have to be dealt with. How are aboriginal governments going to be structured? How are they going to relate to other governments in Canada and other governments around the world?

How are policies going to be structured? The Constitution is a framework for policy not the policy itself. Canadians must realize as well that constitutions do not create equality. They do not create prosperity. In that sense they are hollow documents. People have to understand that if they are looking for prosperity, if they are looking for equality, they have to elect politicians and governments that make a commitment to those issues.

Once we pass this Constitution and once we develop the new framework, one thing people must do is take a look at the government that they have in Canada today, the government that in my view has done a great deal of damage to the unity of this country, change that government and elect governments that can bring about prosperity within the framework of our new Constitution.

That is going to be the priority of all Canadians after this debate is over on October 26.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to speak not only for my own constituents but also for a great number of Canadians who have expressed their reservations about this latest constitutional package and the impending referendum.

These people have been made to feel a sense of guilt because they have called into question many of the deficiencies of this proposal put forward by the Prime Minister and the premiers on August 28, 1992. These democratically minded citizens have been labelled enemies of Canada for no other reason than that they have chosen to examine the proposal and voice their concerns.

We know from the latest Environics poll that at least 25 per cent of Canadians would fit into this category, enemies of Canada, as determined by our Prime Minister. It is no wonder that Canadians feel intimidated and suppressed when their own government tells them that if they do not agree with this deal they are unpatriotic at best and perhaps even traitorous.

This is a grievous affront to democracy and a dreadful insult to the Canadian people. This is not a referendum on unity or even a referendum on sovereignty. The Quebec government has changed its own question from sovereignty to the substance of this deal. Therefore, let us be very clear about that.

Despite the tactics of the government, abetted by the Liberals and the NDP, a great many Canadians have shown the courage to ask some tough questions about this deal. One of the questions that has been posed to me by my constituents in the past few days is: "How can the House of Commons possibly approve a question for the referendum before the legal text of this agreement is even written?" It is highly unethical to commence a referendum campaign before the voters even know what the agreement really says. "Let the buyer beware" is as meaningful in politics as it is in day-to-day purchasing.

I find it incomprehensible that neither the Liberal Party nor the New Democratic Party needed to see any text at all before they quickly committed themselves to this deal.

Fortunately the Canadian electorate will be making its decision based on the merits or deficiencies of the package rather than on political expediency. I cannot stress this point enough.

It must be made emphatically clear what the public will actually be voting on. Are Canadians to merely vote on a loose set of principles outlined in this so-called consensus report, that incidentally is not even signed? If so, will this loose set of principles be interpreted broadly or will it be interpreted narrowly by the premiers and the federal government?

The fact of the matter is that neither the Canadian public nor the House of Commons, nor even this Prime Minister, knows exactly what we will be voting on. This government has an obligation to produce a legal text before it puts into motion the wheels of a referendum campaign. The bottom line is that we cannot ask the Canadian people to vote on something they have not even seen. That may be good enough for some of the politicians in this Chamber unfortunately, but I do not believe that it is good enough for the Canadian people.

On Thursday of this week, tomorrow, the caucus of nominated Reform Party members will be announcing our formal positions on the constitutional deal itself. We have not succumbed to the political and media pressure to just jump on any bandwagon. Our position will not be based on political expediency but on thorough research and thorough consultation with the people to whom the Constitution actually belongs.

Aside from the fact that the government is asking Canadians to commit to a deal which is not really a deal, it is also asking them to vote on a question that is not really a question. In other words, the referendum question posed by the government is simply not politically neutral. The phrase "Do you agree" is leading language. No pollster worth his or her salt would ever use such a phrase because it biases respondents to automatically say yes. The term "renewed" is an evaluative, not a descriptive word. It has all sorts of positive connotations that imply implicitly support for the package. Gallup, a well respected Canadian pollster, has remarked that this is a particularly loaded term.

• (2240)

The most frightening aspect of this question, however, is that it does not actually ask voters whether they accept the package or not. Rather it asks whether the Constitution should be changed on the basis of the agreement, not on the agreement itself. Why? The answer is because there is no agreement at this point, at least no legal text.

Such an open-ended question will allow the first ministers to alter the agreement after the referendum if they find it expedient to do so and perhaps even to go ahead with ratification despite a no vote in one or more provinces.

Australians go about their constitutional changes by bringing constitutional amendments for ratification through their federal system and only when those amendments are drawn, written up and debated in Parliament do we see that the people are consulted on it.

I think every Canadian who is watching us tonight and who loves this country, regardless of whether they would vote yes or no, is painfully aware that this system is going about it completely backward, where we are asking people to ratify a deal before they have even seen the deal.

If the government were truly serious about conducting a fair referendum campaign, it would amend its question by changing the word "renewed" to "amended" and by putting the question on the actual legal text rather than some nebulous agreement.

I appeal to my fellow members' sense of justice and objectivity. If members vote in favour of the wording of this particular question, they must realize that they are voting against a balanced and fair referendum campaign.

There are those who might say that if members vote against the particular wording of this proposed question, they are voting against the referendum itself. This of course is absolute nonsense. It should be pointed out that although I disapprove of this particular phrasing, I am fully behind the concept of public ratification of constitutional amendments through national referendums, provided that they are gone about in the right way and that at the end of all these constitutional debates and wranglings and amendments in the federal Parliament as well as every provincial legislature that they would be voted on by people.

Mr. Speaker, you will be aware that I voted for Bill C-81 in the spring despite the many shortcomings that the referendum legislation had. In fact, the Reform Party was the first national party in the House to advocate referendum approval of constitutional amendments. I am aware also that the Liberals have been talking recently about bringing in a referendum but we must also remember that history will bear out that the Liberals have been in charge of this country for roughly two-thirds of our history and this is the first time that we have ever really heard the word referendum. They had many opportunities to bring it about before but it has not come up.

The Liberals have adopted the positions, as with the Tories, albeit reluctantly, but Canadians must ask themselves this question: Why did it take 125 years to do so? The answer lies in the timing. It just so happens that a referendum was deemed to be favourable to their electoral fortunes at this time. Nothing grieves me more than seeing this used as a political tool, rather than an effective means of ratifying something as important as the Constitution of this country.

Political opportunism is evidenced by the fact that they are supporting the biased question now before us. They are merely manipulating the referendum process for political advantage.

I therefore ask all Canadians to take a good hard look at the motivation behind each party's position concerning this question and ask these questions of themselves before they vote on October 26. Is it based on principle? Is it based on consultation with their members and the public or is it based on strategy? I trust that the Canadian public will ask many tough questions and scrutinize the motivation of all members who leaped on to the bandwagon to pass this deal so quickly.

We would hope that the actual legal text that I referred to earlier would be available.

I had a very prominent person say earlier to me today: "I have not seen any legal text, I don't know when I will see any legal text, and I am getting nervous about it and I will be very nervous if I do not see the actual wording of this before October 26".

We all remember painfully the Meech Lake debate and the pain and concern that was demonstrated across the country because of that. Only when the actual text of the Meech Lake accord was put into newspapers across the country was it that Canadians sat up and said "We need to take ownership of this Constitution". When they saw that, they saw that there were deep, deep divisions and serious flaws in the Meech Lake accord. History will bear that out, as I believe history will bear out on this constitutional agreement that was brought forward in Charlottetown, when people get a chance to read it. They are not ignorant, they are not naive. Canadians are not people who would say: "Well, who cares? Let's just get this out of the way". People are deeply concerned about this and when they are given the chance to read the actual legal text I believe that they will do that with conviction and I believe that they will vote regardless of the fact that they may be painted as enemies of Canada by prominent politicians in this country. People are very tired of that.

My friend from Annapolis Valley—Hants referred to that earlier when he said that people are just smouldering with disdain for politicians. I am wondering if this debate will rise above that, or if everyone will just paint it

with the stroke of a brush, saying this is political expediency and nothing else.

Recently, one of my Liberal colleagues asked: "Who will speak for Canada?" Yesterday the Prime Minister replied in this Chamber that he would speak for Canada. If that is the case, I must therefore ask who then will speak for Canadians? There can be only one answer. Canadians themselves. This is the Constitution that belongs to them and somehow, finally, we must get to the point in this country where they say: "This is ours and we will take ownership of it, and maybe, just maybe we won't believe everything all the politicians say and we will get hold of this document, whenever it becomes available and we will look at it and we will be allowed to make the decision on this regardless of any amount of political manipulation" which is shown them on TV and I am sure will be in their mailboxes for the next several weeks. They will become very tired of it.

Canadians must be allowed to understand exactly what it is they are voting on. They must be allowed to speak their hearts and minds without fear or threat of being labelled enemies of Canada should their decision not coincide with the Prime Minister's.

The time has come to test the true waters of democracy in Canada. I would encourage anyone watching this debate this evening, anyone who is either politically involved or not politically involved, not just to lie down and say they are tired of listening to this, but to get involved, to read the documents, to talk to people, to phone people with information, and get out and vote on October 26 and not allow themselves to be held ransom to the fact that somebody may be criticizing them, that somebody would say to them: "If you vote yes you are a proud Canadian, but if you don't vote yes then you must not be a proud Canadian".

I have been labelled personally an enemy of Canada, in this Chamber and across the country, by the Prime Minister and some other senior cabinet representatives. I want it on the record that I am offended by that; that I, as well as hundreds of thousands of Canadians who I am speaking for are offended and I daresay resent the fact that because they are trying to look at this in a reasoned and intelligent light that they would be called that. I would beg and implore people in this House of Commons and in the Senate and anywhere else where people are going to campaign as they freely may on the yes side or the no side, that they would rise above that and that we would look at what this is for and exactly what it will do.

Will it freeze the Senate? I do not believe that the third E, effective, will do any good. I believe that when the Senate says in its highlights that we looked at, where we see such things as each province would be assigned six senators and each territory one, that is a breakthrough for the first E of equal. Then we see where they say that additional seats would be added to represent the aboriginal peoples of Canada. If I could see that in a legal text I may be able to have the question answered, how many seats, when, where, how? And then, regarding the second E, election; elections of senators could be by the people, which is what we thought was going to happen. That was wonderful. And then the second half of that sentence says "or by their provincial or territorial legislatures". That means, then, that election of senators is virtually non-existent. It says they can be elected then by their provincial or territorial legislatures.

• (2250)

Maybe things have not come as far as we thought they would. When my premier, Don Getty, came home a couple of weeks ago from Charlottetown saying: "I am Mr. Triple-E. I got a Triple-E. I am all in favour of the yes-side of this referendum." Today, less than 24 hours after legislation is put into place, he resigns. Could this be an abdication from somebody who went home and realized that it is not going to fly? This is no more Triple-E than flying to the moon.

People need to look at this document, test the waters, see what they think of it and in all good conscience vote either yes or no to it, but only after they have taken the time to study the document. Hopefully, the government will bring out the legal text so we will really know what it is we are voting on for Canada.

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I must take a couple of moments at the outset of my comments this evening simply to respond to a couple of the comments that have just been made by the hon. member for Beaver River.

I have to say I am saddened by the tone and the negative approach of this hon. member in her comments here this evening. She claims to have been offended by comments alleged to have been made by the Prime Minister in which she claims to have been labelled as an enemy of Canada.

It is only fair that I set the record straight. The only people who are enemies of Canada are those who would choose to split this country up. Those in the province of Quebec we know well. There may be others in other parts of the country. They can only select themselves.

I believe the Prime Minister has made it clear. There is no question about it when he made a comment in reference to people being enemies of Canada, he was speaking of separatists who declared themselves as separatists and nobody else. I do not think it contributes to this debate to perpetuate that misconception because it is only in the narrow, partisan interests of certain people to perpetuate that kind of unfair characterization of comments.

I have every belief that the hon. member for Beaver River is not an enemy of Canada. I believe people are entitled to differences of opinion on this issue and should not be an enemy of Canada and are not enemies of Canada but simply hold different points of view. To perpetuate this unfair characterization does not serve this debate whatsoever. I would hope that the hon. member would recognize that.

Second, there was a suggestion made that Canadians would not have access to information in this debate. Let me put that to bed right now. Canadians will have full information, including the legal text on this debate, well before October 26 so that they can analyse and understand it. Why in the world would 13 governments and aboriginal leaders in Canada agree to something where they could not put the facts before the people and allow people to make their decisions? They would not do that. That is not a rational decision they would enter into.

I think the people should take a rational and reasonable look at this case. We are all Canadians and we are engaged in a very important debate. All sides of the issue have to be reviewed. People have to look at the information and make up their own minds. That is what I genuinely hope will happen during the course of this debate. I hope that we will not have negative partisan perspectives put forward during the course of this debate, but rather that people will speak from the heart to the issue of Canada, to the future of this nation and to the future that we can all build together.

I am really delighted to have the opportunity to speak here this evening in this important debate. This is an historic debate. Only twice before in this country have Canadians had the opportunity to speak in a referendum in this manner. That is important because referenda do not happen very often in this country. In this nation it is really a measure of our youth and it is a measure of the fact we have only 125 years of maturity behind us that we have experienced only two such events. That means we should take this question very seriously and consider it extremely carefully.

Most important, we have never had an opportunity to vote as a people on such a fundamental and defining characteristic, a defining question, as the one that we have here before us today. This question allows us to go to the very heart of how we define ourselves as a nation, how we treat each other, how we respond to the needs of the diverse regions of this country, how we start over again in building a relationship between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people, how much respect Canadians are prepared to accord to each other, and to bring it right home, how much we respect ourselves as individuals.

As someone who has laboured long and hard over the last three and a half years, first of all working with people on issues that affect aboriginal Canadians and, second, over the last year on this national unity issue, I am very proud of the accomplishments of the various leaders of this country and the outcome they have been able to achieve in this agreement.

When the Canada round takes its place in the history books that future generations of Canadians will study, it will be remembered as much for its effort to consult as many Canadians as possible on renewed federalism as it will for its success in reconciling differences that have troubled Canada since Confederation.

I have to come back to one point. My colleague from Beaver River suggested that we should ask ourselves what was the basis for our decision to support this package. Was it a question of principle? Your are damn right it was a question of principle. This package has aspects to it that I think lead us to a stronger, more united country, a stronger economy, a better way of life for our people. Was there consultation with Canadians? There has never been consultation with Canadians like there has been over the last two years. Never in the history of this country and never in the history of any western industrialized nation like Canada has there been a consultation like there was in this case to hear from Canadians what their views were, to distil that, to work it through, to work with Canadians who were keenly interested in the issue to arrive at a result.

That has not been done anywhere before. The consultation has been thorough. This is simply the last step in a very long process. I would hope that we would be able on October 26 to finish that off in a manner that does justice to all Canadians and responds to the very real need to have direct input from every single Canadian who has an interest in doing that.

The effort to consult Canadians on the shape they want for their country and to take the time to do that has been fully justified. Canadians felt the time was ripe for change and they wanted to play an active role in determining it. Though the call for reform took different forms in different parts of the country, Canadians held a common wish that their federation reflect and anticipate the challenges of the next century. As much as any other region, it was important for leaders of western Canada to hear the concerns of their constituents and bring them to the negotiating table. That is exactly what happened. Their bottom line objectives soon became very clear.

Any final agreement would have to result in a fairer, a stronger and a more united Canada. It would have to provide for a more effective regional voice in national affairs for Canada's regions and it would have to preserve the federal government's ability to act in national interests. These objectives and many others were met in the Charlottetown First Ministers' Conference on August 28. Most significantly, the Canada round was shaped by the recognition of the principle of equality of the provinces. In turn, this was also reconciled with the equality of individuals and that of Canada's founding linguistic groups.

• (2300)

Great strides have been made in the Canada round to reform Canada's national institutions. For western Canadians the agreement of the provinces on a reformed Senate is a tremendous victory.

Let us not compare this package to the ideal, to the best Senate one can ever dream up or the best Senate an academic can put together on paper. Let us compare this proposal to reality, to the Senate we have today and to where we are today: a Senate which is not elected, which because it does not have electoral legitimacy is not able to be effective. It is not equal; it does not represent all regions, all provinces of the country equally. The proposal in this package is miles ahead of the existing situation so let us compare the new proposal to the current reality, not to some ideal that somebody might have.

This new Senate will give all regions including the western provinces more clout. Together western seats will account for a full 40 per cent of the entire Senate. With a 62-seat Upper House it will be far more effective and people oriented.

Just think of it, with only six senators the citizens of Alberta will all probably know the names of their senators. They will know who they are. They will know how they stand on important issues. They will know whether or not they are effective representatives of Albertans in the national government. That can only be a tremendous step forward.

A new partnership in this package is also formed with aboriginal peoples. They will be represented in the new Senate. Their numbers and the distribution of those seats will be settled at a later date, but the commitment is there to aboriginal people to be involved at the core, at the centre of this country.

Most important, the six senators from Alberta will have the same clout as the six senators from Ontario, as the six senators from Quebec, as the six senators from British Columbia and as the six senators from any other province. That is an important consideration to keep in mind.

The Senate will be able to put the brakes on the power of the government and of the House of Commons by forcing the government to take the Senate into account in preparing legislation. That is a very important consideration.

The Senate will also have the power to block bills on fundamental tax policy changes directly affecting natural resources by way of a simple majority preventing arbitrary and discriminatory measures like the National Energy Program from which we suffered so greatly in Alberta.

On supply bills the Senate will have a 30-day suspensive veto. The Senate is also a marked improvement over the existing one in that it will have the ability to block ratification of appointments to federal boards and agencies. This is an often forgotten element of influence or in fact direct power this Senate will have.

We often forget myriad federal agencies out there that have regulatory authority over the lives of Canadians through one means or another. I think of the CRTC, the National Energy Board, the Bank of Canada, or many other bodies. The heads of those agencies and many other national agencies will be named by the Prime Minister but they have to be approved by the Senate. This takes power directly away from the Prime Minister and gives it directly to the regions of this country and to the Senate of this country. That is a very important change that we have not experienced in this country before.

In addition all other legislation will, if defeated by the Senate, trigger a joint sitting where a simple majority will decide the passage or defeat of legislation. Indeed future constitutional amendments related to the Senate will require the unanimous agreement of Parliament and all the provincial legislatures.

In the House of Commons the number of seats will be increased modestly in order to reflect the principle of representation by population. The increase goes from 295 to 337 seats, but we have to keep in mind that the number of parliamentarians, senators plus members of the House, stays the same. We are shrinking the size of the Senate and are increasing the size of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I see you are signalling that I have only a couple of minutes left. I could go on for quite a while longer because there are many very constructive and positive aspects. However, let me wrap up on the issue of the recognition of the inherent right to self-government for aboriginal people within Canada.

I am very proud of this. I was very proud to be a part of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, a part of the committee that worked with aboriginal groups to help define the parameters within which this proposal would work. I was very pleased to see that taken up by the First Ministers and by the other leaders.

I think that it is a tremendous leap forward for this whole country, not just for aboriginal people. It is for this whole country. What we are doing is taking the old view of things. We are taking the old Indian Act which was drafted in the 1800s and which was based on a colonial mentality. We are saying that that moves aside.

In its place, we have a new recognition of the inherent right of aboriginal people to govern themselves, to provide their own leadership, to govern their own communities and to provide the kind of internal strength that emerges from that kind of a system.

This is probably one of the most important aspects of this proposal. I am delighted to see it there as somebody who has worked closely with aboriginal people in this country for the last nearly four years. I am delighted to see it there. I ask all Albertans regardless of political stripe or orientation to join with us, to debate these issues and to support yes on October 26.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House tonight to speak on the referendum question.

I want to say right off that after speaking to constituents throughout my riding, in Simcoe, Caledonia, Delhi and all around the riding, there is really one feeling, that is the feeling of support. I want to say that there are various reasons that people have come to me to say that they support this deal.

Many of them do not know what is in the deal, frankly, and they understand that. They do not know what is in the legal text. In fact, many of them do not even care what is in the legal text. They figure that it is my job to read that and to explain to them what is in it.

There are many points in this deal that some have problems with. I frankly have problems with a few points in this deal also. I frankly do not like the idea of adding 42 or so members to the House of Commons. I do not think it is necessary. I would have rather seen members of the House of Commons taken away if they had to equalize them.

I do not like the idea that the Prime Minister and premiers could not come to some sort of an agreement on economic barriers between provinces. I frankly see that as a way that we can help rejuvenate the Canadian economy, if we can start breaking down some of these barriers.

I do not like the idea of the Senate, and I do not like the idea that much of this constitutional deal is still up in the air. I could probably nit-pick this deal to death, but I will not. I will not ask my constituents to do that either because there are those out there who will surely during this debate come to them. They will tell the little individual parts of this deal that they do not think is right.

I realize as I think my constituents realize that for the good of the country, this deal has to be ratified. I believe it has to be ratified now. I am not saying as some have that those who are against the deal are traitors. I do not believe they are. What I am saying is that those who vote against this deal would have us debate constitutional deals and wrangle over this Constitution for years and years to come.

I am one who frankly does not believe that this country can put up with this any longer. I believe this would play into the hands of those in Quebec who are separatists and those who do not want to see a strong and united Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you and I say to Canadians that this has not been an easy deal to reach, nor is it an easy one for most people to understand. Even though we have yet to see the legal text, there is information out there for Canadians to read.

The Government of Canada has put out a booklet for Canadians to read and they can receive it by calling the 1-800 number which is 1-800-561-1188. Canadians can get this and they can read it. If they do not know the answers to some of their questions, they should be calling their members of Parliament.

I say to my colleagues in the House here tonight that we should be studying this deal and we should be looking at the legal text. We should be telling Canadians what is in here and why it is that we feel that they should support this deal.

• (2310)

The fault of our national unity problems do not lie in one part of the country or another or with one group of Canadians or another group of Canadians. Sadly it is uniformly spread throughout this country. It is not only a Quebec problem, it is a national problem. It is not only an English versus a French or a French versus an English problem, it is a problem for all Canadians to face. It is a problem dealing with western alienation and eastern provincial poverty levels where rates of unemployment have reached some Third World levels.

Intolerance seems to be a product of hard times in this country. I see it surrounding us in today's society. Unless we as politicians deal with some of these problems I believe intolerance will overtake us.

We will not solve these problems by putting the blame on somebody else because we are going to need everyone in this country to help solve this problem. We need everyone pulling together.

I know this debate is confusing. It is confusing and irrelevant to people's day-to-day struggles. I know Canadians are concerned about the health of the Canadian economy. I know they are worried about their jobs, their families, and about the future of their children.

I know if you are in a small business your business has probably been off 30 per cent or 40 per cent this year. If you are a lawyer or an accountant, your client base is down and you are dealing with too many bankruptcies. If you are a farmer, you have had some of the lowest commodity prices ever. In fact, I know some farmers who have had to turn to welfare. Farmers having to turn to welfare.

I know taxes are too high. I know the national debt is a problem and bureaucrats in Ottawa and throughout the provinces seem to be out of control.

I know that governments and politicians do not seem to be listening. But let us not let these problems skew our vision of this country. Let us not misdirect these fears or these misunderstandings into hate for our national institution or, indeed, our country.

I believe our economic problems will not be solved unless we deal first with this national unity problem and I believe there are solutions. I do believe we are slowly coming to a consensus in this country as to the answers of how to resolve them but there is much work ahead,

and there are many bridges to go over before we solve this problem.

We as Canadians need to rejuvenate national pride and restore a national sense of purpose and a common cause in this country. But let me warn you we do have a difficult task ahead. People are upset. They are upset with politics, they are upset with politicians, with government, with national institutions, and certainly they are upset with these constitutional discussions. Some believe the breakup of this country is inevitable. In fact, some believe it is a better alternative for this country, but better for whom?

It is certainly not better for Ontario, which I represent, with $20 billion of trade and 400,000 jobs depending upon a trading relationship with the province of Quebec. Certainly we cannot have a strong Ontario, we cannot have a strong Haldimand—Norfolk without a unified Canada.

Ontario is in a unique position on this debate. In fact, it is a major partner in Confederation. It is the motor that runs the nation, and the bridge between the east and the west in this country. We in Ontario, especially in rural Ontario, must play an active role in defining the type of Canada we want.

To those who say the breakup of this country is inevitable, I say no. To those who say we will break up and we cannot solve these national unity problems, I say this country will be unified and we can reignite the political will to reunite this country.

To those who say it will go away if we ignore it, I say you are being silly. These problems do not go away and they may never go away. But I say national unity and this economy go hand in hand. If we want to tackle the problems of the economy we must first tackle the problems of national unity. That means dealing once and for all with this constitutional question that is before us today.

This country was built on compassion, compromise and understanding between peoples who came to this country and who worked hard and well. Our forefathers came from all parts of the world, especially in Haldimand—Norfolk, where people came from different parts of Europe and who built farming communities and agricultural products and agricultural commodity groups that have really been the envy of the world.

It would help, though, if we knew a little bit more as Canadians about our history, how we have stayed together as a country and what it is we have accomplished together over these past 125 years. Surely no one is aware in this country that the three main peoples—the English, the French and the aboriginal peoples—lived in harmony in Canada prior to the foreign French and English wars that transformed lower Canada into a battleground in 1759. In 1774, when all was said and done, the Quebec Act gave French Canadians in the lower St. Lawrence the right to their language, their religion and their civil law. They did this because they knew what was happening south of the border in 1776. They knew what was coming and so this is what happened.

The Quebec Act was recognition of what we call today a distinct society. We would not be a country today if the First Nations or the French on the St. Lawrence, upper Canadians and United Empire Loyalists had not supported a British North America in 1812. Does anyone in upper Canada think that they could have defended themselves without the help of the first peoples or the French in Quebec? I do not think so.

Have we have forgotten Chateauguay, where 500 British North American troops, 90 per cent of them French Canadians, drove back and defeated an American army of some 7,000? We went through two world wars and the Korean conflict together. We have lost men and women from every part of this country. Have we forgotten as Canadians why we did that?

I believe the problems that we face today as a nation are due to the fact that we have forgotten our history. When difficulties arise, we do not have anything to turn to. We have forgotten why we have become such a great nation. If we are going to save this country we are going to have to start remembering what we have accomplished together and why we have always pulled together and how through working together we have overcome our differences in the past.

We must stop bickering and entrenching our positions or threatening separation if we do not get our way. I believe the common people support the common good and support a united Canada.

The intelligentsia in Quebec or the constitutional purists in other parts of the country and those in Canada who seem to be against everything for nothing but their own political goals will try to convince Canadians that they should vote against this Constitution for various reasons which may seem to Canadians to be important at the time. However, I asked Canadians and the people in my constituency to look at the bigger picture.

I believe we are debating tonight the future of this country and I would not say otherwise. I believe we are talking about a country that can no longer deal with the constitutional wrangling. I believe that the costs have been too great already for our country, not only economically but a cost in human pride for the country.

We as a country have always believed that it is better for us to work out our differences because in the end history has proven that we as a country have stayed stronger united than in little pieces. That is why in the end we will stay together, because we have survived some of the most divisive issues facing this country and in doing so we have become stronger not only as a country but as individual Canadians.

I ask that constituents in my area look at this constitutional debate. Look at this referendum openly and ask yourself the question, what is the alternative? Are the problems or the differences you have in this referendum big enough to break up this country?

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be in the Chamber again with a colleague whom I just heard speak from Haldimand—Norfolk.

I had an enjoyable visit to another country this summer, one that I might add probably has far more and far greater problems than Canada. It is an ally and a friend of Canada, Israel. However, that is for another day.

• (2320)

I would like to begin by asking those who are listening this evening across this land and those who may read the odd speech to remember that in this building there is a Peace Tower and in that Peace Tower is a chapel. In the chapel are the names of Canadians from every province of almost every nationality who fought and in the Boer War, 1902, in World War I, World War II, and the Korean war on behalf of this country and gave their lives. They were probably French Canadians, Metis Canadians and German Canadians. There is no end. Their names are there for all history to see.

Over the last 125 years Canada has evolved into a country recognized the world over as a peacekeeping nation that finds compromise before it seeks conflict. We had a great Prime Minister by the name of Lester B. Pearson, and others who preceded him, who probably set the tone for Canada. It is our responsibility as legislators to protect that image through any compromise necessary as long as it keeps our nation strong and builds a future for our young people. That is our duty and our job as elected people representing this great nation from coast to coast, of any political stripe.

I look, first of all, at those other great nations, and there are too many to mention, but I will just mention a few. Can any here imagine the United States of America without the great states of California or Texas? Can anybody imagine England without Wales or France without Normandy today? Germany, which was divided because of a ruthless leader, once again finds itself united. In fact, Europe strives to find a way to not only unite itself economically but politically. Obviously, that is a different scenario.

What about Canada? What has caused some people to feel that Canada should be divided by some people? I believe that it was not led by grassroots individuals. This country faces the demise it faces today because of political leaders who led through the desire for power, possibly. It was started by a visitor who stimulated that independence movement in Quebec and was followed by some individuals who saw themselves leading a province out of Confederation.

We know there was a vote once before in the great province of Quebec and people rejected that thesis, and there was a collective sigh of relief. However, since then the stimulation has occurred again. In my view, this time it is not just driven by some factions in Quebec but by people outside.

For example, I want to bring to the attention of the House a recent occurrence when a minister of the Crown announced the expansion of some armouries and military installations. The Government of Canada spends $11 billion a year on defence. It is going to spend $165 million on a former air force base in my riding. That seemed to sit well with everybody else. However, when less than $12 million was just announced for an armoury in the province of Quebec some very zealous leaders of this country stood up and said: "See what I mean. They are giving it all to Quebec". I resent that capitalization on what are normal expenditures by ministers across this great land. The government is spending $165 million in my constituency, and that is fine. However, when a lousy $12 million is announced for an armoury in Quebec for the reserves, of which my son is a member—not in Quebec but in Winnipeg—because he believes he would like to be a peacekeeper if that occurred, what did we get? We got political leaders jumping opportunism in the worst way and saying this is no good for Canada. This is what I mean when one part of the country gets everything, especially Quebec. I am sick and tired of that nonsense because it is just not true.

What made matters worse at that very instant was some of our journalistic people who like the sensationalism of the *National Enquirer* headlines, jumping on it and saying "see, folks, headlines, Quebec gets it all". What kind of nonsense is this? It is up to us to dispel those wrongful happenings and bring some sense to the government and the opposition which are looking at a referendum—and I see there is a vast amount of support—to follow it.

What is the problem? We have gone for 10 years looking at our Constitution and wanting to find a solution. I believe, and pardon the expression, what has happened after the 10 years of consultations since 1982 and the troubles and the discussions, the thousands of meetings, the millions of words, we do not have a pig in the poke anymore when it comes to a new constitutional effort.

I think we have something real when we have the premiers for the second time working, not behind closed doors, but in a very public way as best they could, with countless advisers, the two leaders of the territories as well as our native leaders. I think they have come up with something, albeit I would not like every part of it but I can compromise. Maybe some members opposite do not think it is perfect but I am sure they would like to compromise rather than go through another 10 years. There has to come a time when we look at it and say enough is enough. It will probably work as well as anything we could come up with in another 10 years.

There you have it. What is really important today is to look from coast to coast. We have a fishing problem on the Atlantic coast. There are people without jobs. It is not the government's fault. We did not steal the fish out of the water, but there is a problem. There is an economic problem. We are ending up in a recession in Ontario. The real machinery, the real engine of this country is in a recession. Some people may want to blame it on the government but recessions do occur. I am sure they would like this government to spend some more time on that issue as soon as it could.

In Manitoba, right here in the prairie provinces, we have heard what has happened to the tremendous grain crop that developed in the ridings of Alberta where there was such a tremendous amount of snow and a very promising crop. What are the chances of those farmers' reaping even a possibility of a profit after having to fight every way they can, using government programs that were put in by a government to assist when they were needed? Still what are their chances of making a great profit on what was going to be and is now a difficult year? As it rains, grain cut, thousands of tonnes, will probably be lost because they are sprouting and there will be of no value, not only to Canadians who like to sell them to the market, but to those starving people we have supplied food to for so many years.

The oil prices in Alberta have not been the greatest. There are difficulties there. I suppose the only place we can suggest things are not too bad is in British Columbia. We do not hear about a lot of problems there but I am sure if I talked to my colleagues out there they would know. As we speak tonight there is a possibility of a merger of an airline. I would hate to see a western developed airline maybe somehow end up not existing anymore. Is that the government's fault? I think we have probably had overkill in the airline industry. We had too much servicing and too few people and so there is a merger. What does that mean to consumers in terms of price? As the chairman of the consumer and corporate affairs committee, I intend to make that an issue. How can we look after consumers, or shall we let the marketplace? Just throw it at the market and whatever happens, happens. We have an obligation and I think it is important for us to look at these different situations.

• (2330)

I know I do not have a lot of time, but I say to you, Sir, and to those who view this as a very serious issue that the riding I represent of Portage—Interlake has as much history in it as any other western province. Obviously it was developed and settled by the French *coureurs des bois*, the great Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, both of which still exist today.

Our country would never have grown without the participation of our two groups of founding peoples. Also, it would not have sustained and have become labelled the number one category by the United Nations. I believe it is likely to remain the number one nation.

Perhaps we could put our collective head together and get out of this dog fight of who can become the leader on the basis of dissension. Why do we not find out who will remain the leader and who will become the next leaders based on what we can collectively do together to find jobs for young people like these young pages who have joined us once again for another year? They will see how from time to time this House of Commons acts, and they will not be here every night this late, I can assure them.

However, that is our goal. That is the goal of the collective sides of this House of Commons. I really have no time of day for those who would see this country divided, who would put thoughts into peoples' minds that we would be better off to split the country up because no sovereignty type of an agreement is possible. I do not believe that. I think the Prime Minister put it best when he stated that other parts of Canada had compromised in a major way to see that Quebec would be an equal partner, with some differences admittedly, for another 125 years.

I would like to pay tribute to one particular gentleman who is not with us this evening, the right hon. Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs who was dedicated to the work of bringing this very difficult subject together in the form of the package which was agreed upon in Charlottetown. I say to him that this country indeed owes him a great deal of respect for the time and effort he has put into it. Before it is done, which is not too long from now, I believe we will have a strong and united Canada and, yes, I intend to support it with a yes vote.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, we are debating today the following motion proposed by the government:

> That, pursuant to the act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of the referendum question:
>
> "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?"

I would like to refer to the consensus report on the Constitution. It is a report which is not signed and it is not binding. It has many flaws. How can we vote positively or negatively if the final document is not available? The legal document is not available.

Any constitution has a legal implication. Every word in a constitution has a legal implication. It is going to be interpreted by judges and lawyers in the future.

As I said, we do not have that legal document. What we have is a consensus report. We are trying to amend a Constitution that has served Canada relatively well for the last 125 years. The Prime Minister of Canada indicated to the people of Canada that this Constitution had not worked well and that we needed changes to it. Instead of addressing the fundamental problems Canada faces today, that is economic problems, he garnered all the energies of the premiers of the provinces and of the federal government to deal with the constitutional issue that is certainly not in the forefront of the preoccupation of the average Canadian. The average Canadian believes that we have to address economic issues first, be competitive, have higher productivity, have security of employment and jobs for the 1.6 million Canadians who are unemployed today.

Ask yourself: does this consensus report pass the constitutional test? I would like to elaborate on that.

First, would this document provide for Canadians to have constant input on constitutional amendments or changes? I would say no because there is no mechanism for binding referendums that would allow Canadians to deal with such issues as amendments to the Constitution. Therefore, there should be a provision in any constitutional amendment to have a referendum process that is binding on the government. This is essential if we believe in democracy.

Second, a constitution should have provisions that all its citizens are being treated equally, and again it fails on that second point.

In our Constitution there is a provision of a notwithstanding clause. A notwithstanding clause is a clause that allows for governments, both federal and provincial, to opt out on issues that infringe on human rights and equality. This question of the notwithstanding clause has not been addressed by the consensus report on the Constitution, and I wonder why.

At this point I would like to mention that the Prime Minister of Canada said not so long ago in this House that a constitution that contains a notwithstanding clause is not worth the paper it is written on. So tell me why he has not addressed this fundamental question of equality.

Third, a constitutional amendment should articulate a vision and the fundamental values of a nation. This document is being sold on the basis that the west is finally being admitted into this new Confederation of unequal basis. As well Quebec will rejoin Confederation as a signatory to the Canadian Constitution and this will stop the constant bickering and fighting in Canada.

I would like to quote from *The Toronto Star* of Monday, September 7, 1992. It says: "Vote on unity won't settle our demands, Bourassa says". Is the bickering going to stop on October 26? Certainly not.

Fourth, any constitutional document should be clear, simple and flexible. This consensus report on the Constitution would probably make world history in bringing into constitutional documents a series of political objectives underlying the social and economic union. I like to quote. It states further that those policy objectives or provisions should not be justiciable. I had to look in the dictionary to find out justiciable means. It simply means that you cannot challenge it in courts. This is a constitutional proposal that probably existed in the Soviet Union where you could not challenge it in the courts.

Now we have two unacceptable provisions in this new drafted Constitution: the notwithstanding clause and the provision that certain elements of that Constitution would not be justiciable.

As you know, I have been an ardent supporter of parliamentary reform. I believe in binding referendums. As well I do believe that the Senate should be reformed and that it should be a Triple-E Senate, a Senate that is really elected, that is really effective and that is really equal. What this proposal or this consensus report suggests is that we will have a bastardized Triple-E Senate. The Senate will be half-elected and the legislatures can appoint senators. The leader of the government simply suggests to the legislature the person who should be a new senator. It is not elected; it is really appointed.

• (2340)

There is also an option to have an election, but as time passes I think that most of the senators would be appointed by the legislatures because we have party discipline in our parliamentary system.

Normally the people should be able to elect senators. Its effectiveness has been cut because there is no veto power. Third, it is not equal because senators who declare themselves francophones—and I would like to quote from the document. Article 14 on the Senate talks about double majority:

> The originator of a bill should be responsible for designating whether it materially affects French language or French culture.

We note that the originator of a bill is usually a minister so he can designate a bill the way he feels.

> Each designation should be subject to appeal to The Speaker of the Senate under the rules to be established by the Senate. These rules should be designed to provide adequate protection to francophones.
>
> On entering the Senate, senators should be required to declare whether they are francophones for the purpose of the double majority voting rule.

Naturally there would be senators with one vote and senators with two votes.

> Any process for challenging these declarations should be left to the rules of the Senate.

On the other hand, article 9 on the Senate states:

> Aboriginal representation in the Senate should be guaranteed in the Constitution. Aboriginal Senate seats should be additional to provincial and territorial seats, rather than drawn from any province or territory's allocation of Senate seats.
>
> Aboriginal senators should have the same role and powers as other senators, plus a possible double majority power in relation to certain matters materially affecting Aboriginal people.

We are creating three types of senators: those with one vote, those with two votes, and those with three votes.

> These issues and other details relating to Aboriginal representation in the Senate (numbers, distribution, method of selection) will be discussed further by governments and the representatives of the Aboriginal peoples in the early autumn of 1992.

After we have voted on this proposal further discussions are going to take place. I have just quoted two articles and the senators are not equal. Their votes do not count in the same way, and therefore it is a bastardized Triple-E Senate. Some journalists in Quebec call it a One-E Senate, meaning half-elected.

With this proposal there will be first-class senators and second-class senators.

In summary, the question being debated today infers that the Prime Minister and the premiers have in fact reached an agreement. This is not a legal document. What we have is an unsigned declaration. What we have in reality is a manifesto that constitutes the first of future political accords. We have a manifesto that creates new institutions, institutions that will cost Canadian taxpayers a lot of money in increased taxation. We have created a constitutional industry for bureaucrats and lawyers.

This is a manifesto that repeatedly refers to the next round of negotiations. It is full of asterisks. What we have is a document supported by the Conservatives, the Liberals and the New Democratic Party that is full of rhetoric and contradictions, convoluted language and anti-political objectives.

We as Canadians now face a national referendum on the constitutional deal concocted by the Prime Minister, the premiers, the territories and aboriginal leaders.

I believe as Canadians in a matured democracy, we should be entitled to make a full assessment of the merits of the deal for extensive debate. We should feel totally free to accept a deal if we think that it will strengthen our nation or to reject it if we do not.

We should not be branded as anti-Canadian if we do reject that deal. I cannot support that deal. It does not meet the criteria put forward by people who believe that the west has been left out of the constitutional fold. Some say you have to hold your nose and vote yes anyway.

The party system that we have has already committed most or all of the members to voting in favour of this agreement. Even so, they have not seen the results of the referendum process. This alone should convince us that we need a real constitutional reform or a real made-in-Canada Constitution.

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canada's 125th birthday year has generated and is still generating a tremendous sense of national pride among Canadians, including those who live with me in my riding of Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis.

One Lachine resident, Andy Lacroix, telephoned my office today to say that he had seen a worn out Canadian flag flying over a Canada Post office and thought it should be replaced. A few days ago, residents of Dorval complained when they noticed that our flag there was not flying high at Dorval airport. Those are two very small examples of the growing pride we share in our nation and its symbols.

Just prior to Canada Day, I was happy to play a role in Parliament for the formal amalgamation of *la Chambre de commerce de Montréal* and the Montreal Board of Trade. These two great and longstanding associations represent the common interests of the francophone and anglophone business communities in the Montreal area, respectively.

Their amalgamation is again a signal that the leaders of our business community are ready to plan and to build together, and to say yes to working together for Canadian unity at this most critical time in our history.

Today I rise to join this debate to thank all those who were involved in the negotiation process and to congratulate them on the successful completion of an exhausting job, a job extremely well done. This was the most massive and sweeping consultation process that Canadians have ever witnessed and shared. The Spicer commission and the Beaudoin-Dobbie commission laid the groundwork for our elected leaders to follow.

The eventual, unanimous agreement reached in Charlottetown between the Prime Minister, 10 provincial premiers, two territorial leaders and four representatives from the aboriginal community is an exceptional and remarkable accomplishment. The negotiating authorities came from all sides of the political spectrum and from all parts of this extensive and diverse, sometimes perverse, country.

They still succeeded in establishing an accord with unanimity. They are greatly appreciated and will long be remembered.

Perhaps the most remarkable picture Canadians witnessed was the process of compromise which evolved and flourished for the benefit and protection of the whole country. The final success came from hard work and hard choices, both of which were faced each day of the negotiating process.

The Prime Minister quoted Sir John A. Macdonald who said 125 years ago: "The whole scheme bears upon its face the marks of compromise". Canadians can and should once again discard their traditional modesty and congratulate one another because we have achieved a remarkable milestone in Canadian and in world history. We have achieved substantial constitutional change without violence or massive political upheaval. We accomplished change through peaceful negotiation and compromise, thereby setting the example for so many others in dispute.

• (2350)

Even the historic Constitution Repatriation Act of 1982 missed the consent of my home province of Quebec. The Prime Minister was accurate and justified in stating that the accord reached in Charlottetown was a uniquely Canadian process of pragmatic compromise and compelling vision. The Prime Minister and our hon. colleagues, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the Minister of National Health and Welfare, deserve high praise for their determination, vision, patience and negotiating skills.

The Charlottetown agreement has something for everyone. As the Prime Minister said just yesterday, it enables a new generation of Canadians to say yes to Canada with pride and confidence. This agreement includes a special reference recognizing linguistic duality as a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

My Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis community is part of what makes Quebec and Canada unique. My neighbours, including their elected representatives at the municipal, provincial, federal and institutional levels live, work and play in both of Canada's official languages. We appreciate our neighbours and we welcome our differences.

Commitment to vitality and development of minorities is essential for Canada. For over two decades many anglophones in Quebec faced an uncertain future. These uncertainties and lost job opportunities led to a massive migration of our youth and of many qualified citizens. The Charlottetown agreement provides a commitment by all Canadians and their governments in the plural and total sense to the vitality and development of linguistic minorities. Ratifying this deal I believe will put an end to the uncertainty.

My neighbours in the Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis riding have a responsibility to maintain and expand the links between the two linguistic communities in this great country. Let us commit ourselves and vote to keep all Canadians together. After 66 wonderful years I want to call Canada and Quebec my home forever. I believe that Canada is a tolerant, pluralistic nation where constitutional peace can only lead to shape and foster our economic union, our national identity, our special character and our wonderful heritage.

It is easy to speak of heritage, representing a community like Lachine. Madam Speaker, I know that as a regular visitor you would share with me the sense of glory of the *patrimoine*, the buildings that have stood for hundreds of years and served the community, religious, educational and municipal and other services. The fur museum is a worth-while visit for anyone taking the time to want to know something of the origins of Canada as the *coureurs des bois*, the voyageurs, left Lachine to explore and trade with natives across Canada.

We, each and every one of us, have a special role to play. We must persuade ourselves and each other that we are going to win this referendum. We must build bridges of confidence, create partnerships, celebrate our history and rebuild our national pride. We can start by saying yes to Canada, yes to this agreement, and yes to constitutional renewal and peace on October 26.

The United Nations Human Development Index rates Canada as the number one place in the world to live. We also have the seventh largest economy in the world. We have a lot to be proud of and a lot of previous hard work and sacrifice to build upon. As the Prime Minister said on Tuesday: "We are so evidently stronger together than we could be apart".

I believe this agreement is good for Canada, good for Quebec, and good for my community and its citizens on the towns bordering Lac-Saint-Louis. We look to approval of this agreement by Canadians as a sign of constitutional peace for generations to come. Please register your support on October 26 for a renewed and revitalized Canada. Vote yes.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak tonight, and in particular to speak after the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, who by coincidence is the member for the riding with which my riding is twinned in the bureaucratic nightmare we have all come to know as Voyageur 92.

Certainly I think the hon. member and I have been doing our best to promote Canadian unity and to promote knowledge among young Canadians of each other and of their respective provinces and cities through the efforts we have been making to make these various exchanges work. There have been a few glitches along the way. We hope everything will work out and everything we planned will come to fruition.

I would like to begin my remarks this evening by hearkening back to the comments made before the Standing Committee on External Affairs in June 1990 by Sonny Ramphal, the then soon to retire Secretary General of the Commonwealth. Mr. Ramphal, an outstanding citizen of the world I think and always a very articulate and knowledgeable person, in appearing before the committee spoke to us of the situation Canada was facing at that time which was of course right at the time when the Meech Lake accord was coming undone.

He spoke not to the content of the Meech Lake accord or anything like that, but he spoke to the responsibility, regardless of one's position on that particular constitutional accord, that Canada had toward the rest of the world. He made a plea to the committee that even if Canadians were not willing to save Canada for themselves, they ought to do it out of a sense of responsibility to the world community because to the extent that other countries have looked up to Canada as a place where people of different heritages, linguistic communities, backgrounds, races, et cetera, have been able to live together in not perfect harmony but relative harmony to the extent that the world looked up to Canada in that way.

For Canada to somehow fail that vision by coming undone in some way would be not just a sin against ourselves but a sin against hope, a sin against hope for the entire human race which should we fail would then be in the position of being tempted to the despair of saying if Canada with all its resources, with its democratic traditions, with its other traditions of tolerance et cetera cannot do it, cannot manage to stay together, cannot manage to find a way for these diverse needs and interests and communities to find a way to live together, then why should other countries which find themselves in much more desperate circumstances even try? It is that responsibility that we are faced with again tonight and in the days to come as Canadians contemplate whether to vote for or against the agreement that was reached in Charlottetown.

• (0000)

It is not a question, as so many people have rightly tried to point out, of being anti-Canada, certainly if one has questions about the agreement—I have some questions about the agreement myself—or even if one is finally moved to oppose the agreement. I would certainly say to those who are thinking about opposing the agreement—and I am speaking now to those who are not committed like my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois to sovereignty in any event but to Canadians who are not part of that particular opposition to the agreement—to consider the consequences.

They should not operate out of fear, that is not the way it should be looked at, but should seriously consider the consequences as I have just spoken about them in terms of what kind of message that might send to the world. They should also consider what the consequences might be for Canada if we were launched into a scenario in which the separation of Quebec became a real possibility, or even if we were just launched into another long period of constitutional limbo where we could not muster the political energy to finally get around to dealing with some of the problems that so desperately need to be higher on the political agenda than they are able to be because of this preoccupation with the Constitution.

One of the things that Canadians are going to have to do in the coming months is to not let their feelings about the Prime Minister get in the way of their feelings about the country. I think this was a very real problem during the time of the debate around the Meech Lake accord. However, I am not here to debate history. I am here to describe what I think needs to happen in the next little while.

Canadians need very much to keep in mind that prime ministers come and go. What we are interested in is the future of a country, a future which will long outlast not only the current prime minister but all of us here in this Chamber. We should be considering not the political status or future or points that may accrue to any one particular leader or party but what is, in the final analysis, good for the country.

I make an analogy, because I do think this is a serious problem, with those who went to war on behalf of this country in various conflicts, whether it was World War I or World War II or the Korean conflict. They did not go off and put their lives on the line for Mackenzie King. They did not go off and put their lives on the line for Sir Robert Borden or Louis St. Laurent. Those who happened to be the Prime Minister or be running the Department of National Defence were subject to all kinds of criticism at that time and rightfully so in many cases. People did not let that get in the way of their willingness to do the higher thing for the country.

That is the attitude that we have to take now and which many Canadians have to take with respect to this agreement. It should be easier to do than it was with respect to the Meech Lake accord because in many respects this Charlottetown accord is not the document that the Prime Minister himself would have written had he had the chance to write it himself. The Prime Minister wanted economic union and the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers to be in the constitutional accord. It is not there.

The Prime Minister was not early on committed to the insertion of the inherent right of self-government of aboriginal peoples into this particular agreement. It is there. Earlier on the Prime Minister did not even take seriously the idea of a social charter or a social covenant, or the social union as it has come to be called in the document that we have before us, but it is there.

There are many things in this particular constitutional accord that we have before us that are there because many others had an opportunity to contribute to this particular process. I think that those many others had that opportunity to contribute partly because of the influence that was brought to bear on the process by my leader, the member for Yukon, and by others from my party. If the House will recall we, as part of the condition for returning to participation in the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, demanded there be a set of conferences.

It was those conferences that overturned the idea of the economic union, rejected it out of hand. It was those conferences that established the need and the widespread acceptance for a social covenant. It was the conference on aboriginal self-government that called for the inclusion of the inherent right of self-government. All along the way this broader participation, coupled with the presence at the table of aboriginal leaders and territorial leaders, made this much broader and more inclusive document, both in terms of process and substance, possible.

I want Canadians who might be listening and others who might be contemplating what they might say to their fellow Canadians over the next little while to realize that this is not something cooked up in the Prime Minister's Office. It is the result of a legitimate process that was far superior to the process that preceded the Meech Lake accord.

For those of us who are unhappy with the current government and not happy with the Prime Minister let us not let that get in the way of seeing what real accomplishments there are, for instance in terms of aboriginal self-government. Looking back on those days in 1990 I think the aboriginal people have a right to feel vindicated by the way in which they were instrumental in bringing down the Meech Lake accord.

I was very worried at the time that they were taking a very big risk, not only with themselves but with the country, and that what they thought they might get out of bringing down the Meech Lake accord they would never get. The fact of the matter is that for them it paid off. They must be thinking about this with a great deal of satisfaction at this point. They have made gains both in terms of what is in the document and also in terms of the participation at the constitutional table, which was unprecedented.

There is one other thing happening here, and I feel compelled to mention it. When I listened to the Prime Minister yesterday he had no qualms about using his speech on the Constitution to promote his own particular economic views. He spoke of the need, as he saw it, for freer trade between the provinces and referred to the free trade agreement. I hope that as the Prime Minister has set the precedent of inserting the free trade debate into constitutional speeches I might be forgiven for saying that there is another constitution being amended in this country now. That is the economic constitution under which we live.

We used to have our own economic constitution, which was obviously impinged upon by international grievance, by GATT and other things. Lately, as a result of the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement and now with the possibility of a North American free trade agreement we are entering into and I quote no less an authority than Ronald Reagan who said when he was promoting the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement that he was changing the economic constitution of North America.

• (0010)

One of the things I hope Canadians will be able to do in the next little while but probably not with as much focus as I would like until after the referendum is to consider also the way in which their economic constitution is being altered and has been altered. Like the political constitution, these agreements are things which, I suppose, have amending formulas and unlike constitutions, they even have abrogation formulas. However, they are very difficult to get out of and they last for a long, long time.

I would hope at the same time as Canadians are thinking about their political constitution and how they regard what is now being put before them that they will think also of these agreements. That is why we suggested today in the House of Commons to no avail that perhaps the government should consider consulting the Canadian people on the North American free trade agreement as well as the Constitution.

I see you waving at me, Madam Speaker. I will try to wrap up very quickly. The fact is there is a great irony happening here. At the same time as I and many others are willing to join with colleagues from other parties in doing the right thing for Canada as a community we are in my judgment, I know others would disagree, but nevertheless, we are engaged in a process with the other hand of government. We are engaged in a process through these various free trade agreements of breaking down the community, of breaking down our ability to act as a community economically speaking, of breaking down our ability to even perceive ourselves as a community through the elimination of borders and control over our own lives.

Let us get our act together. If we are going to build a community with one hand, let us not tear it down with the other. Let us try to build it up with both hands and consider not only the political constitution we have before us but the economic constitutions we have before us in the form of free trade agreements.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, certainly I am pleased to have the opportunity tonight to speak on this very historic legislation which will give Canadians the opportunity to approve a new constitutional package through a national referendum.

In September of 1864 the Fathers of Confederation met in Charlottetown to create our great country. I am very proud of the fact, being from Prince Edward Island, that just a month ago, in August, Prince Edward Island was given the opportunity to play host to another meeting of historical significance.

I am very proud of our premier, the Hon. Joe Ghiz. His wealth of experience, his knowledge of constitutional matters and his well–known ability to excel under pressure played a very, very important role in the outcome of these negotiations.

As we embark on this historical referendum campaign the words of our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, are worth repeating: "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 recognize that what we have here in Canada is not perfect. But they also recognize that we are a very privileged people compared to the rest of the planet. We have inherited what is widely considered to be the best country in the world in which to live.

It is within that context that I join in this historic debate tonight. As I rise this evening, I hearken back to April 1991 when our leader originally proposed that the best way to handle this whole issue was to hammer out a deal and then put it to the Canadian people through a national referendum.

This was the best way to ensure we could get over this constant stumbling block of constitutional debate that has for many years taken far too much time, effort and energy. I am proud that our leader had the vision 17 months ago to lay out a nine–point plan, a plan that set much of the agenda in the constitutional discussions that followed.

I cannot remember a time in our history when an opposition leader has made such a significant contribution to a national debate such as this. Of course, the cornerstone of that package was that these changes are so monumental that Canadian people deserve an opportunity to say yes to Canada, yes to Quebec, yes to the aboriginal people, yes to the east, yes to the west, so that we join in a united effort to put our country on a stable and united road as we prepare for the 21st century.

In speaking with Islanders this summer and throughout the constitutional process I recognize that many of them, including myself, believe we have spent too much time already talking about the Constitution. The time we have spent in debating, in negotiating and in drafting our Constitution is time that could have been spent on serious problems facing this country, like the unemployment problem, improving our education system, and preparing to take on the challenges of increasingly competitive international economy.

To the average Canadian, the significance of the constitutional debate pales in comparison to their need to find work. One of the results of the constitutional reform will affect them in the long run. In the immediate future, their concern is to ensure that their children are well fed and that their rent or their mortgage payments are made.

This is why we have to settle this constitutional problem now, so that our time, efforts and energy can be put to solving some of the other serious problems in this country.

This package may not be perfect but as I say, we cannot afford another 10 years in this country of talking about the Constitution. Those seeking perfection in this deal will simply have to lower their expectations. As I said, it is not perfect, but I honestly believe it is the best deal, the best possible deal that the Government of Canada, the premiers, the aboriginal leaders and the leaders of the territories could have put together.

Canada is a very large and diverse country with many competing interests. In order for us to continue as a strong and united country there has to be some give and take. This deal is good for Canada because it will ensure that we remain united. It provides us with a reformed Senate. It provides a just and a dignified arrangement for aboriginal people. It strengthens the constitutional commitment to equalization and regional development.

• (0020)

Most important of all is that it supplies the glue needed to hold the country together as we head into the next century. This is important. It is important that we keep this country together and probably more important in my part of the country than anywhere. I come from eastern Canada and the prospect of being cut off from the rest of Canada would have all kinds of social ramifications for easterners.

There is no telling how much investment our country has lost in recent years due to constitutional uncertainty. The jobs that this investment could have created are desperately needed, not only in my province of Prince Edward Island but all across this country.

I say in this Chamber today to the constituents of my riding of Malpeque, to Islanders and to Canadians that this is our opportunity to put the national unity uncertainty behind us and unify our future together.

Let us take the opportunity so that future generations will benefit from the strength that our country will gain from putting the constitutional uncertainty behind us.

If our leaders are to spend or had to spend another decade dealing with the Constitution and national unity, then surely many of the crucial issues facing Canadians would not be dealt with in an adequate way.

Today we have this referendum question before us and certainly I will be supporting it.

I realize that there are risks involved in referendums. Referendums can be divisive as some people say, but they can also be unifying because they give us all an opportunity to say yes to Canada, yes to Quebec, yes to the aboriginal people, yes to the east and yes to the west. Therefore, they can have a very unifying effect in this country. I would say that on this issue there is as much or more risk in not holding a referendum.

I believe that the Constitution belongs to the people. Therefore, it is only just that Canadians should have an opportunity to approve the deal through a referendum.

When this referendum legislation is passed, and it certainly appears that it will be passed in this House of Commons, the responsibility for the results of this measure will move from the hands of the politicians to the hands of individual Canadians.

Surely Canadians will stand up to this challenge as previous generations have had to do and as our forefathers did 128 years ago in Charlottetown.

If you visit the legislative chamber of Province House in Charlottetown, the room where the basis was established for Confederation in 1864, you will see a bronze plaque which commemorates their efforts. The plaque reads:

> In the Hearts and Minds of the Delegates Who Assembled In This Room on September 1, 1864 Was Born the Dominion of Canada. Providence being their guide They Builded Better than They Knew.

On September 1, 1864, our Fathers of Confederation gathered to create a country that has since become second to none.

Over the next few months Canadians will have an opportunity to ensure that the country that these people built will remain strong, united and independent.

I believe Canadians are up to that task. When they go to the polls on October 26 across the country, we will emerge as our forefathers did with a country that is better, stronger and ready to take on the challenges of the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): This evening, Madam Speaker, I do not claim to be a constitutional expert, but we have been discussing the Constitution for so many years that all of us are or claim to have become constitutional experts.

There will be a referendum on October 26. Pursuant to Bill 150 passed in Quebec, the referendum was to be on Quebec sovereignty. We know the Quebec government has proposed amendments to hold a referendum on the offers instead. However, how can one possibly agree with the agreement reached in Charlottetown on August 28 when the legal text will only be available after October 26, that is after the referendum? I think that English Canada should be as concerned as Quebec about the implications of the legal text which will not be available after the referendum.

This agreement is bad. It is bad for Canada; it is bad for Quebec. We do not have time to go into detail this evening, especially not in 15 minutes, but I would like to go over the main points that were discussed and that might have been accepted or rejected during the constitutional negotiations.

Economic union was a very important issue for Quebec, and indeed for all of Canada. How can we seek to maintain tariff barriers between the provinces of Canada and have free trade with the United States, and soon with Mexico? It is preposterous. Even the minister was against the July 7 agreement, and therefore against the August 28 agreement because the problem of economic union had not been resolved. That is one of the issues.

As for the division of powers, just think of the demands in the Allaire report that was presented to the 1991 Liberal convention when the Liberal Party demanded 22 powers. If you study the agreement, you will find any number of powers that are already under provincial jurisdiction such as leisure, hunting, fishing, mining, urban affairs and housing. No new power is being transferred to the provinces or to Quebec as a result of these demands.

The right of veto, which was so important to Quebec, has been replaced by insignificant veto rights. After giving everything to everyone, how can you then claim to want a veto? One of the principal areas over which the Quebec government and the province of Quebec wanted a veto concerned the creation of new provinces. In this case also, there is no veto that could prevent or require discussions on the creation of new provinces.

• (0030)

As regards the Senate, what a joke. What a big joke. When the Prime Minister wanted the GST legislation passed, we saw him just appoint eight new senators to rubber stamp his bill in the Senate, and now they are talking a Triple-E Senate. This represents a considerable loss for Quebec.

Apparently there is some compensation. About 40 new ridings throughout Canada can be created or elected, of which approximately 18 will be in Quebec, 18 in Ontario and a few others in British Columbia and possibly elsewhere. There are already far too many members in this House. Everyone knows very well that when the

government decides something, most of the government members have to accept that decision. That is how the system works. Even if there were 10, 15, 20 or 30 more members, what would that change when we know there is a party line in this House and you have to toe that line or else leave the party. That is the democracy being practised. That is what you find in traditional political groupings and that is why there is a complete consensus among the traditional parties in this House to pass this unacceptable agreement.

As for the Senate, even Senator Beaudoin, chairperson of the Beaudoin–Dobbie commission, was against amending it as has been proposed. You do not hear anything about that anymore. You no longer hear the senators objecting. And yet they were the ones who, following the July 7 agreement, that was reached while Quebec was not even present, protested that it was absolutely unthinkable and completely unacceptable. Then on August 28 there was an agreement, a consensus to approve and adopt those very same points. We are told that the agreement was unanimous, but everyone around that table was against something. Then it was tabled here in this House, and in about three days, a few hours, the members are to ratify the agreement and enable a national referendum to be held, in accordance with Canadian legislation in effect in English Canada, in accordance with Quebec legislation in Quebec. At the same time it is hoped that federal funds will not upset or use the situation in Quebec and that they will be used in accordance with legal provisions.

The Supreme Court is also a very important element because it seems the House of Commons, the elected officials, our government, may turn increasingly to the Supreme Court to make decisions, with the government thereby abdicating any decision-making responsibility. Quebec is guaranteed three judges, and it is stipulated that they must have been accepted to the Quebec Bar. They may have practised outside Quebec for any length of time and taken bar exams in any other province. Judges appointed to the Supreme Court may not necessarily be practising or sitting in Quebec.

Distinct society, what a joke. Obviously, it is difficult for the man in the street to interpret this term. In fact, this was not going to be a restrictive expression in the Meech Lake accord. In the Charlottetown accord of August 28, it is restricted to language, culture and the Civil Code. One could not claim to be teaching Quebecers anything new. Quebec has always legislated in areas of language, Quebec is different as regards its culture. The civil code is not found anywhere else but in Quebec. But the meaning is restrictive. In French, the text uses the term *notamment*, which implies that something else may be included. The word, *notamment*, is not in the English text. In English Canada, the accord is meant to help anglophones understand and in Quebec, it is meant to please francophones.

The situation of the native peoples is increasingly similar to that of Quebecers, but they obtained what they wanted in the agreement reached on the 28th of August. They had a firm negotiator, someone who wanted to address a problem and appears to have resolved it. In the current agreement, much more consideration has been given to natives than to the people of Quebec.

For all these reasons, this agreement should be rejected by all of Canada. It has been said in this House that those people in Quebec who decide to vote against the agreement are against Canada and want to break up Canada and that those outside Quebec who vote against the agreement are doing so because of their personal opinions. No, we are not against Canada. In Quebec, we are for Quebec. The constitutional problem will be resolved only when Quebec obtains its political sovereignty. The question that the federal and provincial governments are going to put to the population deals only with offers that are unacceptable.

I say to Canadians that the issue has only been put off. Those who claim that after October 27 there will be no more talks about the Constitution are wrong, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on what indeed is an historic question and an historic debate, even though as I do so I recognize that in all likelihood very few, if any, of my constituents of Brandon—Souris will be watching it as it nears the hour of one o'clock here in Ottawa.

In my opinion, the question before us is probably the most important one facing Canada since Confederation. It is a question which merits the very careful consideration of all Canadians. I hope they will study the proposal carefully, give it their careful consideration, and accept their responsibility to be a part of a decision-making process on October 26.

• (0040)

The question before us is one which is obviously a result of the negotiation process. It is one in which there have clearly been compromises made by the various participants. But what has emerged in my opinion is a reasonable and equitable compromise.

Before discussing the nature of that compromise I would like to remind our listeners that the Confederation put together in the 1860s was of a similar nature. It was a compromise in itself.

Speakers before me have paid credit to John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier. Mention should also be made of George Brown who in several capacities made a significant contribution during the 1860s.

The individuals of whom I have spoken in putting together a Confederation pact in the 1860s did not achieve all that they as individuals desired. In fact Confederation in 1867 and subsequent changes were a series of pragmatic responses to the realities which exist. Confederation indeed was a compromise in itself.

As I speak I am reminded of the fact that John A. Macdonald would have preferred by way of example not to have had provinces. He preferred the British model, but he recognized that in the reality which would become Canada that was not a logical goal and it was a goal which he readily and quickly abandoned.

I am reminded of the fact that the entry of my province of Manitoba into Confederation in 1870 was very much a result of compromise. It was not a decision which John A. Macdonald and the leaders of the nation would have preferred at that particular time, but it was a pragmatic response to the realities of the Red River rebellion of 1869.

I am also reminded of the kind of Confederation that was put together then and in subsequent years. It has not always conformed perfectly to our stated goals. I am reminded of the fact that some provinces, by virtue of the rules on which they entered into Confederation, have more members on a per population basis than do others.

I, for example, during my term here have represented on average some 75,000 residents of Brandon—Souris. Other members of Parliament have traditionally represented less, while many have represented more.

It seems to me the very art of governing in Canada is the art of seeking and attaining such compromises. I am reminded of the definition of politics that I most often gave to my students. It was that politics was the art of the possible. What we have before us is a demonstration of that type of art form at work.

I believe the compromise before us is a reasonable and equitable one. I believe this properly called Canada round is a significant step beyond where we were some two years ago. I believe a reformed Senate will be more relevant than the present Senate has been.

I believe the principle of election, the principle of equality of representation in the Senate, and the desire to make that body effective have been achieved to a very significant degree.

I also believe that we have made a significant step forward with respect to aboriginal rights.

For someone who has taught Canadian history for much of his life, I am very conscious that the history of relationships between the aboriginal, now called First Nations of Canada, and previous governments of Canada has not always been a happy one. In fact at times it has been a history of which we have little reason to be proud.

While we cannot in this Parliament or at any other time redo the history of the past and undo mistakes that may have been made in the past, those who have been primarily involved in the preparation of this particular agreement have recognized the importance of the principle of self-government. I believe we are moving in the right direction.

Certainly there remains much to be done in this particular area in that many do not fully understand the details which will indeed prove to be self-government. But I am confident of the good will which exists and I believe the principle is one which should be endorsed.

I also believe that the sharing of powers between the federal government and the provinces as proposed is reasonable. I say that mindful of my own background of being someone who came to my politics to a very large degree as a result of being a student of John A. Macdonald. I became knowledgeable of John A. Macdonald through those excellent biographies written by Donald Grant Creighton. I must confess and I do so readily that I believe it is important for the federal government to have and to continue to retain a very significant role within the federalism which is Canada.

Quite frankly, I am pleased that some of the proposals which have existed which called for greater decentralization than is currently before us were not in fact successful. I am particularly pleased that the federal government's role with the shared jurisdiction as protector of the environment is one which has been recognized in this proposal.

I am conscious of the fact that there are critics of this proposal, critics who are concerned about the fact that the proposal does not address their own individual concerns. As I speak, I am mindful of a great deal of activity by certain women's organizations within my own constituency who I know that individually and collectively are somewhat disappointed by the end result. I would remind them that the process which is being put in place today and which is being proposed before us is not one in itself which is absolute nor is it necessarily the end of the line. Our Constitution has been amended on numerous occasions in the past and indeed that will obviously prove to be the case in the future.

Therefore, to those who are disappointed because the present proposal does not achieve all which they would wish, I would say to them that I hope they would judge a proposal first of all as a package on its merits and that they would compare it not with the model which they had in their own mind but with the situation which exists in Canada as of today.

I would also like to say a word or two about the process that is under way because I believe the process in itself has been significant. Certainly there has been an immense amount of consultation with Canadians during the course of the last many months. I believe that consultation has had direct and significant results. Certainly the proposal which is before us now is significantly different than that which was initially tabled by the Government of Canada.

• (0050)

Where the changes be with respect to the Senate, with respect to the division of powers, with respect to the question of inherent aboriginal rights or with respect to the wording of the Canada clause, most of those changes are a very direct result of the public consultation process in which so many Canadians participated.

I am also one of those who has believed for some time that the referendum which is now beginning would indeed be beneficial for Canada and should in fact occur. As I say that I am very conscious of the fact that many of my colleagues have not shared that view and that they have been concerned that such a referendum process would prove to be divisive and thus damaging to national unity.

The reason I believe a referendum would be valuable is that I am convinced Canadians will accept the responsibility of being a part of a decision-making process. I believe they will accept the responsibility of carefully evaluating the proposal which is before them. I believe in making their decision they will in fact be making a commitment to Canada. That I think will have positive and lasting results.

One of the things about politics that has distressed me these last few years is that there has been a growing tendency, it seems to me, on the part of Canadians to blame the process and to blame the politicians for what they perceive to have been the things that have gone wrong. Certainly the nature of the process in which a relative few make decisions on behalf of the many is the type of process which perhaps encourages that sense of feeling, that sense of alienation.

Now the decision is not up to the members of this House. It is not up to the members of the legislatures across the country. Indeed the decision is now one which must be made by Canadians. They have an opportunity to participate. They in fact have a responsibility to participate. By participating they also have to accept the responsibility for the decisions which are made. I believe as a result of their doing so they will identify much more clearly with the end result than they would be simply if others were to make that decision on their behalf.

I know there are concerns about the cost of the process. There are concerns that perhaps people will not give careful consideration to the issues before them. I believe my constituents, and I sincerely trust that this is true of Canadians elsewhere, will give very careful consideration to the issue. I believe they will approve the resolution because they believe in Canada and they believe that the compromise which has been created is reasonable and just. They understand it is not perfect, just as I understand it is not perfect.

This is not the document that I would have written if I had had the sole opportunity to do so, just as the document which is before us, Mr. Speaker, is not what you probably would have written. What is different now is that never again in our history will such documents be written by an individual or even by a few individuals. What is more important is that such documents must be written as a result of a collective consultative process, and I am pleased therefore that the decision on that document must also be made in a collective manner.

I am confident and I say with great hope because I love this country that the end result on October 26 will be approval in each and every province of the proposal before us so we can enter into the next century conscious of the fact that we have put many of our problems behind us.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your patience and thank your for recognizing me.

[*English*]

The referendum question before us tonight raises a number of other questions. Any pollster will tell us that by asking "do you agree" we are asking a leading question. You ask an unbalanced question that the opening part of this question ought to be balanced by putting it in terms of do you agree or do you not agree.

When it comes to the subsequent line, what does "should be renewed" mean? It is not just a matter of renewing the Constitution. We are talking here of a profound change. What does the term "on the basis" mean? Does it mean subject to the legal text? Actually what we are debating here tonight is not exactly a question but more of a sales pitch.

Other questions come to mind when reading the proposed question. When will the legal text be made available? Will the legal text subsequently be changed? Will there be a parliamentary committee to examine such text? Will there be amendments? If a province should turn down the referendum, what will happen next? Does it mean that voters in such a province are to be branded as bad Canadians? Certainly not.

The Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs made an interesting point this afternoon when he said that people should vote on what the package actually says and not what anybody tells them it contains. Let's take him to task.

People think the deal contains an effective social charter, but it does not. People think the Senate will be elected, but it will be only partially. People think that interprovincial trade barriers are removed, but they are not. People think the Senate will be effective, but it is not quite so. People are being told this deal is strengthening federalism, but it is not.

People are being told this deal will ensure national unity, but in reality it sets into motion a two-nations Canada. People think that we will get less government through a smaller Senate, but in fact we will get more government through an enlarged House of Commons. People think that powers are being transferred to the provinces in exchange for powers being transferred to Ottawa, unfortunately this is not the case.

People are told that we must globalize trade and compete internationally. How can we if this deal gives the provinces the responsibility for training the unskilled and the unemployed? People expect the federal government to set national standards in education, in the environment, in skill training, et cetera, yet this deal does not meet these expectations. It actually makes it more difficult to establish national standards and meet international commitments in environmental matters.

There are good features in this deal, such as linguistic dualism, even if the English and French texts of the deal are at variance. However that can be remedied. There is also the recognition of aboriginal rights and the right to aboriginal self-government. We finally recognize them as partners in Canada. This is a great step but it needs totality. If one looks at the forest and not just the trees then one must conclude that this deal is not good enough for Canada. It may be good enough for the provinces, it is a provincial vision of Canada created by premiers, but it is not good enough for Canada.

I come from the constitutional school of Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Eugene Forsey, one which believes that the nation is more than just the sum total of its parts, that the nation must have the tools to develop national cohesion to compete and sustain its development with respect for the environment. In a federal nation, there has to be a give and take of powers according to changing times and requirements instead of a one-way flow of powers from the federal to the provincial governments as in this deal.

• (0100)

When it comes to such a profound change in our system Canadians have to be given all the means and time to understand how the proposed changes will work, not just a six-week wonder with no legal text, with no public hearings, with no expert analysis.

It is worth while noting at this point that to the question: "Do you think there has or has not been enough public consultation about changes to the Constitution", 60 per cent of Canadians answered no in a poll just published by *The Toronto Star*.

To the question: "If the new proposals are rejected by Canadians in a vote will this lead to the break-up of Canada", 54 per cent answered no.

If you look at satisfaction, this deal does not fare well among Canadians. In Atlantic Canada 49 per cent say their region has been short-changed. Quebecers are also dissatisfied with this deal, and so are westerners with 55 per cent saying the west does not get enough. This dissatisfaction may explain why, according to the same poll, 54 per cent of Canadians said yes to the question: "Do you think there should be changes made to this package of proposals?"

It is very hard to understand for any observer who was not party to the negotiations why the federal government would agree to give the provinces responsibility in labour market training, housing, forestry, tourism, mining, urban affairs and not obtain anything in return. It is also hard to understand why in the Canada clause which expresses Canadian values the fundamental importance of the natural environment would not be included. If there is a value which strongly unites Canadians, it is the deeply felt desire to protect and sustain the natural environment.

To relinquish housing is also a bad move. It means that there will no longer be a federal role in land use, creative design, new approaches to land use and environmentally inspired new approaches to urban living.

To relinquish forestry means there will be no federal role in research, no leverage in silviculture, no national voice at international gatherings.

To relinquish mining, urban affairs, and tourism is a bad move because of the role the federal government could play, and does play if it wants environmental objectives to be kept in mind.

To give the Senate powers to defeat by a simple majority any bill from the House of Commons that involves fundamental tax changes directly related to natural resources seriously undermines the federal government's ability to influence environmental behaviour in the future.

It is this weakening of the national fibre which is so upsetting and makes me sad, and which compels me to say: "No, this is not good enough for Canada". This is not the way to go because we cannot build a strong nation by giving in to requests from left, right and centre with the inevitable result, ironically, that everybody still remains dissatisfied, as revealed by the polls I just brought to the attention of the House.

Perhaps the mistake was made right at the beginning when we failed to ask ourselves: "What do we want to achieve with the Constitution? What purpose should it serve? What are the essentials? Where do we strike a balance in the federal state?" It is now becoming clear that we have put the cart before the horse, that we took the pragmatic route without first establishing what we wanted to achieve in this constitutional journey. This journey, was it really necessary? One wonders.

To conclude, for the reasons I have given, reluctantly I have to say that on October 26, if this deal remains unchanged, I will have to vote against it. This decision should not be viewed in terms of partisan politics, nor in terms of lack of support for my leader for whom I have the greatest respect, admiration and devotion.

In a gesture of great generosity and statesmanship, my leader has risen above partisan considerations in the constitutional debate. He felt, and quite rightly so, that this issue transcends partisan considerations. In doing so, he makes it possible for me to pursue the same approach but to arrive at a different conclusion.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations came forth with a quality of life index this year.

That quality of life index said that of the five billion people in the world, of the many countries of the world, the best country to live in in the whole world is Canada. That felt good.

It feels good that you and I, all of us listening tonight and all of Canada, have somehow put something together that has produced the highest quality of life for our citizens in the world. I am proud to be part of that Canada. British Columbians are proud to be part of that Canada and particularly those of us in the lower mainland of British Columbia think that we live not only in the best country in the world but in the best province and in the best part of that province.

Our first feelings are feelings of appreciation to our nation, to our province, to our community. We are appreciative of the quality of life that we have come to know. I would also like to say on behalf of the people I represent that they are also getting tired of the wrangling about the Constitution. They want to get on with the strengthening and the building of our country.

It is not quite that simple. I think we need to have this debate. We need to have this discussion and we have to bring it to a conclusion through a referendum. I think this is all correct procedurally. I wish I could stand tonight, though, and say that British Columbians are now satisfied, we are ready to support this package wholly. I am not really sure I can say that without issuing some qualifications or expressing some of my traditional concerns that I have expressed in this House over many years.

Even with this package, the alienation that is felt in British Columbia is still there and it is very real. It has some basis. I have always wondered about equalization grants, transfers of payments from some supposed have province to have not provinces.

I was in the maritime provinces last week in the have not provinces. I kept looking for the have nots and all I could see was new road construction, buildings being restored or new construction. I did go to a fish plant and saw a lot of people being laid off but I could not see the have nots when I compared it to my province of British Columbia.

I can go around my province and see have nots everywhere, in city after city or town after town.

• (0110)

The constitutionalization of equalization grants, a trend that started many years ago, I do not like that idea. I do not think we should be subsidizing poor provinces. We should be subsidizing poor people wherever they are found in Canada. That is a traditional argument that I cannot seem to win or we cannot seem to win and so we concede. British Columbians give that to the rest of Canada because we say we are Canadians. We are proud and we are strong so I guess we will have to accept the constitutionalization of equalization grants as a way of life for Canada for the foreseeable future. However, that does not mean we necessarily approve of them or think that they are necessarily the right way to go in Canada. It just means we are perhaps willing to put that aside for another day because it seems to be the consensus of the nation that we should have equalization grants.

I grew up in Saskatchewan and like so many young people, when the jobs were not there, I left for a different lifestyle and economic advantages in British Columbia. I have a very special empathy when we take the funds of Canada and we transfer them back to the farming communities of my birth. I feel good that as a Canadian I am able to share that with them.

The question of representation is a little more difficult for me to explain because I do not really understand how it is easier to represent in British Columbia than it is in Saskatchewan or P.E.I.. I do not quite understand how I somehow should be able to represent 100,000 constituents more or three or four times as many constituents as another in a smaller geographic area. I do not quite understand the fairness of that, but I am willing to accept that and I am willing to say that I am strong, I am proud of Canada and I can represent those extra 100,000 or 200,000 people here for you and I will do it if I need to do it for Canada. I am not complaining about it, I just bring it to your attention. It is another thing that we give from British Columbia to try to make this new Constitution work. It is an attitude of giving and compromising that has come and is coming from our province.

It is kind of hard to explain that others have a fixed percentage of the population of proportional representation. Our province is growing the fastest of any in Canada and we are never, ever going to reach our proportions in a fixed formula the way it is being established now. It is hard to explain, but we say in British Columbia that we will accept that and work for those changes later because we are Canadians and we want Canada to work as it does work. Therefore, we will give again.

When B.C.'s share of national procurement stagnates at 4 per cent, 5 per cent or 6 per cent or even falls, we say we will give that to eastern and central Canada as well. We will take the government procurement and we will try not to complain. We will stick with the free market system and we will throw that in for Canada.

As we compromise and give to our nation, I have to say that the alienation would disappear if somehow it were recognized that we are giving from British Columbia.

We are reaching out with compromise to save and support our nation. It does not hurt to recognize the contribution of my province. It does not hurt to recognize the contributions of every province in Canada.

We get tired of the minority situation in Canada all the time in British Columbia because every one of us out there is a part of some minority or vested interest group. They keep rearing their heads and demanding and demanding, instead of asking what they can contribute. We really need to stop demanding and start saying this is our list of what we have to give. This is what we are giving, we are giving this, we are giving this and we are giving this because we love Canada.

If every province listed all the benefits that they receive from the Government of Canada and if they felt good about their contribution, we would not be having any problems here at all.

I think that everybody should make a list of the advantages of being a Canadian. You list all the advantages. Over here you list the disadvantages. I tell you that disadvantage list is pretty short, not only in Canadian terms but in global terms. No matter where you come from, this is a great nation. I love the parts of it. I am ready to contribute to the parts of it. If I have a little more, I am willing to share that. Let us all have that idea. Let us all have that attitude so that next year and the year after the world will look at Canada and see it as number one.

I will support this referendum, not because I agree with it entirely, but it establishes a framework that I can work within and try and change some of the things over time that I am not satisfied with. Almost every British Columbian says to me in the final analysis, "I do not want to lose my country. I want to build it and keep it strong". That is why I am here at a quarter after one in the morning. That is why you are here at a quarter after one in the morning, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for being here, and I thank Canadians and ask them to be generous and tolerant in the spirit that built our nation and will build it for generations to come.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, we are here discussing tonight, or rather at 1:15 this morning, the content of the question to be answered by Canadians concerning the Constitution and the future of Canada. Despite the fact that there is general support for the wording of the question within this Chamber tonight, as the vote tomorrow will no doubt substantiate, this is an important question that will likely create some dissension among a number of Canadians, and therefore the members of this House would be well advised to proceed through the upcoming referendum campaign very carefully.

The agreement covers a lot of ground and I think all Canadians owe it to themselves to have a good look at it before they vote in late October. An informed decision is the most important decision.

I support the wording of the question being put to us today. I support the consensus reached by the First Ministers on August 28 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and I support a yes vote in the referendum campaign. I would like to talk about that to some extent tonight. At the same time, I want to stress that the Constitution is not the only issue that concerns me tonight and I think that during the next seven weeks during the referendum campaign itself, the issues of the economy will be the ones that occupy the majority of my time. I believe this because I believe strongly that if our country cannot support itself, that is, it cannot support farmers on the land, cannot keep workers in their jobs, cannot keep small businesses in business and cannot keep young people enthusiastic and optimistic, then we have a country that is in desperate need of change and looking for redirection.

I think it is obvious on the economic front that this country does need change and redirection.

• (0120)

I am told that by the media, by my colleagues, by my friends, but more important, I am told that by my constituents. I see that in my constituency. In The Battlefords—Meadow Lake in northwest Saskatchewan we are losing farm jobs, processing jobs, manufacturing jobs and jobs in the retail and service sectors because the Canadian economy as it is today will not support those jobs.

We are in northwest Saskatchewan by and large a regional resource based economy. We are dependent on many things beyond our immediate control. Government policy affects us directly because we are vulnerable in so many different ways. Low grain prices, the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement, policies which have kept up the value of the dollar and until recently interest rates, the newly initiated North American free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico and tax policies which favour the multinational corporations over ordinary wage earners are all examples of government–driven initiatives that are driving jobs and people out of Saskatchewan.

The public has been consulted in the constitutional process and throughout that consultation process ordinary Canadians have raised economic issues as being a priority concern. They said their governments should proceed with real solutions to their daily problems.

In November 1990, Keith Spicer was appointed to head the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, a royal commission designed to find out what Canadians were thinking about with regard to national unity. After millions of dollars were spent and tens of thousands of Canadians were consulted, Mr. Spicer reported that Canadians were feeling betrayed, confused and angry and his royal commission agreed that they had reasons to feel that way.

I would like to quote briefly from Mr. Spicer's report. He states: "Canadians repeatedly raised the subject of the economy throughout the forum process. Indeed, in many cases, economic concerns ranked higher and were pressed more insistently than any other. Canadians are right to be concerned about their economy. Chronic deficits and a high and rising national debt have contributed to high interest rates. These, together with a high foreign exchange rate, have caused job losses, lost exports, missed job creating investment opportunities and a sharper cyclical downturn than necessary".

There is no doubt in my mind that the sooner the federal government, the provincial governments and all their parts, the MLAs, the MPs, the cabinet ministers and the First Ministers can devote their full–time energies to dealing with the human issues affecting people, the issues that determine quality of life, the issues that ensure some personal and family security, the sooner this country will feel better about itself and the sooner we will feel united as Canadians with an optimistic future.

Because the constitutional unity in this country is important as well, the economic debate has been overshadowed by the political debate and the attention of the public has been diverted for too long by this constitutional debate.

This was a debate that stirred the emotions of people from coast to coast to coast. I have also been wrapped up in the emotion of the constitutional debate. I have shared the disappointments of failed talks, failed negotiations, failed dreams. I at times thought that agreement might be impossible.

Therefore, it was with some surprise, but also with some pleasure, that I watched the First Ministers reach a tentative agreement on July 7 and then seal it with Quebec's participation on August 28. The consensus agreement, with its 60 parts contained in 20 typewritten pages, is an interesting document. It is obviously a compromise document, a negotiated agreement in which no one can claim complete victory but everyone can see some advance. The importance of that agreement is more than its substance, although substance is important.

Its importance, however, lies in the fact that representatives of the federal, provincial and territorial governments, together with representatives of the aboriginal communities in Canada, cared enough about this country to say they would accept what was written as the bottom line. The consensus agreement establishes that Canada remains a country guided by tolerance and compromise. It establishes that despite our many differences, Canadians remain willing to co-operate to achieve greater well-being for all.

The agreement establishes beyond all else that Canadians have a right to be Canadian in different ways, in different times, in different places, and yet feel we are all Canadians just the same. There is a lot in the agreement and parts will be, and in some cases should be, criticized because at some point in our future we will look at this document and say this did not work, that did not work. However, when taken as a whole with the knowledge that it is a compromise document the agreement can be supported.

I acknowledge that the deal is not perfect. In fact, I know that if I thought the deal was perfect then there would be others for whom the deal would be completely intolerable because there are many, including members of this Chamber, with whom I do not agree.

Our differences threatened, and perhaps still do threaten, to tear this country apart. The constitutional debate took us to crisis proportions throughout Canada. The consensus agreement can remove that crisis. There will still be a debate. There will always be a debate about the constitutional issues in this country. The constitutional debate has been a fluid thing. It moves, it rolls and it bounces around, but with this agreement the debate can lose those crisis elements and it can return to a rational and relaxed level.

If I were to have written the constitutional agreement all by myself it would have been a much different document and I would have been a much happier person. By the same token if the Prime Minister had written the constitutional accord by himself it too would have been a different document than the one we have in front of us today and I would have been a very unhappy person in those circumstances.

The premiers and the aboriginal leaders in this country are to be congratulated and thanked for their efforts. When one looks at the time they required to achieve their consensus one recognizes that each of them wanted this deal to work. If that time, research, negotiating principles and effort had gone into discussing Canada's economic problems instead of the Constitution, I know there would be less economic insecurity among farmers, business people, students, pensioners, wage earners and others in this country today.

Canadians would be feeling more optimistic and less fearful for their personal financial security. We still have to cross that bridge. If Canadians vote yes in support of this agreement, the First Ministers' meetings, with aboriginal and territorial participation, can begin to deal with our real Canadian crisis.

If we vote no in opposition to this deal we are telling the political leaders to go back to the drawing board, to go back into that constitutional crisis and to argue about amending formulas instead of economic development, to argue about numbers of senators instead of the price of wheat or beef, to argue about spending power jurisdictions instead of about job creation, to argue about court appointments instead of intergovernmental or international trade agreements like the free trade agreement and the North American free trade agreement.

Personally, as a member of Parliament and as a resident of Saskatchewan I really do not think this is much of a choice. When we support this consensus agreement we are participating in the end of one historical drama and beginning a new one. The end is a pleasant one and the new one is a challenge. We are beginning the process that will allow Canadians to reclaim their economy, to reclaim their country.

In fact, I would like to put it in more personal terms. We will have a chance to reclaim our country if this constitutional consensus is accepted.

When my leader, the member for Yukon, yesterday said in this House that despite its flaws Canada is a great success and a very fortunate nation, I recalled the television images coming into our homes and offices each night; images captured forever in countries like Somalia, Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and even in parts of the United States; images that capture the human suffering of people without homes, without food, without clothing, without freedom, and without hope.

We are a fortunate nation by comparison but we have problems and those problems need to be addressed. We have the ability to solve our problems but only when we are prepared to confront them sensibly and without undue emotion. The October 26 referendum gives us a chance to put the crisis of the constitutional debate behind us. It gives us a chance to move on to other issues. It gives us a chance to begin a new process that is built from co-operation not confrontation. It is a chance I want to take. It is a chance I want others in this country to take. I urge all Canadians no matter where they live in Canada to join with me and other members of this House in taking that chance by voting yes in the October 26 referendum.

• (0130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and proud to be participating in this historic debate. First, I would like to say that I am proud of my Italian origin. I am proud to be a Quebecer, but I am especially proud to be a Canadian. As a result of this historic period in our history, we shall, after October 26, emerge as a stronger, greater, more generous and more tolerant country.

I am proud to be a member of a party that has always shown leadership on constitutional issues and I am proud to have a leader, the Leader of the Opposition, my leader, who, at the outset, had the courage to testify before the Bélanger-Campeau commission in Quebec and present the case for Canada. He had the courage to rise above all political partisanship and propose a plan of action, that is a nine-point plan to break this constitutional deadlock. Much of this plan is present in the Beaudoin-Dobbie report and today it is present in the agreement of August 28.

As Whip of the official opposition, I would now like to thank my colleagues who, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, participated in this process—especially within the Beaudoin-Dobbie parliamentary committee. First, I would like to thank our official spokesman who, for two years, has done an excellent job within the Bélanger-Campeau commission and within the Beaudoin-Dobbie parliamentary committee: the member for Papineau—St-Michel. Thank you on behalf of the whole caucus. I would also like to thank the member for St-Boniface, the member for Mississauga East, the member for Western Arctic, the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys and the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, six members who represented us and did an excellent job, and of course all the other members of this House who contributed to the work of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee and to other bodies.

From the beginning, when the Leader of the Opposition suggested that once the agreement had been reached that Canadians should vote on it in a referendum, I supported this idea. I remember having participated in public debates on open-line radio shows, even with government members, and I am happy that today we finally have agreed, on both sides of the House, that a referendum is necessary because the Constitution belongs to the people. Of course, there are people who said at the time, and who still say today, that a referendum implies a risk and may be divisive. Of course, there will be emotional debates. However, the fact is that between now and October 26 we will speak emotionally, but we will also have the opportunity to get to know each other, to get to know our regions and to appreciate Canada, this great country of ours. This will also give Canadians an opportunity to show in practical terms our tolerance and our generosity, qualities which make Canada what it is. I am sure that on October 26, this tolerance and this generosity will be reflected in the results of the referendum, because I am convinced that in all regions of Canada, there will be an overwhelming yes vote.

In the 12 or so minutes that I have left, at this very late hour, let me deal briefly with the agreement.

I would like, first of all, to touch on what I call the two solitudes that constitute Canada. There are those Canadians who think that we should not give too much to Quebec or who believe that this agreement gives too much to that province and who are therefore against it and would like to vote against it. On the other hand, there are a number of Quebecers who think that this agreement does not give enough to Quebec and who think that they have to vote against it also. That is the dilemma of the two solitudes that we have in Canada.

Given those two options, those two solitudes, if we were to go with the view that all of the powers must be maintained, that none should be given to Quebec or to the other provinces and that we should have a central government and a very centralized form of federalism, we would end up in such a rigid situation that the country might disintegrate.

If, on the other hand, we were to agree with those Quebecers who are demanding the transfer of all federal powers, we would then no longer have any reason to maintain a federation or a federal government and in that case also, the country might disintegrate.

The only way to keep this country united is the Canadian way. Thus the need for compromise, for taking a middle ground, so that all the regions of Canada may be allowed to develop and prosper, while at the same time having a federal government able to provide a prosperous future for this country as a whole and lead us into the 21st century.

If you go back in history, you will see that the discussion has changed very little in the last 125 years. Nevertheless, a compromise was reached, which gave us our Constitution. I think that the same thing will be done again.

Let us look at the arguments from those who are against the agreement. I would like to point out at the outset that the agreement is not perfect because I would not want anyone to be able to come back later on, if I were to criticize the agreement, and say that I had said it was perfect. No, the agreement is not perfect. Moreover, mere mortals cannot aspire to perfection. I do not think the agreement reached 125 years ago was perfect, nor was the agreement to patriate the Constitution in 1982, nor was the Meech Lake accord, and nor is the agreement that we have before us today. But the situation is such that, even with all its imperfections, and I intend to look at them in detail, this agreement, however imperfect, must be approved because, as I mentioned, it is a compromise position and, historically, Canada is a country built on compromise. As long as there is a willingness to compromise, there is reason to believe in and hope for a bright and prosperous future for our children and grandchildren.

Even though the agreement is not perfect, I believe it must be supported. We heard some of our colleagues here tonight who are against the agreement. Just what was the thrust of their criticism? It was simply that there was no legal text.

We want to consult the people. We have an agreement, a political document. The Prime Minister of Canada, all the provincial premiers, the leaders of the two territorial governments and the aboriginal leaders have agreed to this compromise. They have said publicly that there was a consensus and therefore an agreement, and although there are people who say it was not signed, to me that is as good as a signature.

• (0140)

As I said earlier, part of the process suggested by my leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition, was to submit the agreement to the people for consultation. This is unprecedented in the history of this country and I think the fact this is happening should give us cause to rejoice. For once, citizens, and not a small group of elected representatives, will decide on the future of the country.

The legal text will come later. It is our responsibility as elected representatives and legislators to ensure that the legislation as such, after consultation with and approval by the people, respects and reflects what was in the text of the August 28 agreement. That is our responsibility. For the time being, we must put this agreement or compromise before the people of Canada so they can decide and then we can continue the process.

It is like buying a house. What do you do when you buy a house? You go and look at the house, meet the seller, negotiate and strike a deal. For instance, the seller wants $150,000 and the buyer offers $120,000. Finally, an agreement is reached on the price, and a purchase offer is signed. In Quebec the offer goes to the notary and elsewhere in Canada it goes to a lawyer who prepares the sale contract. While legal experts prepare the purchase or sale contract, the buyer can show the house to his family. Before the final signature, he has plenty of time to show his family the house. In Quebec there is a law that provides for a cooling off period during which the purchase offer may be cancelled.

I must say that if the issue of the legal text is the only case opponents can make against the agreement, they do not have a very strong case, and I am sure that by October 26, Canadians will realize that.

People must understand the legal text is not an issue, since we have a text.

[*English*]

You are telling me that I have only two minutes left and I would like to tell about something that happened to me last week. Last week I had the honour and the pleasure of visiting one of my schools in the riding where it was celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation. During that visit, I was given a book called *Anthology of a Student Riding*. This is from the school board on which I was honoured to serve as a commissioner and chairman until I was elected in 1984.

I am sure that my colleague, if I ever pass my time, will forgive me and allow me to read into the record the thoughts of a young boy which are so pertinent to what we are doing all day today and now at 1:45 in the morning. Andrew Wieczorek is a grade five student. I quote:

"Canada, ah, what a country. But have any of you noticed the different languages which people speak, the beauty of the forest and nature or all the jobs and employment?

[*Translation*]

This country of ours is much more than a geographical entity.

[*English*]

I am just one citizen of Canada and I am very proud to be Canadian, but sometimes I am discouraged by the attitude of our fellow Canadians. For instance, people who live in Quebec are wondering if separating from Canada is a good idea. I think that these people are foolish because they do not realize the fact that they are still Canadian and that they should look out for their country.

As a Canadian, I am proud of this vast, beautiful country from the eastern fishing coast to the prairies and of the rich forest land of British Columbia. Where else but in Canada can you have a chance to be different and enjoy it? There are St. Patrick's Day celebrations for the Irish, Columbus Day for the Italians and of course a May 3 celebrations for the Polish. Then, on July 1 all Canadians celebrate Canada Day as one big, united family.

All people from nation to nation are welcome in our country full of freedom. People who emigrate to Canada see a future for their children here, a vision that this would be the greatest country in the world. My grandparents were also immigrants and it is because of their dreams for a new life that I am here as a Canadian today.

Canada also means freedom. As a Canadian, I have the freedom to develop into whatever I wish and to wave my flag and be proud of it. Other countries do not possess this freedom we have. I have freedom of speech and freedom of religion. When I am 18, I will have the freedom to vote for whomever I think is best to lead this great country.

Even though I am a young Canadian, I hope that my dream of a Canada staying together continues.

[*Translation*]

French and English, black and white, young and old.

[*English*]

When I grow older, I will try to contribute in my own way to help Canada to grow either through my career as psychiatrist or my talents as a musician.

[*Translation*]

My country, it's you, it's me, it's Canada".

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate from the beginning, and I have come to the conclusion that those who are speaking for the proposal are all trying to sidestep the issue. I have just heard the member for the Montreal area, who, of course, ended his speech on a patriotic note. I also heard the Prime Minister of Canada. His was also a very patriotic speech. Previous speakers have told us what a wonderful country we live in. They have tried at all costs to extol the virtues of this country, a country where borrowing has been a way of life for the last 20 years and which is on the fringe of bankruptcy. But they chose to ignore this and resort instead to emotional arguments, suggesting that this proposal, this draft package that has been tabled, could end up dividing the country.

I would say that they are obviously trying to sidestep the question. That strategy was, of course, made clear when on the television you had Premier Bourassa, from Quebec, and the Prime Minister, with big smiles on their faces, shaking hands and saying: at last, we have an agreement.

You also saw the Prime Minister meeting with the members of his caucus the next day in Drummondville. They were all kissing each other and crying phoney tears in order to show the population that at long last they had reached an agreement. Of course they thought that Quebecers would say:"What a welcome relief. We have been talking about the Constitution for two years; enough is enough. They finally found a solution; we will not hear about this anymore."

• (0150)

First thing the following morning, Quebecers started to hear experts saying: This is not an agreement, it is a rough draft, a sketch. It is not an agreement since nobody dared to sign it and since there are no legal documents. We do not know how to interpret this so-called agreement. They used words like "we should do this or that", "this should be", but nothing was clear and we are about to ask Canada's and Quebec's population to spend, directly or indirectly, nearly 200 million dollars in government money to give an answer for a proposition which is not really a proposition. According to me, this is a downright waste. We could have obtained the same results through a poll for only a few hundred thousand dollars.

Since the experts have started to analyse that draft agreement, the people, particularly the Quebecers, have realized that this agreement is really unacceptable not only for them but for all Canadians.

Since according to the polls the members of Parliament have little credibility, this evening I will first refer to what experts have to say. I would like to quote several of those who analysed this project and expressed themselves. I am going to quote a few of them. For the most part they say that the *status quo* is worse. That is to say that we keep exactly what we had before but it is even worse. The truth is, of course—or the credibility in any case—that Quebecers should read the analysis made by experts who come straight out against what we hear in the speeches from people who claim to see in this agreement something extraordinary, when in fact it is so "unextraordinary". That is why it is unanimous; it is because there is nothing in it; nothing final, everything will have to be renegotiated over and over again.

I will start with the distinct society. According to expert Josée Legault, this so-called agreement only pays lip service to Quebec as a distinct society; it will put French Quebecers in a minority position and in an ethnic strait-jacket. That is to say that they will once again be a minority in their own province. I know what it is like. When I arrived in Montreal from a small town in central Quebec, I really felt I was a member of the minority there, in Montreal, in my own province. This is what she said, a political scientist at Université du Québec in Montreal. She can be trusted since she is an expert: ; "You can soon kiss goodbye to whatever is left of the French character of Montreal."

Let me give another example. Eight experts from five or six major Quebec universities, together with the University of Ottawa, state that the distinct society clause is a step backward for Quebec. These are the people that are to be believed instead of listening to those speeches which are unrelated to the substance of this deal, those patriotic speeches such as those I heard today which have nothing to do with the proposal before us.

Turning to powers, it is claimed that Quebec will have extraordinary powers, but Carleton University political science professor François Rocher, who is not a Quebecer and surely not a sovereignist, says that this is the crowning moment of centralizing federalism and a deal that brings to a halt 30 years of dynamic political development in Quebec. I am not the person saying this. It was stated by a professor of political science form Carleton University in Ottawa.

As regards the claim that Quebec gained a great many powers, a neutral expert says the opposite, that this is the crowning moment of centralizing federalism, although in 1984 the Prime Minister was saying "No more centralizing federalism" in his speeches. Today the same man supports a deal that centralizes even more power in Ottawa.

In her column in *Le Devoir*, Lise Bissonnette, a well-known and highly credible commentator in Quebec says the following: A yes vote will mean the start of sterile negotiations and fresh problems. Of course, nothing is settled with this deal since everything is to be negotiated. Everything will have to be negotiated point by point *ad vitam aeternam*. This is what she says. These are not politicians speaking; these are not great patriots. This deal is real and has been tabled in this House. This is what must be debated, not Canada's beautiful mountains, and not Macdonald or Cartier who helped found Canada. We should be talking about the future, not the past. What is at issue is our future and that of our children.

Let us talk of the future of our children. Surveys conducted in Quebec CEGEPs show that between 80 and 85 per cent of young people, especially francophone young people are against this deal. They have their future in mind. Forget about the past and look at the future, and you will see clearly that people are against this proposal, at least those who are looking toward the future.

Let us talk about business people. The president of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Bernard Roy, former chief of staff for Prime Minister Mulroney, stated: Clearly, what is being offered here is not what business wanted. This is the new president of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal speaking. He added that giving an equal Senate more powers than those of the current upper house will make the operations of the federal government even more cumbersome and inefficient. This is not just anybody speaking; this the president of the Chamber of Commerce and a friend of the Prime Minister. Mr. Le Hir, who also represents the Canadian Manufacturer's Association, the most important association in Quebec, one that is vital to our economy. Quebec could not survive without its small businesses. Mr. Le Hir says that it is the *status quo*, which is even worse. This proposal must be rejected, and not only by Quebecers. If this constitutional proposal is adopted, you can be sure that Canada will continue to be ineffective, have large deficits and make people poorer.

• (0200)

This proposal is bad not only for Quebec, but for the whole country. Let us forget about all those patriotic speeches and start thinking about the proposal. The government's strategy is to elude the real question and then people will say that, unfortunately, it did not see what was happening. We have to open our eyes and realize that this proposal is bad for Canada's economy and even worse for Quebec's economy.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Speaker? One minute. In one minute, I will tell you that Quebecers are intelligent people who, more and more, go to university and are able to understand. I can assure you that this strategy of trying to elude the issue will not work in Quebec. Quebecers are not water carriers anymore; they are intelligent people who are able to understand. I am convinced that Quebecers will vote no because if we vote yes to this accord, we will have endless negotiations and that will be harmful for the Canadian and Quebec economy.

I will vote no and work very hard not to get into this kind of project that will totally kill Quebec and its economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, there are moments of truth in the lives of nations just as there are in the lives of individuals. The national referendum on the constitutional agreement will be a moment of truth for Canada. Perhaps it might be said that it is one of the most important tests in our 125 year history.

A positive vote in this referendum would not mean a final resolve to our almost pathological predisposition to bite our own tail, but it would be an affirmation of our nationhood. It would be a vote of confidence in the future of this country. It would allow Canadians to get on with their lives. It would allow us to begin to tackle the many pressing economic difficulties that also threaten the future of this nation.

On the other hand, a negative vote, whether it is a negative vote by a single province or in fact right across the nation, would only drive us into further turmoil. While it may not precipitate the departure of Quebec—and there is really no indication that that would be the final outcome—a negative vote in this referendum would ensure the continued paralysis of the federal Parliament as this nation struggles to regain its balance to find yet another formula for success.

A negative vote on this referendum would decimate the dramatic gains that this country has made at redressing the historic wrongs to our aboriginal peoples. It would jeopardize what amounts to the quantum leap we have made politically in reforming our antiquated Senate. A negative vote would ensure the continuation of the kind of economic malaise that has gripped this nation, which we have seen throw thousands and thousands of Canadians out of work and compromise and jeopardize our very economic future. This country will have no future. It will have no economic prosperity until it resolves once and for all our current constitutional dilemma.

I do not pretend for a moment that this constitutional agreement is a panacea to all current or future constitutional squabbles. Lord knows that Canada's favourite pastime has become its obsession with constitutional self-flagellation. Why are we tough on ourselves? When we look at it, we really have so much going for us as a country and as a people, it is really beyond reason but it seems to be the propensity of Canadians and of the Canadian system to be very hard on themselves, to be very critical.

With respect to the agreement that has been brought together by the first ministers of this country, it is not a perfect deal by any means. But it is an agreement that has been honourably achieved by political leaders, who I believe have been genuine in their intent in acting in our national interests.

It settles Quebec's unique status as the homeland and the protector of the French heritage. More important, it brings our aboriginal Canadians into the Constitution in a very meaningful and justifiable way. It responds to the demands from our western provinces for Senate change and for a larger presence in the national scene.

For British Columbians, the changes to the House of Commons and Senate that have been agreed upon will ensure a stronger voice for that province at the centre. An expanded House of Commons will give British Columbians greater representation and a guarantee of fairer representation by population with the awarding of seven new seats over the next six years. The reformed Senate will ensure that B.C. has an elected and responsible representation, essentially equal to Quebec or Ontario. That is really quite an accomplishment when one considers what we have now.

While the constitutional journey has been an arduous one, we have managed to achieve what was thought to be essentially impossible in a country as large and as diverse as Canada. We have achieved consensus through compromise. This constitutional deal is like a patchwork quilt, a skein of trade-offs if you like.

When the agreement is analysed, many of the elements would never stand on their own but each one is crucial to the survival of the deal because each one balances in some fundamental way some other compromise in the package. While almost no one is satisfied with the total package, I would submit that most Canadians agree that it is perhaps the best we can hope for. It is a satisfactory resolution of widely divergent views and widely divergent geographic and political interests. If politics is the art of compromise, I think most would agree that Canada's first ministers have embraced a package that is the very embodiment of that sentiment. While I am certainly not happy with all aspects of the deal, I am willing to concede that an agreement that at least partially satisfies the various regions of this country is far better for the future of this country than no agreement at all.

• (0210)

I would also like to emphasize that I am not going to be wrapping myself in the flag to sell this deal. While I support it personally, I am not its architect and I cannot take credit for its strengths. At the same time I refuse to take the flack for its weaknesses.

My role, as I see it as the representative of the Okanagan—Shuswap in this particular referendum campaign, is really very simple. I consider it my duty to provide opportunities for my constituents to learn as many details as they can about the pros and cons of this agreement so that they can make an informed, reasoned and an intelligent choice when it comes to the vote on October 26.

I am not going to sell it. I am not going to become the bagman of the Prime Minister, should he try to play Captain Canada with it. I am not going to wrap myself in the flag or try to exorcise the demons of the no vote because there are no demons, there are no bad Canadians. There are people who might feel differently and vote differently than I do and they have every right to do so; that is our democratic process. I am going to do my best to explain this agreement, its strengths and its weaknesses, so that my constituents in Okanagan—Shuswap can make the best choice as they see fit.

I believe in the use of referendums as a legitimate tool in the democratic process. I supported the government in its decision to implement the referendum legislation. Although I agree it is an imperfect tool, a referendum is a legitimate way of enhancing the powers of the democratic process through empowerment of the people in a vote of ratification. That is why I am willing to abide by the expressed wishes of the constituents of the Okanagan—Shuswap and place my faith in the collective wisdom of the people of Canada through referendum.

Now that we have the proposed agreement, it is time to let the people decide quietly, to reach that decision intelligently, essentially free from the political rhetoric and the hyperbole that often confuses more than explains.

Let me add one further thought in this regard because it strikes me as odd that while we have debated the social constitution of this country to the point of exhaustion, and I submit to national nausea on the issue, we have essentially failed to recognize a very important event that has unfolded almost unnoticed before the eyes of Canadians. While Canadians have been focusing exclusively on this one debate, the government has quietly rewritten the economic constitution of this country through the agreement of the North American free trade deal between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. There was no public debate and no parliamentary process.

If the government feels obliged to test the mettle of our social constitution through a process of public referendum, then it should certainly feel obliged to put the North American free trade agreement to the same test of public scrutiny. That is why my colleague, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, earlier today called upon the Prime Minister in the House to call a parallel referendum on the North American free trade agreement.

I support his plea for a call for a referendum on the NAFTA deal. Put it to the people as has been our social constitution and let them decide on the re-writing of our economic constitution. Whether it is distinct society, whether it is Senate reform or whether it is the formation of a continental trading bloc from the Yukon to the Yucatan, Canadians should be allowed to ratify such sweeping social and economic changes through the process of referendum.

It is simply hypocritical for the government to call a referendum on the social constitution and not call a referendum on the re-writing of our economic constitution.

In closing, let me refer to an editorial which I found in one of my local newspapers today which I think neatly summarizes my views. It relates to the referendum process and it cautions the readers. It states:

> Whatever your views on the constitutional package, base your final decision on what your head says, not your heart. An issue as important as this shouldn't be clouded by emotions.
>
> The majority of the public is tired of the constitutional debate, but now is the time to set aside that malaise and learn everything possible about the proposal put forward. The future of our country is at stake.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting at this hour to follow the learned and well-spoken member for Okanagan—Shuswap. The riding of Stormont—Dundas and his own are paired in a very positive initiative, ongoing right now, with our young people across Canada, Voyageur '92. The feedback we are getting from our young people who have been to the Okanagan—Shuswap area and have had the opportunity to exchange views, shows they have a far better and greater understanding and more respect for young Canadians of that region.

I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate on the constitutional referendum on which Canadians will vote on October 26. There is no doubt the outcome of this vote will have a considerable impact on the future of Canada. If Canadians decide to accept the Charlottetown agreement, fundamental changes will be made to the way Canada is to be governed.

Conversely, if the agreement fails to be approved, one can only speculate as to how serious a setback this would be for Canada. One should not associate a rejection of this agreement as being a direct catalyst for the break-up of Canada. However, from a realistic point of view, a continuation of the constitutional paralysis which has plagued Canada for many years, can only lead to increased political and economic instability throughout the country.

[*Translation*]

Surely Canada's existence as a united political entity could be jeopardized. Moreover, steps to solve the pressing economic problems the country now faces would again be postponed, which could also complicate the situation. Therefore, on October 26, Canadians will have the opportunity to decide their future in clear terms.

[*English*]

By way of a national referendum, Canadians will have a clear means to say yes to a renewed Canada. The constitutional agreement that will be voted on was achieved through a long process of consultation and public debate. The views of Canadians from across Canada have been taken into consideration.

The Liberal Party of Canada was on record from the outset that Canadians must not be excluded from the constitutional process. Furthermore, we have maintained that the people of Canada must have the opportunity in a referendum to pass judgment on any agreement. I am sure Canadians are pleased that these two points have been met.

The constitutional agreement does not contain everything Canadians would have liked to see included. The Liberal Party would like to have seen more with regard to establishing a stronger economic union, including a more detailed framework for the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers. In addition, we would like to have seen a more effective Senate than what was devised.

Regardless of these outstanding issues, it is important for Canadians to remember that this agreement can be amended in the future. We live in a dynamic and changing society. The needs of Canada and Canadians change over time. The agreement has an amending formula and if changes become necessary, they can be introduced. However, the constitutional agreement does provide Canadians with a basis to work from.

[*Translation*]

If they accept this agreement, Canadians will continue to enjoy a standard of living which is envied the world over. It has been said that Canada is a difficult country to govern. True, we live in a huge country, with an ethnically diverse population. Yet, during the past 125 years, we have built a strong country which has much to offer to its inhabitants. This agreement gives Canadians the opportunity to make their country an even better place. Yet, during the past 125 years we have built a strong country which has much to offer to its inhabitants. This agreement gives Canadians the opportunity to make their country an even better place.

• (0220)

[*English*]

This agreement will enable Canada to meet the economic and social challenges ahead as we prepare for the next century. We live in an increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace today. For Canada to survive, we must be strong and united, both economically and politically. We have an opportunity before us to provide Canada with a blueprint for reform and renewal.

Canadians have traditionally expressed a desire for compromise. This agreement is an example of compromise. It offers hope for a better future for all Canadians. Regardless of our origins, the language we speak or where we live, Canadians have shared this land in harmony.

We all have hopes and aspirations for ourselves, our families and for Canada. We have, however, realized what Canada has managed to achieve over the last 125 years. We take pride in Canada's place within the world community. We are a country committed to peace and social justice. While more work is required, we are grateful for what we have and want to remain Canadians.

Canadians want to continue to share in our country's rich resources and heritage. We want to continue contributing to the growth of Canada. More important, we want to pass on to our children and future generations of Canadians a country that will provide them with the same countless opportunities for social and economic advancement that we have enjoyed.

In my riding of Stormont—Dundas, English and French speaking residents have lived side by side for many years. In addition, the city of Cornwall is next to the Akwesasne reserve on Cornwall Island. My riding is a microcosm of Canada.

[*Translation*]

On the economic level, Stormont—Dundas has had its fair share of hardships. But its population knows that economic growth and future prosperity depend on a strong and united Canada. Canadians in Stormont—Dundas live together in harmony, in a community made rich by the cultural heritage of its francophone, anglophone, native and multicultural roots. This riding is an example of what Canada can go on being, that is to say a diversified nation whose diversity is an advantage rather than a handicap.

[*English*]

October 26 will be a milestone for Canada. Canadians will be able to support the constitutional agreement and proceed with the creation of a better Canada for every Canadian. We can choose to preserve Canada and build for its future.

All three major political parties in Canada have expressed their support for the constitutional agreement. Labour unions and business organizations across the country have also come out in favour of this agreement. However, it will be left up to the people of Canada to have the final say on whether or not this agreement will come into effect. This is as it should be and I am confident that the decision of the people will be the correct one.

I believe Canadians will want to endorse this agreement. I am sure Canadians understand the difficulty in arriving at a constitutional agreement. Certainly they know it would have been virtually impossible to obtain a constitutional agreement that would suit everyone. For that matter, arriving at a consensus for an agreement in itself is not an easy task, as the first ministers would certainly attest. Yet an agreement was reached and it is now up to Canadians to vote on it.

While the agreement is not all encompassing, it puts forward an acceptable resolution to the seemingly endless constitutional debate. I plan to campaign throughout Stormont—Dundas in favour of this it and I hope a number of my constituents will do likewise. Canada has devoted a significant amount of time and energy to resolving our constitutional differences. We have finally arrived at an agreement worthy of support.

In conclusion, I believe Canadians will make a decision to support the constitutional agreement. I will urge my constituents to vote in favour of it on October 26. In doing so, they will be a part of an historic moment in Canadian history, when Canadians from across the country will say yes to constitutional reform and yes to a renewed Canada, a Canada that will be strong and united.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, it being 2.25 in the morning, I feel I should remind our viewers what it is we are debating. Therefore, I quote from our Orders of the Day. What we are debating is:

> That pursuant to the act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of a referendum question.
>
> "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992.
>
> _____ _____ "
>
> yes no

We have the *Consensus Report on the Constitution*, Charlottetown, August 28, 1992, final text. I remind the viewers it is not the legal text but the final text. Tomorrow I am assured that we will receive the legal text.

In 1930 at the beginning of the Great Depression, my father Walter Flis and my mother Anna Flis decided to cross the ocean with two children and choose another country where they felt they would make a better living, not so much for themselves but for their children. They came to this great country called Canada. They were not coming to Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia, they were coming to Canada. That is all they knew about this country. It was Canada.

Because the immigration rules of the 1930s required that if you had no relatives in Canada you had to work two years on a farm, they were heading to Alberta to work their two years on a farm.

On the boat coming from Poland they met other friends and those friends said that they had relatives in Saskatchewan. They were persuaded to go to Saskatchewan. The two-year commitment to work on a farm in Saskatchewan turned out to be 22 years. They purchased a homestead and a half section of land. From two years they ended up farming for 22 years.

As it is today, the income from farming in Saskatchewan was insufficient to support a family, a mom and dad and six children. During the winters my father would go to Kenora, Ontario, to work in the bush camps to earn extra money to buy seed in the spring to sow the next year's crop. Other winters I remember my father and my oldest brother, who was only 16, going to Nanaimo, B.C., to unload coal off the ships, again to earn a few extra dollars to buy grain and pay for groceries for the coming year.

That reminds me that there is something wrong with this package agreed to on August 28. I am reminded that there were no labour barriers, no trade barriers of any kind between provinces. My father and brother could work in other provinces and bring the money home to supplement the farm income.

In 1952 after three crop failures in a row, my father could not see any future for four sons and two daughters in farming. He sold the half section of land and moved to Ontario. The farms in Ontario were too expensive. He could not afford one so he ended up buying a little family restaurant business and this went very well. It put me through teacher's college and university for which I am very thankful.

• (0230)

I was in my mid–20s when I met my wife at the opening of the seaway in Cornwall. The late Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was there. I always credit the late John Diefenbaker for getting my wife Sophie Radziszewiski and myself together. The former parliamentary secretary is holding a book up of the former Prime Minister.

My wife was raised in Quebec. I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. We got married and where did we settle down? In Ontario. Again, there were no barriers for my wife or myself. We were free to move across this great country. Then why could the Prime Minister and the first ministers not once and for all remove all of the barriers between the provinces now, the labour barriers, the trade barriers, et cetera?

My son did the reverse. He saw no future in Ontario. He is managing a restaurant and a brew pub in Saskatoon but he cannot buy beer from Alberta or New Brunswick. He has to buy the beer that is produced in Saskatchewan and yet we want to be competitive on the world market.

Here is a Prime Minister who boasts in this House how he has removed the barriers between Canada and the United States, how he has removed the trade barriers between Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Yet we seem to have been powerless to remove the barriers between the provinces. I see that as a big flaw in this package we are asking the people to vote on in the referendum on October 26.

During the summer I did a lot of door–to–door canvassing. I listened to what my constituents had to say about this whole Constitution debate. Of course, they have had enough of this debate. They say: "Get on with it. Vote for it. Get it out of the way and concentrate on the important things that are troubling this country".

They pointed out what they agree with. They are very pleased the aboriginal people will have finally been recognized, that they have the right to self–government. They were very pleased with the reforms to the Senate, reducing the Senate to 62 seats.

They were not pleased with increasing the members in the House of Commons. I must say I agree with my constituents on that. For the number of people we represent I do not think we need more members. I think what members need is additional staff. Give me an additional staff person so I can serve my constituents better, but I believe we have enough MPs now.

Their biggest concern was that we are giving away too many powers to the provinces in this package. They want a strong central government. My constituency is made up of 40 per cent Anglo–Saxon Canadians and 60 per cent Canadians of other backgrounds. What they want and wish for this country is a strong central government. They are very concerned we have given away too much power to the provinces, which will weaken this country.

One of the things they pointed out was immigration. Why on earth would you give immigration to the provinces? There may not be many problems in the next decade, but who knows 30 or 50 years from now? Immigration patterns may change. Some provinces may be very selective and discriminatory and embarrass Canada because we may be breaking the United Nations conventions on immigration. We may be breaking and violating the human rights of people from certain countries. What an embarrassing situation Canada could be in because some province may want to be very selective in its immigration policy and may embarrass the whole country. We could lose the kind of reputation the United Nations gave us today.

Let us look at the powers we gave to the provinces on human development and training. Why would we give away training to the provinces when we are in such difficult times with unemployment and economic issues? We hear a lot of criticism today about our educational system. I do not blame the educational system. I blame us in this House, the federal leaders, for not having the foresight and the leadership. What is lacking as far as education and training? National objectives for this country are what is lacking. We do not set national goals for the next 30, 40, 50 years. If we do not have these national objectives how can the provinces strike curriculums to meet national objectives? It is no wonder we are floundering.

The reverse should have happened. Training and education should have been more centralized so that we can give our country direction. If, for example, in the next 30 years we feel we want to move further into space technology, then we should be building that into our school curriculums from kindergarten right on through university, but central federal government control over this is needed.

Twenty years ago I visited the school systems in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland when they were still under communist regimes. I was quite impressed with the high calibre of their educational systems. However, their educational systems were highly centralized, too highly centralized for my liking.

As a federal government we have to take a look at how, through setting national objectives for the country, we can strengthen the whole educational system and training. Unfortunately, we have gone the other way.

My constituents have great concerns about weakening the federal government.

I am sure the parliamentary secretary and you, Mr. Speaker, must be thinking: "God, is Mr. Flis voting against this agreement? Is he going to campaign on the no side?" No, Mr. Speaker. I will use every ounce of energy I have to work for the yes side of this agreement because as associate critic for external affairs for our party, I have had the opportunity of visiting and working in many other countries, including Ethiopia, Pakistan, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, you name it. Every time I return I am so thankful to the Lord that my parents chose to come to Canada.

I was just handed this year's silver dollar. It so beautifully captures what Canada is all about. I hope every Canadian will go to the bank and get one of these dollars and carry that dollar in his or her pocket on October 26. If they do, I am sure every Canadian will vote yes.

The coin designer, Rita Swanson, who comes from my province of birth, Saskatchewan, says this about her design:

> Underlying my inspiration for the design of the new Canada 125 dollar coin was a desire that it be meaningful—in a national sense. I therefore chose what I believe to be strong national symbols: the flag as our national emblem; children as our future and our source of inspiration; the Parliament buildings as testimony to our history. I hope the design and the coin will help to remind everyone of how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful, unique and very special country.

• (0240)

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to speak in the House tonight in this very important debate about Canada's national unity and the referendum in which all Canadians will be participating in a short six week's time, on October 26.

As I look at the clock, at one end of our country in a couple of hours the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will be getting up, ready to start their day. At the other end of the country, in my province of British Columbia, perhaps some people are still awake and some are sleeping. To those people who cannot get enough of Parliament or who are not sleeping well tonight and maybe have to be put to sleep or who are working at the all-night 7-Elevens or gas stations, we want to get a message across to those people. Here in the Parliament of Canada people are doing what they feel is their best to get the message across that the debate we are having today and will be having from now until October 26 and beyond is an important one for the future of our country, for the day-to-day lives we all lead, what it means to our country and our fellow Canadians.

We are talking tonight about the question on the referendum that all Canadians I hope will participate in on October 26. It is a question that is going to ask Canadians about the constitutional agreement reached in Charlottetown between the Prime Minister, the premiers, territorial and aboriginal leaders.

It is the best bet so far for a united Canada and in particular for resolving the drawn-out debate on the Constitution. The best news of all for many is that we can put the prolonged debate about the Constitution behind us and move forward to address many pressing economic and social concerns in our country.

We know that after October 26 the Constitution will not disappear forever from the public agenda. We know and all Canadians know, now that we have the ability to amend our Constitution on our own and in particular, and as those rules are clarified in the agreement reached in Charlottetown, that we will be debating the Constitution further.

There is a sense of fatigue as has been mentioned. Certainly among most Canadians there is a desire that this Canada round be dealt with now so that when we do carry on the debate about the Constitution and about what government and agencies of government should do, that debate will then be framed around the rules of our Constitution that will have been established.

From the discussions I had with my constituents over the Labour Day weekend, I would say the main message I heard was that it was important to put these discussions behind us. Of course, they were particularly concerned about the future of our country and keeping a united Canada from coast to coast to coast, from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia, to the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

They are trying to capture just what it is to be a Canadian. We have had some difficulty doing that over the past number of years. We all know that often we define ourselves as not being Americans. As a young nation of some 125 years we are really now just making our first serious effort at trying to define exactly what a Canadian is.

The Canada clause is not ringing poetry, but it is a way to try to put on paper what it is that we think Canada stands for. I think that is a particularly important start for a sense of nationhood for us in the future.

When I look at the unity agreement, as I call it, I see a web of compromises and balances that tries to meet the needs of the different parts of Canada, including those of British Columbia and other areas. We are a large country and a diverse nation. As a Confederation we attempt to hold those different regions together under a common agreement and provide us with a reason to exist.

Through the course of the debate on the Constitution in the last two years I have provided information on a regular basis to my constituents by way of a constitutional updates mailing list, regular community meetings on the Constitution, and in particular a constitutional forum that I co-sponsored with students of the College of New Caledonia in Prince George. All the participants at least had a commitment to their view of Canada. It was a Canada that saw our differences, that had debate about those differences, and a lot of questions often as well about those differences, but the bottom line was that we had to stay united as a country.

Our leaders, our premiers, the Prime Minister and others have attempted, certainly over the past two years, to frame an agreement that meets the demands of the different parts of Canada. As many have said before me—and it will be said from now on as we head toward the referendum date—it is not a perfect document. I recall one speaker saying that earlier today. If there were a perfect document here tonight then it would be my guess—and I would share the thoughts of the member from The Battlefords—we would likely offend a great number of people.

I would just like to comment very briefly in the short time I have on a couple of the concerns I have with the package, some of the positive areas, and then look down the road to October 26.

I have always been, I guess one might say, a little old fashioned about the Senate. It has been always my view that our country might have been better served if we did not have the Senate. Of course that is not to be. Certain governments and groups in Canada felt that in fact we needed a Senate, a revised and new Senate, and that is what we have now.

As Canadians get to read the material that will be provided to them, likely *ad nauseam*, there will be plenty of information around in the next couple of weeks on this. If anybody is worried about not having any reading material over the next couple of weeks, there is going to be plenty. They can mark my words.

It is still unclear what influence the new Senate will have on national politics and policies. Will it bark or will it have a bite? Like any part of a constitution, like any part of any agreement, we will have to see it work and see what happens and down the road refine and improve that agreement.

I know a trade union organizer, a long-time resident of the Prince George area, who likened this agreement to a first contract. The employer does not like it. The workers do not like it. But they know they all have to sign it because it is a place to start from. I do not think that is a bad description of what we are debating today.

Another concern I have falls in the area of the division of powers, the exclusive jurisdiction to be granted in provinces in various areas. Two particular concerns come to light. The first one is my concern in terms of the question of a national training program and labour market training.

I have my concerns in that field and I hope this particular area will be monitored closely. I have faith that those provinces that are better off—British Columbia, Alberta, perhaps Ontario and parts of Quebec—will do okay. However, I wonder how successful those provinces that will have to continue to rely on the helping hand of the federal government will be. I urge caution in this particular field.

• (0250)

I mentioned another area that I spent my first months in this Parliament on, the whole question of forestry and the jurisdictional supremacy that we are prepared to give through agreement to the provinces in the field of forestry. We spent some time passing legislation in this House to get a federal Minister of Forestry. We want to make sure he still has a job to do, or perhaps it is not necessary to have the minister any longer. However, with growing concerns about the world environment and our forests, it is an area of concern that I have.

We receive from many businesses in particular and our constituents concerns about the duplication and red tape of government. I suppose one could say, and I am thinking of mining in particular, that is an area where a great deal of duplication may disappear. Some mining companies might be pleased that some effort will be made to reduce the duplication between the different levels of government.

I am pleased that we are going to see in the agreement the whole question of a social union. This will show that we are a caring nation and one that places importance on the identification of social goals which help define us as a country and give direction to our governments.

I am particularly pleased that the whole question of native self-government has been resolved. I see us going down the road to resolving many of the problems we have in that area. I understand some credit is due to the premier of Yukon for providing some guidance and assistance to premiers and to the federal government in terms of what efforts have been made in that area in Yukon and the success that has been had there. It is something we can all learn from as we resolve problems that have been with us for some time.

I am very pleased with this particular part of the agreement that has been reached. I am hopeful about the progress in the future in this area.

In terms of where we are going now in our debate, there will be a vote tonight in this House where I certainly will be voting yes in favour of this referendum question. I am not worried about the wording of a referendum. I am not questioning the intelligence of the voters of Canada. They know what they are going to be voting on. When they go to the polls on October 26, I know that Canadians will make sure their votes are informed and educated.

All members of the House will it their duty to ensure that information is available to our constituents so that they can make their decision. I have said that before in the House. I voted for that question in the House. I believe my constituents know how strongly I feel about it.

Regardless of position and in closing I pay tribute to my leader who in supporting the yes cause of this referendum also paid heed to those who may differ because as members of Parliament we represent those people as well. I look forward to a vigorous and reasoned debate. I look forward to offering all of the information I can to my constituents so that they can make an informed vote. I encourage everyone to participate in this important and historic vote.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, the clock on the wall says seven minutes to three o'clock Eastern Daylight Time. It is a rather extraordinary time to be speaking here in the House of Commons, but after all this is rather an extraordinary issue and these are extraordinary times. Therefore I guess we should not be surprised that we are doing such things at such an unusual early hour of the day.

I am here early this morning to say unequivocally that I support whole-heartedly the Charlottetown accord. I support the October 26 referendum as a means of getting a decisive opinion from Canadians on the Charlottetown accord. I am here to say that I support the question that will be put to Canadians in the referendum of October 26.

First the question. I have heard, not directly, some criticism of the question. I really do not take the criticism seriously because I believe the question is very clear, very straight forward and neutral. I do not think people will have any difficulty understanding the question. I do not think it could be much more clear than the way it is written. It reads:

> Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

I think that is pretty clear. I concede that some people would have preferred a question that was tied a bit more directly to possible sovereignty for the province of Quebec. That might have made, in the eyes of some Canadians, the choice a bit more stark. But let us not fool ourselves. When people are responding to this question with a yes or no, whether they approve the agreement reached on August 28, I am sure that in the back of the minds of most Canadians who will take time to answer the question will be the matter of sovereignty. I am not concerned about that at all. I think the question is very fair.

Now the referendum, the vehicle by which we get the decisive opinion from Canadians. My party, the Liberal Party of Canada, has been solidly behind and advocating a referendum on this issue for more than a year now. We have stated publicly many times that we support a referendum because, in my words anyway, I think it is the only way we are going to settle this issue once and for all.

We know that talking about the Constitution is a kind of Canadian disease. There is no doubt that even after the referendum and if the issue is finally settled people will continue talking about the Constitution one way or the other. We need a decisive response from Canadians and this is the only way we are going to put the issue behind us and put the issue to bed. It will really be the only way to shut some people up.

If we get approval from Canadians, and I sincerely believe we will, we can go to those people who will continue harping on the Constitution and simply put to them that the people of Canada have spoken and enough is enough. We cannot go on with this forever. I think they will respond. They will pay attention to the opinion they will hear from Canadians. If they only hear it from politicians, academics and journalists, I think they will go on. This is one time we have to get the public opinion and we are going to get it. I believe we are going to get a resounding yes vote. That is my feeling and my hope.

In so far as the agreement is concerned—let us talk about that—I do not want to go through every piece of it. I do not want to go through the agreement line by line. That is something that was left to negotiation. We can only hope that the first ministers, the territorial leaders and the aboriginal leaders went through the agreement line by line and have come up with this package. It is now for us, for all Canadians, to vote on this agreement. They will either vote it up or they will vote it down.

When I take the position that I am in support of the accord or in support of the agreement, let us be clear that I am not totally happy with every component of it. This is not a perfect piece. But I was not looking for perfection. I knew before this process started that we were not going to get perfection. At least I was right on that. There is grumbling in Atlantic Canada, there is grumbling in Quebec, there is grumbling in Ontario, there is grumbling out on the prairies, there is grumbling everywhere. Because everybody is grumbling maybe the job was not so bad after all. It is the nature of this constitutional business that there will be grumbling, and we have got it.

• (0300)

It appears that people of one region are saying: "We didn't get as much as people did in some other region of Canada". I think that is a pretty typical response.

I am not happy with every piece. I will give an example, the Senate. I was really hoping for a revised, a renewed Senate that would have more clout, that would give western Canada a larger voice in the Parliament of Canada and I do not think we got it. I think that the institution that we are going to get out of this is going to be largely symbolic. I do not think it is going to be very powerful at all.

I think the negotiators, the first ministers, the territorial leaders and the aboriginal leaders, sacrificed too much of the second E so that they could get the third E, the so-called equality E. But that is what they came up with and I am prepared to live with it.

I am optimistic that if we get this new Senate that it will grow, that it will develop, that it is not going to remain as is for 1,000 years. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, of the development of the U.S. Senate. It developed over the decades. It started out as an appointed body. It is not an appointed body any more. It has grown into a very powerful institution in the United States. I am hoping that the same thing will happen with the new Senate here in Canada.

I think it is unfortunate that the agreement allows for the appointment of any senators. I have really had it up to here with the appointment of senators. I do not think that is the way to go. My guess is for those Canadians who do not have the opportunity to elect directly their senators that it will not be long into the future before they will be demanding of their politicians the right to vote for their senators directly. I assume their argument will be if other Canadians can have that right, why not all of us. I think that is going to come, but it will take time.

Constitutions are documents that are designed to evolve over a long period of time, but of course the evolution is extremely slow. I can certainly live with the accord and I will support it enthusiastically because we have got to get on to other things.

The country is in an economic mess. Wherever I go in my constituency of Winnipeg—St. James, people are saying we have got to get off the Constitution and start working on the economy. The unemployment problem is horrendous. We are talking about unemployment of at least 11.6 per cent of the labour force. If we counted the people who have given up looking for jobs, I suspect that the real unemployment rate is closer to 12 per cent and it could be well over 12.

We have many, many serious economic questions facing us because of Tory mismanagement. There is the free trade agreement that was signed four years ago. There is the NAFTA. There are all kinds of social issues.

When I was door knocking this summer in my riding, if there was one particular message I heard from constituents over and over again, it was: "Let us get the Constitution out of our way. Let us do it with that old Canadian flare of compromise and get on to some very, very pressing economic problems". I would hope that when the referendum is completed on October 26 that the very next day after we get the yes vote, which I believe we will, we can train our guns on the economy because it is in a serious, serious mess and we have to do something.

I would say this to those people who are inclined to say no to the agreement: Sure we can talk about it for another year. We could talk about it for another five years. We could talk about it I suppose for another 10 years. More talk, more debate, more wringing our hands is no guarantee that we are going to get a better document than the one that is before us.

It is decision time. The document reflects compromise. Sure, it is not perfect. Sure, we are frustrated. Think about the people in some other countries in the world; the people of Sarajevo, South Africa, Somalia and in some of the former Republics of the Soviet Union. Think of their problems and ask yourself whether they would prefer our Canadian problems over theirs. I would suspect that they would say almost unanimously that in the full context of world issues, ours are not too bad.

I am glad that we have exercised compromise and that we have come up with an offer to the province of Quebec that will give Quebecers the opportunity to say yes to Canada. I think Quebecers have wanted that opportunity for a long, long time. They want that opportunity. It is here now. It is actually for Quebecers to decide whether the offer is good enough for them. But my feeling is that they will say yes to it and they will say yes to it enthusiastically. When they do and when the rest of Canadians give support to this agreement, we can turn this particular page and go on to some other things.

In my final few words, I would want to say to my constituents that I hope they participate as much as they would want to in this referendum. I would hope that they would seek out as much information as possible so that they feel comfortable with the question and with the issue.

I am prepared to do anything possible for them and to provide them with information. For example next Wednesday at the United Church in Headingley, Manitoba, which is on the west side of my riding, I will have one of my regular open houses. That is next Wednesday evening. At that time I would be more than happy to distribute material on this particular agreement. I invite as many people as possible to come out and ask questions and get the written material so that they can be as well informed as possible. Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the debate. I am satisfied this agreement is a success and we will go on to much better days for this great country.

• (0310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be given this opportunity to participate in this historic debate this evening. This is only the second time this century that the government has asked the people of this country to make their wishes known through a referendum. As the member for Kingston and the Islands, I am pleased to have this opportunity to convey the thoughts and ideas of my constituents.

The agreement reached by the Prime Minister and the provincial premiers is, like the agreement creating our federation in 1867, a great compromise.

As the constitutional affairs minister said today in his speech,

[*English*]

it was a cobbling together of interests and issues, and I fully agree with what the minister said.

I agree also with my colleague from Winnipeg when he said this agreement is not perfect. In fact, I think almost every member of this House has said the agreement is not perfect. I am sure if every member was canvassed as to what the imperfections were, there would probably be 295 different opinions as to what was right and what was not.

There is a wide diversity of view in respect of this agreement. There is plenty of room for disagreement in respect of it. Any one of us can find fault with various provisions in the document, but in spite of that I believe it represents a reasonable compromise and it should be supported.

I do so not because of great enthusiasm for the agreement, but I do so because I think in the long run it can work for our country. I think it represents a significant improvement on the Meech Lake accord and for one particular reason. It is for this reason I had grave reservations and, in fact, opposed the Meech Lake accord for what good that opposition did at the time.

This agreement deals with the Senate. Meech Lake established a Senate that was appointed by the provinces and which left unchecked the Senate's powers. It also provided that the Senate arrangements could not be changed except by the unanimous consent of the provinces. Once the provincial governments got the power to appoint their senators, the Senate had an absolute veto on the House of Commons and the provision for that appointment could not be changed except by unanimous consent.

We had a situation where the provinces in effect took control of the federal Parliament in a very direct way which in my view was completely contrary to the scheme of the British North America Act, our Constitution Act, and of course contrary to any principle of separation of powers which we have in the federal system because it gave the provinces a very powerful override in this Parliament.

It was for that reason I was concerned that the Meech Lake accord was seriously flawed and should be opposed. This deal has solved that problem. I do not particularly like the way it has been solved. As the Leader of the Opposition said, we in this party have reservations about the arrangements in respect of the Senate.

[*Translation*]

We still have some unresolved issues pertaining to the Senate, but I think that we have at least come up with something that is acceptable and I can live with the over-all agreement when I consider all of the other solutions proposed in the agreements that we have here this evening.

Finally, the time has come to conclude our discussions on the Constitution and to begin talking about the other problems facing this country, particularly the economy and unemployment, which is a major problem for Canadians today because of this government's economic policies.

[*English*]

I want to make it very clear also why we are discussing this whole issue tonight because I think that throughout this debate Canadians are going to remember why it is that the constitutional crisis has been brought on this country at this time. It is the direct result of the election of this government in 1984.

The Prime Minister, this government, chose to meddle in constitutional matters when no one in Canada was discussing the Constitution. He had to muddy the waters, he had to ride like a white knight through the constitutional morass that is Canada.

Our Constitution has never been anything but a patchwork of agreements and compromises, and instead of leaving well alone, the Prime Minister and his cabinet decided to bungle into the area as they have bungled into so many things in the course of their administration, and they came up with this crisis. They created this crisis and they have had to solve it.

Everyone is expressing great relief—not everyone but a lot of people are expressing great relief—that the matter has apparently been finally resolved and we will know more on October 26.

The sole reason that we are facing this crisis is because of the incompetent bungling of this government. If it had left this issue alone we would not be facing this problem today. We would not have spent the last four or five years haggling over this particular difficulty.

Members of the opposition have tried to co-operate with the government, have tried to show some leadership—indeed, the Leader of the Opposition has shown tremendous leadership on this issue—to extricate the country from this morass. We have not been players directly in the negotiation of the agreement—that matter has been settled between the premiers and the Prime Minister—although it is certainly true that as an opposition we had some input in the various committee hearings that preceded the final accord.

We have been anxious to get this matter off the table. This is part of the reason for our support for the agreement that has now been reached. But the government has almost destroyed our country in its constitutional foul-ups and bungling and Canadians will not soon forget that particular sad part of the equation, and that is a very important part of the discussion tonight.

The other thing that is important to remember is that the resolution of this dispute or this conflict will do absolutely nothing to create jobs for Canadians, to provide food for Canadians, or to provide additional moneys for those who are desperately in need.

[*Translation*]

Indeed, we will be losing jobs after the referendum. Those people who were employed by the government to assist with the constitutional negotiations will not have any work once the referendum is over. Obviously a constitutional agreement does nothing to help those Canadians who need jobs, work or assistance in providing food for their families.

[*English*]

What I fear about the referendum debate is the activity of two groups whose aim is to break up Canada. On the one hand, we have the group in English Canada who seem to think that perhaps we can dispense with Quebec, that we should kick Quebec out of the country. On the other hand, we have a group in Quebec who believe they would be better off going it alone and should abandon the rest of us and establish their own state and break the country up.

In my view, neither of these groups is sufficiently large on its own to cause the damage that each would like to do. However, an apathetic view on the part of other Canadians, indifference to the outcome of this referendum on the part of well-meaning Canadians, and an unwillingness to enter into this agreement in the spirit of compromise and vote against the question in the referendum and vote no in the referendum, will all add to the strength and the power of those groups that seek to break our country apart.

• (0320)

It is important that we get behind the yes vote in this referendum and I, of course, indicate my support for it. I will campaign to ensure that the yes side does as well as can be done in my constituency of Kingston and the Islands and anywhere else I can be of assistance.

In his famous report, Lord Durham early in the last century reported that he found "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state". That situation, of course, has changed. There is not a war on. However, what I fear has been happening in Canada for a long time and which I hope has been changing in the last few years is the fact that we have two nations living apart under the same roof. Too often we fail to get together and look at each other, examine each other's culture and see what we have in common.

[*Translation*]

Notwithstanding changes in the past years, we still have two solitudes in Canada. Bilingualism is the way to slowly change that. Our history is filled with examples of agreements between the two founding nations. People who deny that there are two founding nations or that it is now an important concept in Canada are putting at risk both our country and the present agreement which is so important for everyone. We must study the history of Canada, as the minister responsible for constitutional affairs said today. That study will reveal everywhere the importance of this great partnership between the two nations that founded our country.

[*English*]

We have to build our country much as though we were neighbours in a community. When one of us goes to assist a neighbour who is in need of assistance, whether it is taking food over because of a problem or going to relieve the other for various physical problems that may beset him or her, we do community building. We feel better ourselves. We strengthen ourselves. We build our self-esteem. We strengthen and help the neighbour. We build up the neighbour's feelings of community and importance and strengthen him or her.

Why can we not do the same between our communities? Why are we unable to reach out and help another, build each other up by trying to learn and appreciate the other's needs, weaknesses and strengths?

We have in our country the opportunity through our culture, our multicultural heritage, but certainly through the original culture of the two if you want to call it that—the aboriginal culture which is all very much a part of it—to build a very strong and very vibrant community.

We have it now. What we need to do is build on the strength that we have developed in the past, give our citizens an opportunity to continue the job of nation-building which was begun 125 years ago and I believe it can be continued under the new arrangements that have been negotiated.

It will be slightly different. There will be changes. But I do not believe those changes are detrimental to the basic fabric of this country which all of us have lived in, worked for and will continue to strive for in the years ahead. I am not gung ho on the deal, but it is something I can live with. I will support it and I urge my fellow Canadians to do so in the hope that we can put this sad chapter of our constitutional history behind us and get on with dealing with the economic problems that beset our country.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak on the issue before the House tonight and before Canadians, that is the referendum question that will be presented to Canadians for their consideration and decision concerning amendments to the Canadian Constitution.

I see this issue in a rather simplistic way. After the patriation of the Constitution from Great Britain in the early 1980s, Quebec refused to sign the document, refused to become a part of the Canadian Constitution because of various deep-seated grievances.

It has taken virtually a decade to develop a process and a package that would allow Quebecers to consider joining once again with other Canadians in bringing this country together. That is the issue before us; a set of provisions which provide an opportunity for Quebec to remain within Canada. The amendments to the Constitution appear to do this. The signals from Quebec are that there will be a very deep and divisive debate. It looks as if it will divide families. It will divide friends and divide social organizations. It will be a very intense debate in the province of Quebec.

People in other parts of Canada are very hopeful and very optimistic that these changes will meet their needs and that the majority of Quebecers will vote in support of this question and remain with Canada to build a future together.

It reminds me of a sign I see in more and more places where individual Canadians are saying: "My Canada includes Quebec and my future includes Quebec, with all Canadians together". I think many people are very concerned about the difficult debate that will go on in Quebec. Hopefully it will be resolved without lasting scars and will allow Quebec to move forward.

It is a serious concern when we hear the Prime Minister of Canada saying that he is going into the province of Quebec to fight separatism. It worries me and many others. We conjure up a picture of a badly damaged Prime Minister in the eyes of Canadians, going into Quebec trying to resurrect his self-image and the self-image of a damaged government by attacking Quebecers.

Many people in this country believe that Quebec should be allowed to debate this question itself and not have this badly damaged Prime Minister moving into Quebec like Sherman marching through Georgia to burn Atlanta and the damage that could result from that, motivated by personal and political self-interest. I hope that does not occur. I hope that many of us are mistaken in our interpretation of his remarks. It is going to be difficult in Quebec. Our best wishes go with them. The vast majority of Canadians want Quebec in a renewed Canada facing the future together. If Canada was without Quebec it would certainly be a damaged country and one whose prospects for the future would be grim and difficult indeed.

This document does not contain everything I or any other Canadian had hoped to see. It is unfortunate that the package that left the table is going to be difficult to improve before it leaves this House, before it is considered by Canadians. We do have a compromise arrangement.

Another aspect of the constitutional agreement is extremely important and that is the issues affecting aboriginal people. The aboriginal people of Canada seem to be relieved and supportive and to some degree very pleased at the outcome, that a right to aboriginal self-government exists within this document. The opportunity to create aboriginal self-government situations across this country is now recognized and exists.

Aboriginal people have another cause for optimism. There seems to be a movement in British Columbia, an area where I believe there has been no positive movement, on the question of aboriginal land claims. That now seems to be moving forward as the Government of British Columbia and the government here in Ottawa move closer to reaching agreements for a process to begin the resolution of that issue.

• (0330)

The Constitution, coupled with what appears now to be a determination to resolve aboriginal land claim issues and aboriginal rights, is now moving forward. I would think the next decade would be one of great optimism for many aboriginal people in Canada to leave the terrible ghettos in which they have found themselves and open a great opportunity to this and succeeding generations of the aboriginal people of this country.

Those two provisions give me great cause for optimism, that we can find Quebec solidly within the national framework and working toward the future together and that we resolve the issue or put on the road to solution the issue of aboriginal self-government and the aboriginal land claim.

I do not support the Senate agreement. I see the Senate as an obstacle to progress for Canadians. I certainly do not share with the previous speaker from the Liberal Party his view of the Senate. The hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James, the previous speaker, believes the Senate needs to be strengthened. I see it as an impediment to Canadians making judgments. In many cases the United States Senate has been a terrible curse inflicted on the democratic process of making decisions in the United States. In Canada we face the same process. I have always felt that I would abolish that institution if I ever had a say.

Unfortunately, it is the reality of the package. It is a compromise. I cannot have what I want in the Senate and the speaker from Winnipeg—St. James cannot have what he wants in the Senate. At least it appears to be elected. At least it appears that it does not completely override representation by population, the basic foundation of a democratic society. So we will both have to, as indicated, vote yes and support this package, knowing that there are many elements in it that we do not support.

This is the dilemma of all Canadians who are looking at this package, considering a vote in a referendum. They will not like everything in it and that is the reality of a compromise. That is the reality of Canada and it is going to be difficult. It is going to be extremely difficult in the province of Quebec and I know the hearts of the vast majority of Canadians go out to them as they make this very difficult decision. We all cannot have what we want.

When the premiers, the aboriginal people and those who participated in hammering out this agreement left with the accord from Charlottetown worked out and basically put before us a package of amendments, that was essentially it. Canadians, members of Parliament, everyone from coast to coast will have an opportunity to say yes or no.

I will support this. I will definitely vote for it. In the area I represent in North Island—Powell River we are holding public meetings in the major communities to provide information to people, a forum in which they can discuss it. We are also forming a yes committee, a committee which will encourage Canadians who live in that area to consider and then support the proposition.

We have a difficult task. We have to convince them that this is not Brian Mulroney or the Conservative government's proposal. This is a proposal hammered out by a group of people in Canada based on very wide public hearings on it, of consideration, debate and compromise. It is a package brought forward by many people. It is not a package of the Prime Minister of Canada or the Conservative Party.

We will convince the people that it is a much broader document. It is a document of extreme importance to Canada in that it has the opportunity to make us whole again and face the future together. I believe the people in that area will support that document.

We have a problem and I think the problem has to be identified here and dealt with. I call it the dog in the manger problem. We had a number of members of the B.C. Conservative Party who used the opportunity to attack Premier Mike Harcourt of British Columbia.

When the agreement came together, it was a compromise from all parts and when they each agreed on it, that was the end of it. We have members of the Conservative caucus, who represent areas in British Columbia, and the GST senator criticizing the premier of British Columbia instead of saying: "Look, we will go forward and work together and have British Columbians support this document to ensure we can go forward together with the province of Quebec, with aboriginal people, and with the other positive aspects of it". They chose the dog in the manger route.

Another one of British Columbia's dog in the manger advocates is the Liberal Leader, Gordon Wilson. It is extremely disappointing that rather than accept this as a compromise, part of a living document that goes forward and changes to meet the needs of Canadians as they move forward into the future, the dog in the manger approach uses it to attack the premier of British Columbia rather than to work with British Columbians in understanding the document and bringing it forward.

It is my hope, and I understand this is under way, the federal Liberal caucus is working hard with Mr. Wilson and his caucus to bring him into line, to encourage him to support this document as a compromise document, and to stop the attacks on other partners in the yes approach, to stop the attack against women.

When Mike Harcourt and other members of the New Democratic Party in British Columbia and other organizations, including the Liberal organization nationally, have said that women do not have fair representation in Canada, it is incumbent on Mr. Wilson to stop his attacks.

On two occasions on two different issues he said pay equity is not a thing that can happen now because we cannot afford it and we cannot afford to have gender equity in the political institutions. That is wrong. That I think is anti-basic principles. My colleague says anti-democratic and I know she will be one of the ones trying to put Mr. Wilson back on the correct path of co-operation.

I think Mr. Wilson's approach right now is anti-aboriginal Canadian. It is anti-women and it is anti-Canadian. The dog in the manger approach cannot be continued.

I personally believe the *Vancouver Sun* falls into that area of the dog in the manager journalism. The attacks on the premier of British Columbia at this point in time are absolutely counterproductive. When I see Nicole Parton's article, I am disgusted by a former Social Credit candidate having a pen to attack the premier in the dog in the manger approach.

It is my hope that major institution of media in the province will turn and begin to support and provide useful information to British Columbians to help them understand this document, help them understand how important it is to Canada, even though it is a compromise, and to then lend support to the vote in support of the document.

It is time to end the dog in the manger approach to this and to work together as Canadians to get this document into position, to get Quebec back into the mainstream of Canada and get aboriginal people back into the mainstream of Canada, and then build and work with this living document into the future, together.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I enter this debate tonight to talk not primarily as a Liberal, not primarily even as a member of Parliament, but primarily as a Canadian.

From the first time I took my seat in this Chamber I have been very aware that I have a tremendous responsibility to all the generations that have sat in this Chamber before us and to all those to come after for whom we are creating the future.

I have to ask myself as we begin this important debate, are we being true to the vision of our forebears who dared to dream of a great nation, united from sea to sea against all odds of geography and distance and economics, who dared to dream that we could combine the best of different cultures and build a nation not fragmented by our differences but richer and stronger because of them. I have to ask if we are being true to our future in a world where a country like ours is a model of how people can live in harmony without suppressing their differences but in appreciation of those differences and of what we all contribute to the fullness of humanity.

• (0340)

This is truly an historic moment in our long journey as a nation because for the first time Canadians have claimed their Constitution for themselves. Never again will a handful of people be able to emerge from behind closed doors proclaiming that only they know what is best for Canadians and that no one else has anything to contribute to the debate. We learned that does not work.

Tribute has been paid today and yesterday to members of Parliament, ministers, leaders, officials and experts who have led us up to this accord. I too have the deepest respect for the agonizing, difficult and heartbreaking at times process that those people have been through, but I pay tribute tonight to those thousands of Canadians, probably tens of thousands, who rejected the secret deals by a select few and who fought for a Constitution that could truly be theirs.

I pay tribute to all our fellow citizens who have spent years pleading for open doors, presenting briefs to various committees, travelling the country to attend consultations, baring their souls to the Spicer commission, talking to their neighbours and friends, putting up posters, designing T-shirts, expressing their love and their hopes for this country in whatever way they could and expressing their insistence that they have a voice in its future.

Now it is time for us as parliamentarians to trust the wisdom they have brought to that process, a wisdom that has helped our leaders finally come to an accord. We have to trust them and we have to say that those who question aspects or even all of this agreement are not bad Canadians. They are not disloyal to our country. They are not anti any part of our country or any of its people.

It is the right of every Canadian to carefully consider, as we must do, the pros and cons of what they see in this agreement and for each Canadian to make his or her own final judgment and know that that judgment will be respected by their fellow Canadians.

We must trust all Canadians to bring a fair and open mind and a generosity of spirit to their decision and to make a decision based not on self-interest and pettiness, but on what is best for Canada, and I believe that is what they will do.

We must treat this referendum period, short as it is, as a time to build consensus, to restore the trust of Canadians in one another, to replace the fear, despair and mistrust that has been growing and has been eating away at this country, to replace those with confidence in our wholeness, confidence in one another and confidence in our future.

We must also be prepared, as we try to build that consensus, to listen and to bring back to this House their thoughts and their ideas so that as we put legal language and form on the accord that we now have in general terms, we remain true to the trust those Canadians have placed in us.

I say with confidence that I believe they will support this accord if we remain true to the trust they have placed in us in bringing their thoughts, their ideas and their misgivings back to this House and trying to produce an even better document.

There will be people who will say no to this accord. By and large they will say no because they feel it is not good for Canada. There are others who do not want this accord to succeed because they do not want this country to succeed whole and strong.

There are those who see Quebec as a thorn in the heart of Canada, who see only one culture and one language group that should dominate this country, that their way or homogeneity is the way of the future for Canada. Most of us do not see it that way. They will fight this accord because they do not want the country to stay together.

There are those within Quebec who do not want the country to stay together because they believe in the separation of Quebec. They forget that they lost a referendum a decade and more ago when Quebecers rejected separation under different terms. They are trying to win that battle again, and I do not believe we can let that happen.

Do I have concerns about this accord? Yes, I do. No agreement so all-encompassing can contain everything I hoped it would contain or can be free of faults that I would rather not see there any more than it can be 100 per cent satisfactory to every Canadian.

For instance, in an era when we know that the health of our environment determines our future survival and our economic prosperity, I find it a great lack that we have a Constitution that talks about an economic union but neglects to integrate with that an environmental union.

I have concerns for the linguistic duality that has been so much part of our history and of our richness when I see that it is possible to enter into agreements with the provinces but service to Canadians in both official languages will be an optional add-on to those agreements when the federal government provides resources but allows others to deliver programs.

I have concerns for the commitment we have had to all parts of our country to share equally in the opportunities of this great experiment called Canada. I have concerns that the agreements to be entered into with the provinces may diminish the ability of Canada and the Government of Canada to act on behalf of all Canadians and to meet our international obligations which will become increasingly important. I have concerns that an equality that is more than geographic has not been fully met or respected in this document.

I also rejoice that we have recognized the right of aboriginals to a fairer place in Canada, to determine their own future. I rejoice that we have recognized the need to break down economic barriers within Canada, that we have framed a commitment to a social contract, that we have a Senate which parts of the country that have felt left out of the process now feel answers some of their needs.

I see in that Senate new incentives for more open government because a Senate that is there to represent specific interests and capable of blocking the deliberations of this House at the last moment is going to force more open consultation in advance of putting in legislation. I think that is positive progress for this country.

It will lead to more open, honest and more democratic government as will the need for federal provincial agreements which I think every member of this House and I will insist be negotiated openly, honestly and in full view of Canadians.

• (0350)

We have been through a process that was needless to begin with, that has been longer and more painful than necessary, that has sapped our energy from crucial issues that we must be addressing. The 1.6 million Canadians who are out of work today and the close to half a million who are suffering because of the high unemployment level certainly want us to get on with dealing with those issues.

I do not believe and I do not believe that most Canadians believe that this will be the end of the Constitution forever and ever. We have always had a changing dynamics, adaptable country. Others have spoken today of compromise. I do not speak of compromise because that implies people giving in and giving up things. I speak of accommodation where we work together to find what works best for all of us. It is also not what I started out wanting or what somebody else started out wanting but what together we will think will work.

It is time for Canadians to trust one another again. We have had to do that throughout our history. Our Constitution has never been firm and definitive and final. There will always be a tension because we in this country are charting a course, a new way of living together as human beings, a new pattern of unity and diversity that is a beacon of hope for the world.

Let it be a creative tension we live in. Let us never again stretch the ties that bind to the point of breaking. Let us deal with those tensions with respect, with generosity and, yes, with love.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House I am proud to take part in this debate even though it is 3.50 a.m. It is important for Canadians to debate the Constitution and the referendum that I support. We on this side of the House demanded a referendum so that the people of Canada could voice their opinion on the consensus report on the Constitution agreed upon by the first ministers in Charlottetown on August 28, 1992.

The Canadian people want this issue settled so that attention can be directed toward the economy and the 1.6 million people in Canada who are unemployed, people who need jobs and want to work to continue building a nation that is the best in the world.

This will be the first time in the history of Canada that all Canadians will have an opportunity to express their views on such a package on the same day. The Charlottetown agreement, though not perfect, reflects a broad consensus among the 10 first ministers of the provinces, the ministers of the Government of Canada, the three main parties of this House, the people and the leaders of the territories and the aboriginal peoples.

To go a bit further, the Liberal Party on this side of the House worked very hard on this constitutional program. In fact we laid out the official position of our party in April 1991. Consequently we are pleased that many of our concerns were responded to and are reflected in the document.

In the 1860s, going back in the history of this nation, the concept of Confederation remained a very elusive one until finally in 1867 the log jam was broken. One of the major builders of Confederation was the member for the constituency of Lambton from 1854 to 1857 of the Canadian Assembly of Upper and Lower Canada. While he was not a member in 1867 his untiring efforts have served us well. In the words of Lord Monck who later became Governor General: "Without the untiring efforts of George Brown the concept of Confederation would not have been feasible". Even though he was not a member of the assemblies at that time, he was one of the men who brought together the concept that was agreed upon in Prince Edward Island at the time. He has to go down in history as being not only one of the Fathers of Confederation but also the founder and publisher of *The Globe*.

A few years later Prince Edward Island joined Confederation and part of that agreement was that it would have four members in the House of Commons. We also took over its railway. To show good faith it threw it into the package. Of course the rest of Canada did not realize the debt load that went with it at the time. Prince Edward Island became part of Canada. It has a population today of about 125,000 people and it still has four members of Parliament representing an area not much larger than my constituency and with a slightly larger population base.

Therefore the precedent was set back in the early 1870s when Prince Edward Island joined Confederation guaranteeing a province a specific number of members in this House. That is the provision Quebec has sought and achieved in this last agreement, asking for 25 per cent of the seats in the House. It is no different from the precedent set at that time, even though at the present time Quebec has slightly more than 25 per cent of the population of Canada within its borders.

It was not until World War I that Canada shed its colonial vestiges. In the battle of Vimy Ridge under the leadership of Sir Arthur Currie, again from my constituency, the strategic ridge was captured, where other armies had failed.

In World War II Canadian men and women distinguished themselves in world conflict. It was after World War II that our social safety nets were put in place to care for the less fortunate, safety nets that are the best in the world and that resulted in the nation being considered one of the best of all nations in the world. Our nation was built on the principle of compassion and caring to assist the less fortunate. All Canadians are considered as equals.

Since World War II there were several attempts to patriate and amend the British North America Act, our Constitution at the time. It served us well for many years, but like any piece of legislation it had to be amended and updated to keep abreast of changes in society. We had to go to the Parliament of Westminster with cap in hand to have those amendments made.

In 1972 we thought we had achieved an agreement but it fell apart too. That was 20 years ago.

In 1980–81 we brought the Constitution home from Parliament in England and enshrined the charter of rights. However the preamble reads that Canada was founded on principles recognizing the supremacy of God and the rule of the land.

That reflects our Canadian identity and our sense of pride as builders of a nation that is celebrating its 125th birthday this year. While other nations are involved in civil wars and thousands of people are being killed, we resolve our problems here in Canada through negotiation and compromise, the Canadian way.

This package includes provision for the distinct society requested by Quebec. It is defined. It points out the language difference, the difference in the court and the legal system. Quebec has the civil law and the rest of Canada has the common law or the British system. Its culture is different, but it still has its hockey and ball teams. The people of Quebec are Canadians too.

It was the people of Quebec who opened up their homes in early years, in the pioneer times, to immigrants from Ireland suffering from famine and plague who came to this land. In some cases whole families were wiped out by the plague. Children lost their parents and children were lost. It was the people of Quebec who took these orphans into their homes and raised them as their own. These people have a sense of pride in being Canadian. I believe a sense of pride can help us keep this nation together and realize the necessity of moving forward with this package.

This document is not perfect. I am not satisfied that the proposed Senate will be effective enough, but this can be strengthened at a later date. I firmly believe we must have a Senate, because any successful democratic society must have a series of checks and balances to operate effectively. In our system of government the Senate is one of those checks and balances.

• (0400)

Over the last few years we have seen attempts to better our Constitution. One of the tragedies of the eighties was that when the Constitution was patriated we realized that the Government of Quebec was in favour of separation from the rest of Canada and it chose not to accept the new Constitution.

Let us hope that this era of our history is behind us and that we will move on as a united Canada.

The Spicer commission criss-crossed this nation listening to Canadians. The Dobbie-Beaudoin committee, made up of members of this House and the Senate, held hearings from one side of this nation to the other and thousands of Canadians expressed their opinions. Finally, the first ministers have expressed their opinions and arrived at an agreement.

The agreement includes the aboriginal peoples, a revamped Senate, a distinct society clause and a Canadian clause and the Canadian people now have the final voice on this whole issue through a referendum.

As I indicated earlier it is not perfect, but I believe it is the best we can achieve at this point in our history. Therefore, I will be supporting this package. My offices will work to provide information to my constituents so they can make an intelligent decision when they vote on October 26. We intend to make all of our offices and our facilities available to those who request information.

I am also pleased that many of the items that my colleagues and I from this side of the House had asked for were included in this package. I would be very much remiss if I did not pay tribute to those members of Parliament and senators who worked so hard in the Dobbie-Beaudoin committee and came up with a unanimous report. In particular, I want to pay tribute to the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who spoke earlier in this House today—he was the spokesperson for the Official Opposition from our benches—and to my colleagues who worked with him on that committee. I was confident that those members would strive to come up with a proposal that was in the interest of all Canadians. I hope we have achieved that objective.

As a member of Parliament in this House, and having witnessed this process twice—first in the early eighties when I was here, and then again now—I am deeply concerned that while we wrestle with constitutional problems here in Canada the government has negotiated two trade agreements that will have a traumatic long-term impact on the lives of our people and the economy of this nation.

I speak about the Canada–U.S. trade agreement in which Canada gave away the right to make legislative decisions or regulatory decisions that will impact on this nation for years to come. For example, in the agriculture portfolio alone eight acts were changed with 15 amendments to conform to that agreement. By the same token no U.S. laws were changed or amended.

At this point we do not know what changes will be needed to conform to the North American free trade agreement. No doubt, there will be some and they will again take away our ability to make decisions in the interests of Canada. Our standards are the very highest in the world. They have been compromised. For example, of 48 chemicals used in food production and processing in Mexico 12 are banned in Canada. Are the lives of Canadians going to be endangered, is the health of our citizens going to be endangered to conform to an agreement that was conducted behind closed doors, in quite a contrast to the hearings held by the Dobbie–Beaudoin committee or the discussion by the 10 provincial premiers?

These trade agreements are pushed by huge trans-national corporations that know no loyalty or corporate responsibility except to their shareholders. We are seeing government by corporate decision as these companies close down the plants in Canada and move to Third World countries where cheap labour exists and environmental regulations are virtually non-existent. In the name of global competitiveness this country's standard of living will suffer.

It is a national disgrace that not only do we have 1.6 million unemployed workers here in Canada but our Canadian farmers also have to find other work to put food on their own tables, even though each Canadian farmer feeds 120 other Canadians.

In 1990 the average Canadian family farm income was almost $37,000, which included income earned by the spouse or the farmer himself from sources other than the farming operation. Of the $37,000, $21,500 came from income earned from these other sources leaving a balance of $15,500 from that farming operation. Of this amount, $8,091 came from government subsidies, federal or provincial, leaving a balance of only $7,400 from the sale of those farm products alone.

This is a national disgrace. We are allowing corporate interests to achieve a level of control that forces down the price of basic products at the farm level and increases food prices for our consumers.

Just today I read an article in a European newspaper saying that a similar downward trend in farm prices in Europe did not result in lower prices to consumers. The tragedy of all this is the number of victims of those nations that are being governed by corporate decisions, those persons in our cities who have to rely on food banks to survive and, even more tragically, the millions of starving people in Africa.

Finally, I just wanted to say a word about rekindling the spirit and the sense of pride of being Canadian. I was in Calgary at the Calgary Stampede. In the evening performance the Company of Young Canadians, young Canadians from Calgary, put on a variety show. They began with a melody of songs; 15 or 20 came out and sang songs from Newfoundland; another group came out and sang about Anne of Green Gables; and another group sang some of the songs from Nova Scotia and Anne Murray. In the end they all came out together and sang "This Land is My Land, This Land is Your Land from Bonavista to Vancouver Island". While they were on stage they asked everybody to rise and 30,000 people stood and sang *O Canada* with them, many with tears streaming down their cheeks.

We have to rekindle that sense of pride of being Canadian. Let us hope this document will achieve that objective.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, as Canadians, we have been very complacent about who we are and who we have been. Most of us have also been proud of who we are. We have been proud with good reason. Canada has been a place where the citizens generally have felt comfortable. Canada has been a place where people from anywhere in the world could work, study, play and find a niche for themselves where they felt comfortable.

We have not been the melting pot of the United States. We have not harboured the hostility of national groups like in Bosnians, Macedonians and Serbians in

the old Yugoslavia or the Georgians or Armenians of the U.S.S.R. Canada has been a model, not a melting pot but a free and accepting home for people from every part of the world. People came from all across the world knowing they would be accepted and have a somewhat equal chance of making a good home for their family in Canada. Most of them left their hostilities behind and found that they could be what they wanted to be, keep what they wanted to keep from their old culture and blend with their new country and add a new dimension to Canada's culture. We did, in Canada, what no other country has done quite so successfully. We allowed and cherished a mosaic and nourished it with policies that recognize the differences of people from other countries, and only demanded from these newcomers an acceptance in a belief about what Canada was.

• (0410)

These constitutional discussions have not been about community relations, race relations, freedom of religion or freedom of speech. We take all of these for granted in Canada as part of our heritage and part of our democracy. The constitutional discussions have not been about language, although many people try to make it seem as if that is implied. Rather, these constitutional talks have been about the empowerment of the people of all regions and all parts of the country. Empowerment of people means giving them, as many as possible, the decision-making opportunities without endangering the rights of others to also control their destiny.

We must look at this constitutional consensus in that light. How much power can we give each group or each region without reducing the ability of the other groups or regions to control their own destinies?

The players in the constitutional negotiations were all hoping that they could protect their own territory, be it land, opportunity or culture. The west had concerns about political and economic domination by central Canada, basically Ontario and Quebec. This is a position which, for westerners, is as old as Confederation.

The Indians, the Inuit and the Métis wanted a part in the decision-making group in Canada. After 300 years of never quite breaking into the governing structure, after 300 years of being on the outside looking in the aboriginal population wanted a structure which would let them have control of their own affairs.

Quebec, one of the founding nations, looked upon the rest of Canada with a certain amount of unease. Quebecers found themselves a diminishing portion of a largely English-speaking continent and felt themselves to be without the tools, without the powers if you wish, to protect their language and their unique culture. Without the powers to protect their position they could only look forward to continuing assimilation and eventual loss of their identity.

Many people across Canada from other nationalities who came to Canada will be saying that may be true but: "What about us? We also gave up our culture and our language to become Canadians, why should the French be different?" However, there is a difference. My family came from Norway expecting to learn the language of their new country. They kept a considerable amount of national pride in being Norwegian and became part of the mosaic. The French of Quebec were here, with a language and a culture which they did not give up to become part of Canada. In fact, they were not even asked to give it up. They were encouraged to keep and develop their culture, which they have done quite successfully for the last 200 years, particularly in the last 125 years that Canada has been a federation. Can anyone blame them for figuratively manning the ramparts when it seemed to them that an alien culture started bombarding them with communications, business investment, economic control and most of all, a diminishing need to speak French? Quebec did the natural thing. It demanded the tools to protect what it was and that is what we should have expected.

Ontario has much to protect as well. Those of us from the prairies and the maritimes probably think that Ontario's power to exploit the rest of Canada needs curbing. Those very ideas, that very thought are the seeds that produced the Triple-E Senate idea: More power to smaller provinces so that they can protect themselves from Ontario.

People in the maritimes also had the need, desire and ability to make decisions in their lives. The territories also felt limited in their ability. They wanted to be able to grow and develop as they felt they should and not depend upon others. They, too, wanted to be empowered and break out of the colonial status in which they had found themselves.

These are some of the elements that went into the negotiations on the Constitution. The consensus we are discussing tonight is what came out of those negotiations. A lot of compromise and a lot of give and take had to take place to come up with something acceptable to all.

Almost everyone has some concern with the consensus. There are parts of this consensus I do not like. You have heard that many times tonight, I am sure, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that there were parts that people in every province did not like. Only compromise could make a consensus possible, and that is what we are asking the people to vote on now.

A yes or even a no vote will not stop the evolving of what has been agreed on in this consensus. The aboriginal governments will grow and evolve. The powers that have been moved to the provinces will be explored and measured. Some may even be given back to the federal government. Federal powers will also be explored and broadened or narrowed to fit the circumstances in which the government finds itself.

What I am really saying is that the Constitution consensus is not the end of this process. A yes vote will confirm that the direction taken by the negotiators in this consensus is acceptable to most Canadians. A no vote will mean that most Canadians feel that the *status quo* was acceptable and the *status quo* will survive.

In either case, Canada will still be here and we in this House along with most of the participants in these negotiations will get at least part of what we considered necessary. No one in this consensus, if it passes, will get everything they wanted. No one it would appear left the negotiations feeling that their hopes, their ability to affect their own destiny had been diminished in any way. All felt that the other negotiators, the provinces and the territories involved in these negotiations, recognized the desires and understood the needs of the other members of the group.

Now it is our turn, the turn of this House and the people across the country. It is our turn to put our trust in those we have chosen to negotiate on our behalf and to support what they have started.

• (0420)

If we get the support for this consensus, we can look forward to Canada continuing as a country which makes a place for all types of people of all races and makes them feel comfortable enough to continue calling Canada their home.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to take part in this historic debate and hopefully to reflect the sentiments of my constituents in the riding of Winnipeg North. The motion before us states:

> That pursuant to the Act to provide for Referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of a referendum question:
>
> "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?
>
> _____ _____ "
>
> yes no

Implied in this motion is the decision to hold a referendum on the constitutional package approved on that date in Charlottetown. The decision reflects the vision of my leader who on April 21 of last year included it as one of the nine-point proposals for constitutional reform.

Indeed, the Liberal Party of Canada has always believed the Constitution belongs to the people. Therefore, any reform package has to be submitted for their judgment. The voting citizens shall have the final say on acceptance or rejection of any constitutional proposal. I would like to respectfully remind the government that a referendum should automatically bind a government to the voter's wishes.

The proposed wording of the question for the referendum vote, although in my judgment is still amenable to improvement, is no major impediment to citizens exercising a democratic vote and now the constitutional package itself, called the Consensus Report on the Constitution as agreed to in Charlottetown on August 28, 1992.

Last July, I took my family to Charlottetown for a one-week vacation. We wanted to visit the seat of Confederation, as we as a people are engaged in a national debate on the future of our nation. I had no premonition that the present consensus on the Constitution would again be crafted in the same historic city the following month. I could only imagine the enormous task then before the Fathers of Confederation. I now salute the parents of a renewed Confederation. They did not achieve a truly perfect accord, but they achieved an accord that I hope we can all support.

Imagine a patient being seen by his doctor who knows the only remedy he has at hand will not totally cure his patient. But the doctor also knows that the prospects of discovering a real curative drug are distant. He knows that the ideal drug may not be discovered in time to give his patient a chance for a cure. Would you or would you not agree that the physician should give the imperfect but nevertheless partially curative medicine now? If you were the patient, would you or would you not expect the doctor to give you that prescription today?

Time is of the essence in any decision–making. Leadership, it is known, is a function of time.

The time is now some 20 minutes past the early morning hour of four o'clock on September 10. Late yesterday, I walked past Parliament Hill watching the glorious day fade as the sun dipped in the west. Overhead were hot air balloons in all the colours of the rainbow. I wondered about their view, up so high. To them the Peace Tower would be a needle threading the sky, the lawns a quilt of green edged in red flowers, the stately buildings like children's toys so far below. It was then that I paused for a moment to look, to really look at the sky, the green lawns, and the trees beginning to sport their autumn colours. I watched the people, some hurrying home, others strolling. There were couples, young and old, walking hand in hand past the aged buildings of Parliament Hill.

I felt that all was right with the world. My mood was pervaded by optimism for the future. Very soon, on October 26, the people, the Canadian citizenry, would speak and their answer would be a resounding yes, a salvo of love for the country.

This was one of those moments when you fill your lungs as though the clean Canadian air were the most delicious thing ever tasted. It was one of those moments when you thank God you are alive and to be living in such a glorious place.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I am a newcomer to this country. Canada welcomed me in 1968 as a landed immigrant from the Philippines. As a new citizen I have often wondered about Canadians and the depth of their love for their country. Patriotism has always been such a degraded word, as we shirked from what we thought were over–zealous displays of flag–waving south of the border.

No, Canadians are calmer, quieter people who do not wear their love of country on their sleeves. Instead, they wear it tucked inside their shirt pockets, close to their hearts, but within easy reach in times like this when our new constitutional proposals will fly or die on the decisions of Canadian citizens.

What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen? Everyone has filled out a form or a paper at one time or another where there is a box marked "citizenship". Most of the 26 million people in this country check "Canadian" and never stop to wonder what it must feel like to check the box that reads "landed immigrant". Those landed immigrants and refugees are the people who want so much to be citizens of this great country. Over 250,000 people each year are pressing to be a part of this great nation.

I am a Canadian who chose Canada instead of being born into it. Many of my constituents did likewise. We are first generation Canadians who came to this country by land, air and sea to make their homes in the embrace of this great land.

To live in a country that is not Canada, that is not democratic and free, is to live a life decorated in black and white. Your decisions in life are meagre, your opportunities bleak. Justice is perverted. Money greases the palms of bureaucracy. Government is corrupt or non–existent. We see these countries on the evening news and click our tongues on the roofs of our mouths in sympathy. We say: "What a shame. How horrible for the children".

To live in a country without hope is to live partially buried. That is why I feel our newest citizens are often the greatest supporters of Canada. They have seen the alternatives.

On August 28, the Prime Minister, the 10 premiers, the heads of government of the two territories and four aboriginal organizations through their leadership gave their seal of approval to the Charlottetown agreement.

I respect and support the consensus reached. Their job must have been terribly difficult. They laboured night and day and I appreciate their determination and success to reach a really genuine consensus.

• (0430)

Nevertheless I now bring to this debate some concerns raised by the ethnocultural community, all together comprising a quarter to a third of the total Canadian population and as much as 40 per cent in some major cities.

Section 2, paragraph 1, subparagraph (e) of the Canada Clause states:

> Canadians are committed to racial and ethnic equality in a society that includes citizens from many lands, who have contributed and continue to contribute to the building of a strong Canada that reflects its cultural and racial diversity.

In contrast, the preceding subparagraph (d) states:

> Canadian and their governments—

—I underscore "and their governments".

> —are committed to the vitality and development of official language minority communities throughout Canada.

Why, I ask, this seeming hierarchy of rights?

The ethnocultural community would have been greatly assured had section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms been strengthened to insure that it guarantees ethnic and racial equality. Strengthening this section and subparagraph (e) of the new section two, by adding the phrase "and their governments" would truly reflect the aspirations of the ethnocultural community since the Canada clause, according to the Charlottetown accord, states:

> —would guide the courts in their future interpretation of the entire Constitution, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There are other ethnocultural concerns I would like to address. While the policy objectives of the new provision, entitled "The Social and Economic Union," which will form part of the new Constitution, are not limited to the items stated in the accord, it would have been reassuring to the ethnocultural community if this list of policy objectives already had addressed the the issues of providing culturally sensitive social services, providing services to ensure rapid integration of immigrants, and providing programs to combat racism and discrimination.

Also, it would be greatly reassuring to the ethnocultural community had the policy objectives set out on the provision of the economic union already included a commitment not only to the goal of full employment but the equality in employment for all Canadians. As well, the policy objective set out in the provision for the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital should have spelled out a commitment to finding the appropriate mechanism for accreditation of foreign-obtained professional and vocational credentials.

Such a latter commitment would have helped enhance the self-esteem of many new citizens who bring to Canada a wealth of talents and skills.

It is recognized that increasingly the Supreme Court is playing a vital role in interpreting the intent of lawmakers, sometimes to the chagrin of the latter. It is, therefore, the submission of the ethnocultural minorities that they be also consulted regarding appointments to the highest court of Canada, just as much as the current accord specifically requires the federal government to consult with Quebec and aboriginal peoples. The basis for the latter specification equally applies to the needs of the ethnocultural minorities.

Last, but equally important, the ethnocultural minorities would like to be reassured that the devolution of powers agreed to in Charlottetown on matters such as skills training, immigration and culture will not in the future jeopardize in any way the best interests of multicultural minorities.

While I am still reflecting on the perspective of the ethnocultural community, I would like to remind the government that the Canada committee for the referendum be advised that print and broadcast advertising not exclude the ethnic media. I would also like the government to help Elections Canada to prepare brochures, using the heritage languages when necessary, to ensure full involvement and participation of the ethnocultural community during debate and on voting day.

I have two other concerns from the perspective of the west. We on this side of the House feel the Senate reform achieved, that of equality of the provinces, fails to clarify, to clearly define the effectiveness of this Chamber.

The other concern relates to economic union. The Liberal Party feels we did not get as much as we had wished. We recognize that a common market within Canada is crucial to our ability as a country to compete in the outside world.

We are confident and my leader has already made a commitment that we will address these deficiencies in the accord at the appropriate time.

I am also confident that the wisdom of Canadians of tomorrow will likewise address the concerns of the ethnocultural community.

I realize others will have similar or additional concerns and for those concerns, they will not be able to support the Charlottetown accord. It is the essence of a democratic society that differences, debate and dissent occur. We shall respect this essence of democracy but we cannot respect those who will champion the breakdown of this country. At all times we shall not allow the coolness of reason to yield to the heat of passion.

I would like to close by emphasizing the achievements in this accord. We have given Quebec the distinct society clause in a manner that is clearly defined as to what it means in terms of civil code, language and culture.

We have given the aboriginal peoples their right to self-government. This alone is a milestone triumph for our first peoples.

We have given the west and the Atlantic the first step in the reform of the Senate; namely, equality and electiveness. We have achieved a measure toward economic union within Canada. We have affirmed our commitment to a social covenant among all Canadians.

Most important, we have preserved the fabric of the Confederation, the sinews of Canada. We could have done more in an ideal world but we live in the real world of today.

I support this accord and I will fight for its victory. I love my adopted country and I want to share it with my family and my children and my children's children.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening carefully to this debate in the last few hours and yesterday. I must confess that I am having grave difficulty with this consensus report on the Constitution.

I realize in this country right now we are all tired of the Constitution and we all realize that the economy is really in deep pain. We have 1.5 million people not working. There is this great temptation to say that we have been talking about this Constitution for so long and is there not some way that we can just get rid of it, get it off the agenda?

I would like to do that but I feel that the way we are doing it has some danger signals attached to it.

I find in my constituency that most people do not even know what is in this document. I did not receive this document until late Thursday night, last week. I read some of it on the weekend. I am not a constitutional lawyer. However, I took the time to speak to some constitutional lawyers. During my remarks I would like to put forward some questions that I have.

We all realize what is at stake here. I realize that things are very fragile in the province of Quebec and no one wants to see the country separate. No one wants to be perceived as anti-Canadian because they question something in a document like this. I listened to the minister for constitutional affairs speak late yesterday afternoon.

• (0440)

He said just read this and judge by what it says. I went home last night and read it again. Part of the reason I have difficulty with this document is that I do not really understand some of the clauses in it and, quite frankly, I find some of the sections contradicting one another.

I would like to be very specific about some of my concerns. First of all, under section 2(c) it says Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society. I really do not know exactly what that means. In the same phrase it says "which includes a French-speaking majority and a unique culture". I say to myself that there are many cultures in this country which are unique. In other words, which culture is not unique.

I then go on to (d) and I see that Canadians and their governments are committed to the vitality and development of official language minority communities. I do not really know what that means. I find it very difficult to just sort of say I go along with this, I do not know what it means, but I am going to go along with it.

Under section (f) it says Canadians are committed to a respect for individual and collective human rights and freedoms of all people. I find that sentence is a little bit illogical for me. I cannot see how it squares.

It goes on, under section 2, to say that the Government of Quebec is to preserve and promote the distinct society of Quebec. However, under section 3 it says that nothing in this section derogates from the powers and rights or privileges of the Parliament or the Government of Canada. I naturally say to myself, does this not contradict section 2?

We go to the accord and under section 3 it talks about linguistic communities in New Brunswick and it talks about the equality of English and French linguistic communities in New Brunswick. I said to myself that if we have this in New Brunswick, why do we not just use the same clause in Quebec?

These are the kinds of questions that I ask myself. I must confess that many people in my community are not interested in the Constitution. There are probably 1,000 to 1,500 who are interested in the Constitution and they would tell me if you are voting for something or you are voting against something, you should know what you are voting for and what you are voting against. That is the reason why I feel this sort of stress. I do not really feel that I am totally in understanding of everything that is in this document. Quite frankly, I feel that there are a lot of Canadians who feel the same way.

The thing that bothers me about this is that we are going to be approving something that is not a federal–provincial agreement, it is a Constitution. The chances of reversing this Constitution or changing it are going to be very difficult. I am concerned when I see things such as the powers, roles and responsibilities under the federal spending powers.

I see things. My leader has cited some of these concerns under labour market development and training which is no longer a responsibility of the federal government. I see under culture it says:

> Provinces should have exclusive jurisdiction over cultural matters within the provinces.

What does exclusive mean?

The following sentence talks about the fact that this agreement also recognizes the continuing responsibility of the federal government in Canadian cultural matters. How can the federal government retain responsibility in Canadian cultural matters when in the previous sentence it says that provinces should have exclusive jurisdiction over cultural matters?

I go to the issue of exclusive provincial jurisdiction over forestry. I realize that many of these operations were in the provincial jurisdiction before. I always believed that the reason why the Government of Canada also had forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, municipal affairs and regional development was because we as a national government were there to either supplement or support when times required the federal presence to participate in these areas. Maybe a particular province lagged behind in a certain area. It could have been housing. The federal government through Canada Mortgage and Housing would move in to stimulate or supplement or support an economy in a particular region of this country.

Under this agreement, it says:

> Exclusive provincial jurisdiction over housing should be recognized and clarified through an explicit constitutional amendment and the negotiation of federal–provincial agreements.

What does that mean?

I talked to many people in the provinces and they think it means that we, as a national government, are out of the housing business. Yesterday in the House the member for Don Valley East asked the minister of constitutional affairs that very question on Canada Mortgage and Housing. Would this mean that there would be 10 Canada Mortgage and Housing operations operated by the provinces? He said no, that Canada would still be in the housing business. These are the kinds of questions that really need to be asked.

It is interesting. Under the issue of forestry, I see on page 12 of this agreement it says:

> Considerations of service to the public in both official languages should be considered a possible part of such agreements.

Does this mean that we may pass these instruments on to the provinces without having attached to them official bilingualism?

It seems to me that all of these national departments which are under our bilingualism act should maintain that status. If the provinces want to operate them, then surely they should be operated in the same way. If they do not have to be, then we should tell people.

If it is not mandatory that tourism, for example, not be considered bilingual in every province of the country then I am sure that it would be a regressive move for promoting bilingualism in this country. I do not think most francophones would really appreciate that.

I realize I only have a couple of minutes left. I go back to the remarks of the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs yesterday when he said that in 1982 Quebec was left out of the Constitution. That is not totally accurate because the people of Quebec did not vote to be left out of the Constitution in 1982; in fact, 73 of their 75 federal members voted in favour of the 1982 constitutional accord. We should remember the fact that it was Mr. Levesque, who did not believe in Canada, who wanted separatism, who said, "we are not signing on here".

• (0450)

It is very important that we try in a very rational and factual way to put this paper before Canadians. I am concerned that if we do not put the facts before Canadians that one or two or three months from now, when they start to discover what really is in this agreement, they may come back to us and ask: "Why didn't you inform me what this document really meant in terms of my day-to-day life and the future of my country, not only for me but for my children?"

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on the motion that "pursuant to the act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House approves the following text of a referendum question: Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992? Yes or No."

I rise on this occasion to give an unequivocal yes to that question. When the referendum day arrives on October 26 I will be voting yes. I will be voting yes for a lot of reasons. That is not to say that I do not have one or two reservations about the agreement that was reached—called the Charlottetown accord now—and we will get in to some of those slight reservations a little bit later.

I was at a reception hosted by Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Vancouver South, not that long ago on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Geological Survey of Canada. The implication there, of course, is that some of the processes that went into the formation of this country were in place before 1867 and the formal Constitution of the country began.

I am not going to try to quote Mr. Speaker on his feelings about Canada, he has done that so eloquently himself on many occasions. But I do remember him saying that anyone who thinks that this country did not have a lot going for it before 1867 had really better take another look at history. I will not going to go into a lot of the history either, but I am certainly willing to take Mr. Speaker's word for it on the evidence. Of course, anyone who has a fairly good understanding of what the Geological Survey of Canada does would realize that a tremendous amount of political will, a tremendous amount of economic will and, of course, co-operation as well, had gone into the Geological Survey.

On a more personal basis, on an occasion such as this, I cannot help but put some of my feelings surrounding this question into personal terms. I can remember, and it dates me somewhat I suppose, when there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship.

Certainly this whole question of the Constitution and the question before us prompts one—it certainly prompts me—to think of citizenship. It is only about 40 years ago, which obviously means that I am over 40 years old, when there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship. This may be part of the formation of our multicultural nature of our country.

In those days, what we used to have to do if we moved—and it was during the war and I moved around quite a bit with my parents because my father was in the service—every time you went to a new school one of the first questions the teacher asked you was not what nationality you were but what was your national origin. That was simply because there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship. I remember that well.

I have come to think of other things as we approach this new time in our country's history. As far as my citizenship is concerned, I now do proudly proclaim it as being Canadian, of course. Something I reflect upon is Canadian citizenship when I am out of the country.

I have found that after I have been out of the country for as short a time as two or three weeks, a feeling of homesickness descends upon me and I begin to realize, regardless of where I am on the face of this earth that Canada is a rather pleasant place to be, a rather wonderful country to belong to and Canadian citizenship certainly does mean something, not only in the sense of a place to call home but also I have come to realize from association with people abroad that Canadians are viewed as a very special group of people upon the face of the earth.

Citizenship in our family means something which it does not in every family, although certainly there are many families in the country that share what I am about to talk about. My wife was not born a Canadian citizen. I understand that the figure now is somewhere around 35 per cent of our population who have become Canadian citizens through naturalization.

That, of course, brings up the whole question of immigration, which again prompts me to feel a great deal of pride. Certainly as a member of Parliament, something I have become much more aware of is the fact that the 35 per cent of the population that are immigrants have chosen this country as a home. It is a great source of pride to me to hear these people talk about this country from that perspective and how proud they are to have become Canadian citizens.

When we talk about immigrants, I guess we really have to confess that all of us are immigrants. We are certainly aware of the English based immigrants to this country, as we are certainly aware of the French based immigrants to this country, the founding two races of Canada and the negotiations, I presume, not all that much different in the same city of Charlottetown in the years leading up to 1867. I suspect the negotiations which went on were not that much different from the negotiations that went on over this summer and for several years into the past as well.

It is a fact that for various reasons which history attests to and for which there is no reason to go into because of that, the French element of our society has felt as though the objectives of 1867, the formation of this country, for them was not complete. Over the years their feelings have been expressed in several different ways. Certainly the negotiations that took place this summer and previously, most recently the Meech Lake accord, attest to the efforts of all of us to come to some kind of accommodation of this fact.

• (0500)

I do not wish to belabour the point at all. It does seem to me that the Charlottetown accord has completed the circle and I am certainly willing enough to take the word of the Premier of Quebec on the basis of his satisfaction that the accommodation is a satisfactory one for the French-speaking people of this country. I am only too pleased to acknowledge that and only too pleased that it occurred.

There are some things I would like to have seen addressed more thoroughly. There is no question of the reality of 52 per cent of the population not being sufficiently recognized, and I am referring to the women of our nation. It is part of the reality of 1992 and I think it is not necessarily only in Canada. World-wide, the rights of women and the need for women to be expressly protected in constitutions and in courts and so on have not been properly addressed. The Charlottetown accord is deficient in that way. It does not mean that I am not going to vote for it.

Also, coming from an absolutely pure working background and having been very much involved in the labour movement I would like to have seen more reference to the rights of working people to be able to form their organizations unmolested by society. It is a bit of a tragedy in our country that this should be the case. In western Europe, for example, labour unions are extremely well accepted but do not feel in their situation that they ought to be protected by the constitutions of their countries and to the best of my knowledge they are not. They are an integral part of society and rightfully so. In order for them to be a full part of society in Canada they ought to have been referred to.

Immigration, of course, implies a multicultural nature to the country. I do wish that the Charlottetown accord had addressed the multicultural aspect of Canada more thoroughly. It is tremendously gratifying to me and the constituency of Saskatoon—Dundurn to see the multicultural associations within the constituency do things to foster their ethnic backgrounds. I assure you that I would be almost content to view singing and dancing as almost enough insofar as multicultural expression is concerned. These communities go far beyond that.

One of the joys I have experienced over the last period of high school graduations was to see students who have taken the heritage language training, not within the schools system, but as part of the community. These students did it in their spare time after school and on Saturdays. It just demonstrates the tremendous vitality in those communities and it certainly adds to the enrichment of the country. They ought to have been far more widely recognized than they have in the accord.

I see my time is running out. The Senate could very well have been abolished. It is a change, however, that it is now to be elected.

Without a doubt, something that I am tremendously gratified over is the inherent right of our aboriginal people to self-government. I suspect that there was not an intent on the part of the negotiators to have an international reflection when it came to that segment of the accord, but that inherent right of our aboriginal people to self-government within Canada will become a shining beacon throughout the world, similar to other aspects of our country such as the peacekeeping and so on. It will be a tremendous credit to our nation. It is a tremendous credit to our negotiators, aboriginal and otherwise, to have come to that accord.

Obviously I am going to miss some, but I would like to recognize as many people as I can; namely, my member of the legislative assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, the hon. Bob Mitchell, the minister for constitutional negotiations who has received a lot of public acclaim for the work he did and the premier of my province, Roy Romanow. I am particularly proud of his work.

I see my time is running out. I assure the House, I assure the people of Canada and in Saskatoon—Dundurn that I will be forming a Canada committee within the constituency to do everything we can to make sure that the constituents receive as much information as they want and as broad an understanding of the accord as they need to be able to understand it. I am sure once they do understand it they will be voting in the affirmative.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is late, I know. There might be some among you who have not slept yet. I had a few hours of sleep.

It is an honour tonight, or rather this morning, to say a few words about the referendum.

[*English*]

What we will go through between now and October 26 will be a debate on a clause that asks if we as Canadians agree with the consensus that was reached on August 28 last. Canadians are going to hear lots of concerns that people may have. I think the overriding concern right now is that Canada must be Canada the day after. I do not think that is a scare tactic.

I, like everybody else, think that Canada is a great country. I am proud to be a Canadian of this country and as a politician I am proud to represent an area that shows sometimes some very good parts of being a representative from a small area in Canada. At other times perhaps we do not have enough power, coming from some of those areas, to have this debate during reasonable hours.

However, that having been said, particularly since we are going to be off for another 38 days, I guess that is the reason that Canadians feel our institutions are not working. My concerns about the present consensus are just on that point.

Before getting to my concerns, I would like to make it very clear that I think this agreement reached by the Prime Minister, the 10 premiers, the two leaders of the territories and the four national organizations for the aboriginal people in Canada is on the whole a good document and it should be agreed to by the Canadian people, agreed to or their opinions given for this House after October 26.

I have some concerns. I just want to say that my concerns are not with the Canada clause, which I think has a lot of good points in it. It was needed.

[*Translation*]

Among the characteristics included in the Canada clause, there is parliamentary democracy, Canadian federalism and the rule of law; linguistic duality; the distinct nature of Quebec society; the ancestral rights and the responsibilities of aboriginal peoples and the recognition that their governments will constitute one of the three orders of government in Canada; racial and ethnic equality; respect for individual and collective human rights and freedoms of all people; equality of men and women—I am sure that exists today in most cases—and equality of provinces and recognition of their diverse characteristics.

• (0510)

[*English*]

That Canada clause alone should make us say yes, that and the fact that the aboriginal people have arrived at a process by which they can present to Canada and Canada can accept in the future their full responsibility as a partner in Canada. There is also the 25 per cent which shows a distinctiveness or the distinct society that we see in Quebec within Canada.

My concerns have to come in two areas. One is on the responsive institutions. I can only say, like my leader, that the Senate will have to be an effective Senate if it is going to play a part in the future representing the weaker areas in Canada.

I accept the equal. It has to be and so I am pleased with that. I accept that it should be elected and I am hoping that some day in the future it will be fully elected. I am not for gender equality because I think women, more and more, are getting into the mainstream of politics, whether at local, municipal, provincial or federal levels. I would certainly hate to think that in the future if I would want to run for the Senate, I would have to run as a woman in Nova Scotia.

I have held my own for 18 years with most of the men in this room. There has not been what I consider any separation of the goals that are strictly Canadian. Perhaps we as women have worked a little harder to make sure that some of the legislation has been directed and has helped women to be able to arrive at the same end in their careers, whichever way they want to go in Canada.

I accept that it should be elected. I am not sure it is very effective. We will have to wait and see. We will probably have to wait and see about negotiations long after October 26. I do feel that Canadians must trust the Prime Minister, their premiers, their leaders and others who sat around the table that they wanted to see an effective institution.

My largest concern, and the concern that I have heard, is with the size of this House. To increase that size, and I use the example of 42 seats, means that those 42 members are more than we have from the east. Our population would have to grow extremely fast to come up to 42 new members who will be coming in here.

We go down in percentage. We could have a base and I agree with one of the members who said we have guaranteed the east a floor. That floor is there. I think it is section 41(b) of the 1982 Constitution and it is fixed. Nova Scotia can never have fewer than 10 members of Parliament. New Brunswick cannot have fewer than 10 members of Parliament; four in P.E.I.; six in Newfoundland. The floor is geared to the present number of senators sitting today and the number coming from the east. They have given us a floor under which we cannot go down further. Therefore, I guess we will always be guaranteed 30 members from the east. The east in this great country can probably holler as loud as the other 307 members of Parliament that we will see in the future, but I think there is a disadvantage and perhaps this will be looked at by Canadians and changed in the future.

As I sit here in this House and with my experience in this House, I realize how hard one must travel from the extremities of Canada to be here. I also realized that if I wanted to speak in this debate I had to be up tonight to speak. I do not consider that my constituents would have been well served had I fallen asleep tonight and not come to speak. That concern and confusion that my voice is only one from an area that covers the whole size of metropolitan Toronto, where there are numerous members of Parliament, is sometimes discouraging to the rest of my constituents as to how effective the role of the member of Parliament has become in Canada.

I do not think that is enough for me to vote against because surely these are areas that our negotiators will have to look at, but I do think it is a very serious concern. As a federalist who has looked to Canada for its programs, the last part does scare me about Canada. I am not against the social and economic union, it is very good in the package. I am not against, as I said, self-government for the aboriginal peoples. This is excellent and I congratulate these people. I am not against the amending formula. However, I do have problems in another area besides our institutions, the Senate and the House of Commons, on the rebalancing roles and responsibilities.

I can only say to Atlantic Canadians that it will be a tougher world out there after because we will be even more so at the mercy of the more powerful provinces in Canada. We will be at their mercy because if they do not join a national program we will still get the financing that is equal for our area, but we will not have the support if British Columbia opts out or Alberta, Ontario or Quebec. Let us say it is day care. If the provinces take their money and present an adequate day care system to Canada, which I am sure they can, we will not have as much.

I look at the training and the system of employment across Canada and I think of those larger provinces which have equally the same fears today of no jobs, equally the same fear of trying to train, as quickly as possible, the work force in their provinces, and equally I am sure fearful that this government has not done enough to stimulate jobs or to provide training. I look and say that I come from an area that needs that superstructure. Will we have it?

I guess that is the part that is the scariest, because as our numbers decrease we can still holler, but as the dollars decrease we could probably become—and I hate to say it—very much out in the cold. We will need to have a very, very strong voice to keep this country operating in national programs.

I am glad to be able to take part tonight. I realize that my time is up.

• (0520)

I am glad to be able to say to my constituents that more than anything else, this country is worth keeping together. I have to say that looking at the package, we will be negotiating a technicality. I am sure that in the understanding of Canadians across Canada that we will negotiate a text. We will negotiate afterward a far greater Canada.

The flaws that I am talking about will come out. They are flaws in my view, coming from the east. Maybe that is what the premiers looked at and said: "We will be stronger if we have an effective Senate". We must have an effective Senate if we come from the east. It is a necessity that we be able to at least show our dissatisfaction through a very effective Senate if our House of Commons position is getting smaller.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, you have been through a very tough evening and I appreciate the fact that I am the last speaker. I would like to say that I will be voting yes. I just want to say to my constituents that my office is available for any distribution of materials. It is certainly accessible for any problems.

I think that Canada comes first in this debate.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It appears that that will be the last speech of this morning.

I just want to, on behalf of all participants and as one who has been here for the last 15 hours as you have, Sir, thank you and thank all those who were involved in making this debate possible, the participants and the Clerks at the table, the pages and all those who are involved in the House running this so smoothly.

It has been a long night, an historic night and through you, Sir, on behalf of the government our thanks.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): As there is no member rising, according to the order passed earlier in this sitting, the House stands adjourned until later today at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.21 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 10, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION

Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation to the first parliamentary assembly of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held between July 2 and July 5, 1992 in Budapest.

* * *

PETITIONS

NORTH THOMPSON RIVER

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of constituents from Clearwater, British Columbia. They point out their strong opposition to a company's intention to divert water from the North Thompson River and eventually sell that water in San Diego, California.

They simply ask the government to introduce legislation that would prohibit Canadian waters from being sold to the United States as a commodity like coal or copper.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, on another matter, petitioners from throughout western Canada are simply asking Parliament to ensure that we maintain the current level of services provided to veterans through the Veterans Independence Program and to ensure there are no increases in charges to veterans for board and lodging in those long-term care institutions in which veterans are resident.

VIOLENCE

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to present thousands of signatures on petitions today. These signatures are from every part of Canada. We have over 500,000 that have been presented on the same topic.

The petitioners believe there are serious deficiencies in the criminal justice system. Women, children, and disabled persons are particularly vulnerable.

They also believe that crimes of violence against persons are intolerable and constitute the most abhorrent crimes society faces.

They ask Parliament to recognize that crimes of violence against persons are serious and abhorrent to society and to amend the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act, 1972, and the Parole Act accordingly.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, it is my duty and pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present several petitions totalling more than 100 names and asking Parliament to urge the minister of immigration to issue minister's permits for spouses and dependent children of refugee claimants who have been permitted to apply for landing from within Canada, including persons in the backlog and persons accepted under the new legislation, and to allow them to be reunited in Canada for inland processing.

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I have two other petitions. One is a petition of 36 names mainly from the community 680 Queen's Quay West, a government assisted housing project.

• (1010)

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to recognize housing as a shared provincial-federal responsibility, to support the federal non-profit co-operative housing program, and to maintain the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I have a petition from 508 persons from various parts of Toronto, including some within Trinity—Spadina who have asked me to present it. They are concerned about the preamble to our Constitution which affirms that our country is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God and on respect for moral an, spiritual values.

They point out that about four million Canadians do not believe in God or are unsure and the ones who do, disagree on the nature and desires expressed by God and that for many Canadians freedom is founded on secular values rather than spiritual values.

Therefore they request that Parliament remove references to God and spiritual values from the Constitution, ensure that the Constitution is a secular document that defines religious belief or unbelief as the right of the individual, and that the Constitution forbids the state any religious endorsement.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, the petition I have the pleasure of placing before you today is from Canadians from across the country.

They are urging the government not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22 which was passed in 1987 so that Canadians will have the full benefit of lower priced generic drugs and so the provincial and private drug plans can serve Canadians without being forced to charge higher fees and/or provide less coverage.

RURAL CANADA

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by over 125 residents of northwestern Ontario, rural Thunder Bay and Thunder Bay.

These petitioners are concerned about what they see as a direct attack on the rural way of life: cuts to VIA, abandoning the rail lines, neglect of fishery, forestry and agriculture, and erosion of rural postal service, particularly the closure of small rural post offices.

They 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 government's agenda of cutbacks and closures.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by several hundred Canadians from the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

They point out that the price of both new and existing drugs has increased substantially to individuals on provincial and private drug plans since the passage of Bill C-22 in 1987. They call upon this government not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22 in order that Canadians may benefit from generic competition.

VIOLENCE

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. This petition originates in Toronto and across the country.

Whereas the incidence of violence against women and children is unacceptable, the undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to accept legislation designed to eliminate violence against women and children. As in duty bound your petitioners humbly pray.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Madam Speaker, I also have a number of petitions signed by over 2,600 Canadian seniors from all across Canada indicating that hundreds of Canadian senior citizens live below the poverty line, that it is desirable for all Canadians to provide senior citizens with the necessary support to live their lives as independently as possible, and that the federal government has the primary responsibility to ensure the adequacy of seniors' pensions.

Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to ensure that Canadian Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

VIOLENCE

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I too have a petition to present pursuant to Standing Order 36. It is signed by hundreds of constituents in my riding of Broadview—Greenwood who have

indicated that the incidence of violence against women and children is unacceptable.

They are calling upon this Parliament to accept legislation designed to eliminate violence against women and children.

They are asking for special effort in the training of police, lawyers, court workers and judges to become knowledgeable about women and child abuse and to focus public attention on this very important and long ignored problem.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Madam Speaker, in co-operation with my colleague from the great riding of Cardigan, under Standing Order 36 I would like to present petitions on behalf of seniors from the province of Prince Edward Island and across Canada who have been offered a 37-cent increase in their old age pensions.

This is basically a reaction from the seniors about the niggardly amount of money that the government seemed fit to give people who are in need, most of whom are single women.

They humbly pray that Parliament take into consideration seriously this petition from the seniors of Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have received an application pursuant to Standing Order 52. I will hear the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Government Orders

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I rise today under the provisions of Standing Order 52(1), of which I gave you notice, to seek leave to adjourn the House in order to debate a matter of national importance.

The decision by PWA Corporation to agree to merge Canadian Airlines with Air Canada will create an unregulated monopoly and this House must impress upon the government the need to bring in regulations to protect the consumer from price gouging and the communities from arbitrary loss of service.

This House also must impress upon the government the need to work with the new single airline to fairly treat any employees who may lose their jobs as a result of the merger.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Madam Deputy Speaker: After receiving the hon. member's notice that he would be requesting an emergency debate today, the Speaker and I talked about it for quite a while and we have come to the conclusion that today would not be the appropriate moment to have such a debate.

The hon. member or any member of the House should not see this negative response today as a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the situation and of the need for the situation to be discussed. We feel that it would not be appropriate today.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

The House resumed from Wednesday, September 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Clark (Yellowhead) (pp. 12785-12786).

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, this is really a wonderful moment for our country and our people. It represents with the prospect of a Canada-wide direct vote on the constitutional amendments a new partnership between Parliament and those who send us here.

We have seen a long history in this country of efforts to make major changes that have not involved the people directly. A century and a quarter ago Sir John A. Macdonald refused the appeal in 1866 of some 20 members of Parliament from Canada East, Quebec, who petitioned for a mandate from the people prior to implementing the confederation plan. What we saw was the development of a feeling against the plan, particularly in Nova Scotia, that led to successionist movements. There has been a long period throughout our history of trying to have the people involved in major changes.

Robert Borden wanted a plebiscite in 1914 on the question of Senate reform. There was no legislation in place for that and he lost his moment of opportunity and no such vote was possible. Prime Minister Trudeau, a decade ago, sought a national referendum in relation to constitutional amendments, but he was neither able to get his legislation through Parliament in spite of two efforts bringing it before the House, nor was he able to get the agreement of the premiers to such a process.

• (1020)

Today for the third time in our history there will be a national plebiscite, but for the first time in our history it involves the Constitution.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the success that has been possible in negotiating this current comprehensive package of amendments to our Constitution was possible because in June of this year Parliament passed the enabling legislation, the Canada Referendum Act. This act made it very clear to all who gathered in Charlottetown that if they were unable to come to an agreement there was another avenue open, namely that the government could proceed with the support of Parliament in going directly to the people.

We have crossed an important threshold in our country. We are now in a period of transition in which the people are becoming much more directly involved in the process of fundamental change. I note that the promise in the May 13, 1991 throne speech by the government has been fulfilled. At that time, it was said that the men and women of Canada would be asked to participate directly in the process of constitutional change.

I am personally very happy to rise to speak in this debate. I have read all the *Hansard* accounts of the 1898 debate on the Dominion Prohibition Plebiscite Act of that year and also the debates that took place in Parliament in 1942 on the plebiscite relating to conscription for overseas military service.

In 1942 the Prime Minister of the day realized, having made a clear promise in the 1940 general election and having received a mandate from the people based on that promise, that he could not within two years reverse the position that had come from the people in a clear mandate without going back to them.

That certainly, when we are on the subject of mandate, is fundamental in a democracy. The far-reaching constitutional changes that are now proposed have never been discussed in a general election either nationally or provincially. There is no conceivable way that this whole package, as it is now put together in a new 1992 statement, could be said to have been contemplated by the Canadian people or discussed by them as the comprehensive package that it is.

It is absolutely important and vital in a democracy that the people be part of the process and that they give after deliberation a mandate with respect to this package.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister told this House in his speech that the Canadian model was used for the Australian constitution. In 1900, way back at the beginning of this century, the Australians decided that any amendment to their constitution would have to be ratified by the people. Therefore they added to their fundamental law specific provisions to that effect and, on 32 occasions since the beginning of the century, when changes to the constitution of Australia were contemplated, the people of that country were called to the polls to vote on them. In eight cases the proposals were ruled satisfactory by the majority and ratified, but they were voted down in every other instance.

I suggest that is how democracy should work. If the majority of the people cannot be convinced of the relevancy of a proposed change to the supreme law of the land, there is no legal or moral way it should be adopted. The rationale behind this is that democracy operates basically through consensus among citizens, not through coercion. If a majority of citizens cannot be induced to support a given position, the country will be in deep trouble, and in time the schemes the political leaders devise to put new deals together without getting the public on board will get the country in trouble. As a matter of fact, the present feeling of disillusionment created by governments and politics in Canada is largely due to the fact that for 20 years or so major innovative policies have been put in place without first gaining the

support of the people and reaching a consensus, which is a necessity in a democracy.

A direct vote from the people preserves the commitment principle in that the responsibility involved in the decision-making process rests with the people of Canada themselves.

[*English*]

The coming campaign for the direct vote on October 26 will be like a national teach-in. Canadians have listened for several decades now to discussion about constitutional change but it was always in orbit, distant from them. The fact that now every citizen of our country knows that he or she will have to mark a ballot indicating yes or no to these proposed amendments will focus their attention and give real meaning to citizenship in our country.

In his speech on Tuesday the Prime Minister said that the question on the ballot is in fact a proxy for many other profound questions about who we are and where we are going. That indeed is the process of the campaign that will now unfold as we debate sincerely, and with differences, from different perspectives and backgrounds who we are as a Canadian people.

This exercise of self-definition will be a transforming element in our country. We have passed the stage, happily, in which those who govern believed that they could patch together fundamental changes. Perhaps fearing the fragility of something Scotch taped on here and held with a paper clip there they end up as if they are walking on eggs and not really wanting to let people see it or examine it too closely or breathe on it. Certainly they would never have put it out so that there could be intense public debate on it over a four, five or six week period, as in a national plebiscite campaign.

We are now past that stage. The people are partners with those of us in Parliament and the provincial legislatures in dealing with this question. Indeed, all we are really debating in Parliament at this stage is the wording of the question and the process. The real decision now, through the conclusion of the campaign, will be with the Canadian people themselves. That proves that we have come to the point of recognizing that constitutions belong to the people and not to governments.

Indeed, when Her Majesty spoke in our capital on July 1 she mentioned that constitutions are not simply written documents on parchment but must, if they are to be effective and meaningful, live in the hearts and in the minds of the citizens. Therefore, we now come to examine what citizenship is really all about in 20th century Canadian parliamentary democracy.

There have been several criticisms that have been directed to this process which I would like to address. One is that it is an abdication of responsibility by Parliament and the legislatures.

Second, people do not know enough about the issue to cast an intelligent vote.

Third, the cost of this process is too great.

Last week when I was being interviewed on CFRB about this process several callers phoned in with that very comment. They said: "We elected you to be in Parliament and decide these issues. Why is the government bailing out? You are ducking responsibility".

• (1030)

We have not heard the other side of that coin so much this time, but certainly in 1942 and 1898 parliamentarians said: "I was sent here to decide issues. I was elected. We cannot just take these things back to the people all the time". All the time? This is the third time in our history that we are doing it.

Perhaps the best statement of all dealing with that concern was made by the finance minister, a Nova Scotian, in 1942 when speaking in that debate after many people had criticized the government of Mackenzie King for lacking the courage to deal with the issue in Parliament and taking it to the people. In fact, I quoted what the finance minister, J. L. Ilsley, said in the House of Commons in my new book, *The People's Mandate*, on this very subject. Here is what he said in February 1942 in justifying a national plebiscite: "Surely the cowardly government or Parliament is the one which fears to ascertain the views of the people". Ilsley said that it was far more an act of leadership to define the issue and then

to go to the people and defend it and explain, in partnership with the people, what was intended.

On that same point a former Prime Minister of Canada, Arthur Meighen, wrote in 1937 about the fact that about 98 per cent of what goes through Parliament did so without ever having a mandate from the people. They came from the ordinary grind of government and public business, detailed amendments to statutes and changes in the tax act and so on. However Meighen went on to make, in terms of the popular mandate and support from the people, a very important exception. He said that any legislation that would "affect positive principle going to the root of our institutions" ought only to proceed when there is a clear mandate from the people.

No one could read the comprehensive package of amendments negotiated at Charlottetown and then suggest that they did not constitute legislation or change going to positive principle of our country. They most assuredly do. Therefore, there is very clearly an answer here to this criticism that Parliament is somehow ducking its responsibility by going to the people. I see it as Ilsley did, as a high act of national leadership and partnership.

Just to briefly mention those final two criticisms. First, that people do not know enough about it to answer the ballot question. That is precisely what the next four, five or six weeks are all about. We will have a national teach-in and all Canadians and certainly we parliamentarians have the duty and responsibility to share that information. We will go through an exercise of self-definition of who we are as Canadians that will be very valuable.

Finally, as for the cost. I would point out that the largest element of cost concerns the preparation of the voters' lists. It should be borne in mind that the voters' lists prepared for this national direct vote will be used in next year's general election campaign, simply being revised for that purpose. Therefore, the cost of that election will be significantly reduced. Those are the accounting principles.

On the broad question of value to a democracy we have now come to a moment that is historic for our country and I am glad to be able to rise and support this initiative.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): One hundred and twenty-five years young, Canada is a new country, a country with promise, a country that is the envy of the world. Today we are called upon, as citizens of this great country to say yes to a chance for constitutional renewal, to a chance for rebirth and to a chance to get our country working again.

I am proud to live in a country built with the tolerance and generosity that is the envy of the world. Aboriginal people, French, British and yes, Irish and other settlers, immigrants from all over the world have built a country that we call home.

[*Translation*]

Aboriginals, people of French or English descent, immigrants of every country in the world, together we have created a nation envied by all.

Last Monday, 17 Romanians were found hidden in a container in the port of Antwerp, trying to sneak into Canada. Why? As they said themselves: "Because Canada is an ideal country".

[*English*]

On October 26, we will be called to reaffirm our faith in this country of ours. Faith in a country that has given her children opportunities. Faith in a country that saw the children of the Great Depression, not educated, not having the same opportunities as my generation, raising families that can be the best they want to be. Faith in a country that over generations has struggled with linguistic differences but has bridged them. That is what makes us unique as a people. We are not pseudo-Americans. We do not believe that to be equal you have to be the same.

In this particular debate we will set aside political differences, partisan differences to stand up for Canada. We will have to work hard together, New Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, and believe me, for me that will be difficult. But we will have to work together to convince those who have doubts that it is worthwhile to live together in honourable compromise.

You may be tempted to ask on the ballot: "What is in it for me?" But I know that Canadians in the final analysis will set aside individual self-interest to ask: "What is in it for Canada?" This deal does not solve all our problems. It does not guarantee gender equality. It does not give the homeless a place to sleep. It does not solve forever

all linguistic tensions and it does not guarantee racial equality.

But the bottom line is this deal makes sure that we will have a country so that we can build to bridge those differences. We will have a Canada to work out those problems.

[*Translation*]

Our challenge in the next 50 days is to convince Quebecers to say yes to Canada and to convince Canadians outside Quebec to say yes to Quebec.

I am not afraid to tell Quebecers: "Yes, you are a distinct society and I am proud of it."

We must convince native people to say yes to Canada and other Canadians to say yes to native people.

[*English*]

To people in my great city of Hamilton you may ask: "What is the point?" There is a point. On October 26 every citizen in the city of Hamilton will have a chance to say: "Yes, I want self-government of the aboriginal people to be a fundamental part of my Constitution. I want the capacity of francophones to speak their language enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. I want to say yes to Quebec. I want you as part of my Canada and I want the west and the Atlantic provinces to feel that they too have a share and a stake in our society".

• (1040)

I fear in my own area the fight may not be between yes and no, but the fight may be between those who will vote and those who will stay home. When you are called to vote and fight for your country, it is not the time to stay home. Therefore, I urge you to circle October 26 and get out to vote.

When we recognize someone else's rights we do not lose, we all win. By empowering others we become stronger, not weaker. Ontario will be stronger in a stronger Canada. The west and Atlantic Canada will also become stronger, and a stronger Quebec makes a stronger Canada.

[*Translation*]

I am asking Quebecers to say yes to Canada, to a Canada they have built themselves throughout the centuries. Tomorrow's challenges will be met by those who speak more than one language. They will be met by those who can live in peace and co-operate with their neighbours.

We hear a lot about Europe 92. I was there last summer and I now realize that Europe 92 is what we have known in Canada for centuries. What we have here are people who can get along in any language. We already have two official languages. We have in Canada people who speak all sorts of languages. This agreement is not perfect, but it is unanimous.

[*English*]

I too was one of those who thought it could not happen. I wondered whether Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers, westerners and Ontarians could sit at the table and reach a unanimous agreement.

[*Translation*]

This unanimous constitutional agreement is living proof that we can live side by side and make the compromises necessary to get along in this country in spite of all our differences.

[*English*]

This referendum gives us a chance as Canadians to explore our heritage of tolerance and generosity and to build upon it. We are a living example of what many countries in the world could not do: different people, different languages, different cultures living together peacefully and respecting our differences. We are sending a powerful signal to the world. On October 26 the world is going to be watching whether that signal will remain as clear and vibrant as it has been for the last 125 years.

[*Translation*]

I agree with the Prime Minister when he says that this is an opportunity to say yes to Canada and to be an example for the rest of the world. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that it is essential to give the Constitution back to the people through this referendum. I also agree with the Leader of the NDP who says that this vote is a vote for all of Canada.

[*English*]

This deal recognizes the rights of minorities to feel at home wherever they live in this country. Whether you are an anglophone in Quebec or a francophone anywhere in Canada you are home.

[*Translation*]

You are home, that is exactly right. This is what we have accomplished. We have gained something for Quebec. We have also gained something for Canada by recognizing aboriginal rights. We recognize the balance between the different regions which have developed since the foundation of this country. We recognize a basic fact, namely that French is not simply an insignicant historic detail in this country.

[*English*]

This Constitution guarantees forever that French is not a simple footnote in our history books, that those who came to this country 450 years ago and carved the land out, and indeed in the beginning of the historic agreement between the British and the French said that we will have two peoples, two languages, two cultures, two religions, it was a fundamental guarantee that led to a country where we did not tell everyone that to be a Canadian you have to be like me. You can choose this country.

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

[*English*]

They chose our country because they saw a country which said from the beginning of its historic roots that differences are welcomed here. That is what Canada is all about and that is why those who say "let the French go" are waving goodbye to a piece of Canada that makes us unique and different from all other countries in the world.

[*Translation*]

My French speaking friends, Canada is your country. You have built it. The fact that my daughter started school this week in a French Catholic public institution here in Ontario speaks volumes. The fact that my brother in Montreal is raising his daughter Béatrice in French—as an assimilated anglophone—would only be possible in a country where people have realized that speaking two languages and recognizing two official facts in their Constitution is not a loss but a gain on both sides. The fact that francophones can feel at home in every part of the country is quite something.

[*English*]

The deal is complicated. It is not perfect. I do not know of any constitution in any part of the world that has achieved perfection. But is that a reason to throw away a great country? Some opponents may say: "I don't like section 3(1)(b)". That is fine. There are some details that I am not crazy about. But I say this unanimous deal is a chance to bring Canada back to the real issues.

Let us examine the alternative. The alternative is intolerance, exclusion, further constitutional conflict and indeed potential chaos. Canadians have a chance now with a unanimous deal to avoid the bloody histories of other parts of the world. There may be those who say: "Well, if Brian Mulroney is for it and Jean Chrétien is for it and Audrey McLaughlin is for it then I am against it". And I heard that. I heard it on a local radio show in Hamilton.

I ask Canadians not to let their anger at politicians kill our country. This vote is not about settling grudges. This vote is not about teaching a lesson to an MP or an alderman. This vote is about our desire to keep Canada together. You will have a chance to express your disappointment, your disenchantment, at the ballot box in the next election. This is not what October 26 is about. Do not confuse the issue. Set aside our political differences, our partisan differences and work as a united front.

Canada is more than the individual interests of individual provinces or individual Canadians. This is one of those rare times in the history of a country where we can say yes.

[*Translation*]

We can say yes to Quebec and yes to Canada.

[*English*]

It is one minute to midnight, the clock is running out, and the chance is here now for Canadians to say yes to Canada so that we can rebuild a great country into the 21st century.

• (1050)

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise in support of the motion which approves the following question for the referendum on October 26.

"Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

_____ _____"

yes no

I support yes. I am asking the voters of Trinity—Spadina in Toronto particularly to vote yes. I am also asking people across Canada, where I have many friends and acquaintances, to vote yes to this. I am not asking them to vote blindly. I am asking them to study this document and the information that will be distributed about the agreement that was unanimously reached by the Prime Minister, by the First Ministers of the provinces and the territories and for the first time in our history or perhaps in the history of the world, by the representatives of the aboriginal peoples of Canada, and then consider whether they can conscientiously vote yes.

If they decide they cannot and decide they should vote no, I honour their conscience in doing so. However, I hope they will have examined the document that was arrived at unanimously.

I would like to point out six reasons. There are more but I would like to point out six reasons why they might vote yes. The first and to me the most important is that it recognizes the inherent right of the peoples who have lived here for thousands of years, before any of my ancestors came to Canada, to the self-government they never gave up.

I have to confess that I thought I was an educated Canadian when I had two university degrees. In the last three or four years I have found that I grew up grossly ignorant of certain important parts of Canadian history. Like a lot of other people in Canada, I have learned a lot in these three years. I am very glad to have that history restored to me by the process that has taken place in the last three years and confirmed by what is in this document, recognizing that they have always had that inherent right.

There will be many questions we will have to work out with them. We have five years at least to negotiate. This document sets the foundation for that.

Second, there is the reconciliation that I believe is now possible between the people of Quebec and francophones in other parts of Canada and all the people of Canada, in Quebec and elsewhere.

The essence of the Meech Lake five points is present; the distinct society, the three members representing civil law in the Supreme Court, much more independence and responsibility for immigration, clearly defined limits and responsibilities in federal spending and the right of veto on changes to federal institutions. Besides that there is an assured share of the membership of the House of Commons and a sharing of federal powers.

[*Translation*]

I want to say that our two daughters who have been living in Montreal for a number of years, as well as their husbands and children who speak French, are all bilingual. They can go to Toronto, just like my wife and I can go to Montreal, without crossing a border between Quebec and Ontario.

[*English*]

Also very important for me is the social contract. I wish to read some of the points that have been made in the social contract that was incorporated in this agreement.

"The objectives of our country shall include providing throughout Canada a health care system that is comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered, and accessible. Providing adequate social service and benefits to ensure that all individuals resident in Canada have reasonable access to housing, food, and other basic necessities. Providing high-quality primary and secondary education to all. Protecting the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively". I am particularly proud of that because that has also never been so fully recognized in the history of Canada and now it is in our Constitution as proposed for this vote.

"Protecting, preserving, and sustaining the integrity of the environment for present and future generations". Those are only promises but they are now promises that should be part of our Constitution.

There is a Canada clause which undertakes to state the general nature and commitments of our country. I regret it is not as strong as it might be in at least one way. There was a strong request that section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms be amended to say not just that the people of Canada are committed but the Government of Canada is committed to preservation and promotion of racial and ethnic equality and that clause should be exempt from the notwithstanding clause.

I believe that was a reasonable and fair request to make. I wish it had been included, but I believe we can make progress in that direction nevertheless. I will come back to that.

There is the division of powers in which the provinces which have grown greatly in population and economy throughout Canada now have greater flexibility to exercise their powers as they see need locally in the provinces and yet with a strong federal government that can provide financial support and co-ordination.

There is the reform of the Senate. I have agreed most of my life with my party about the abolition of the Senate which has been undemocratic fundamentally and in practice. This abolishes the undemocratic Senate and replaces it with a Senate whose constitution aims at providing fair representation to all sections, not just geographic, but all parts of the population of Canada.

I regret there also we did not go as far as many many people asked us to go to including proportional representation of women in the Senate. I will come back to that.

I see three problems we should deal with. They are not problems that should cause us to vote no or to stay home on October 26. They are problems I believe we can deal with better after we have voted yes and after this agreement has been put into law by the legislatures of Canada.

There is one problem, and I am happy to see that the Secretary of State is here and I respect his continuing attention on these subjects. There is a problem of pressure on certain visible minority groups and ethnic groups to be manipulated. That is to say there are phone calls, so I am well advised, coming to certain leaders of ethnic and racial groups from the multiculturalism department and/or the Secretary of State's office, talking about their vote, talking about the grants that come to their organizations, and in fact strongly suggesting they should vote in accordance with the grant.

There is the appearance that grants are greater to organizations that undertake to vote in support of yes and smaller or to absent organizations that do not agree to vote yes.

• (1100)

This is not a practice to be dealt with directly in the Constitution, but it is a matter that could be dealt with by the minister between now and voting day on October 26. I ask the minister to review the conduct of his office and his department to see whether it is possible to remove any hint of manipulation of the vote through the use of public funds. I ask that because I want those people to vote yes. I do not want them to be alienated by a sense that they are being manipulated. As is often said, it is important not only that justice be done but that justice appear to be done, and that is one of the problems.

I believe the minister and his department can deal with that in the next few weeks. I also believe the wider problem of the absence of the amendment to Bill C-27 can be addressed by premiers of Canada. At least one of them, the Premier of Ontario, has already addressed it, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs has addressed it and some of the native leaders have addressed it by urging that an amendment to clause 27 be incorporated. It is not possible to incorporate it now into the agreement on which we must vote on the 26th, but there could be a public pledge by the premiers and other leaders that they will see to it that it is considered a minor amendment that could be incorporated into the final drafting after the 26th when, as I hope, the vote will be resoundingly yes.

The final problem, and I have heard this from a number of my constituents, is that while this process proceeds in promoting acceptance of a political Constitution for Canada, there is another process afoot that would establish a very much changed economic Constitution for Canada, what President Reagan called the economic constitution of North America. When Canada signed the free trade agreement with the White House, that was President Reagan's triumphant declaration. Now we have an economic Constitution for North American and he obviously had in mind Mexico, which is now under way.

I want to quote what my leader said about 12 days ago: "We have begun the journey into the 21st century. There are those who tell us that it is a journey that must be led by the strongest and survived by the fittest. There is no choice. On their journey there is no time to pause and help a child born into poverty or a family forced into need. They are wrong. They are so very wrong. We have not struggled to politically unite this country only to have it divided socially and economically. Canada's journey into the 21st century has to be a journey with room for all, a journey where the strong help the weak, where the

healthy care for the sick and where every child will rise up with confidence and hope. Then and only then will the hard work and struggle have been worth it".

I believe it is highly relevant to what we are doing today because these two processes go together. The government, with millions of dollars of the taxpayers, is funding its view in favour of the North American free trade agreement while we continue with this referendum process.

Therefore, I find it necessary to call on the people of Canada to present the other side since three-quarters of them, according to public polls, reject that agreement and with reason. They reject it through knowing that more than one and a half million out of work Canadian adults and their families are living on their savings or unemployment insurance cheques or welfare and that is a poor living.

The U.S.-Canada trade deal has cost half a million good jobs, mostly in manufacturing. We are now being drawn into a negotiation with Mexico in which the standards of wages and environmental protection are so low that they are bound to damage the standards in Canada.

We are asked to join a trading block which will shut out the people of Asia and the people of Europe and break the concept of unified world trade for which most nations of the world have struggled since the end of World War II.

Finally, it would be a deal that would turn the raw material producing areas of Canada into areas of low-wage workers, hewers of wood and drawers of water, as General McNaughton said almost half a century ago when he warned against giving away our water. The workers in the present manufacturing areas of Canada would be reduced to low paid service workers, the equivalent of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

I ask that we look at these things together. The North American free trade agreement must be debated further. We do not even know whether the United States will accept it. It must be debated and we must begin now. I ask people in Trinity—Spadina and in Canada to vote yes, to put an end to this constitutional crisis which has seized us and to get on with building a democratic economy in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Madam Speaker, you may have noticed that for the past three days harmony has reigned in this House. Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives have become a mutual admiration society, and all for the sake of making us accept a so-called constitutional agreement. Why so-called? Because in the preface we read the following:

> *The asterisks in the text that follows* indicate the areas where the consensus is to proceed with a political accord.

That means no agreement was reached. In fact, I counted 28 asterisks in the text, which means 28 items on which there is no agreement as yet. At the end of the text it says:

> Other constitutional issues were discussed during the multilateral meetings. The consensus was not to pursue the following issues:

This is followed by a list of 14 items. If this is an agreement, I wonder what is being agreed to. Finally, it says:

> Other issues were discussed but were finally resolved, among which were:

Another six items are mentioned. That is certainly not my idea of an agreement. It is full of gaps, and there are still many issues to be settled, as we just heard.

Like the majority of Quebecers, I refuse to accept this agreement. In addition to the considerations I just mentioned, I have other reasons for doing so and some very concrete examples.

Take the economy. That Canada's economy is deteriorating is no secret. In fact, there is a connection with the constitutional fatigue people are talking about. Governments have taken advantage of the constitutional debate to cover up their inertia, their lack of initiative, their lack of innovative ideas for restoring the prosperity of this country. As Jean Allaire put it, Canada is technically bankrupt. The economy is a disaster. For some time, Quebec's demands have ceased to be political.

• (1110)

They are more closely related to economic matters, because Quebec is willing to do anything to build its own prosperity. This need to regain control, to obtain all the tools required to rectify the situation, has been misunderstood in Canada. Quebec is stuck in a country which denies its need to obtain more powers to overcome its difficulties, while, on the other hand, the federal government increases its debt, mortgages the future of its citizens, imposes policies unrelated to regional realities,

is unable to increase competitivity, and finally insists on controlling everything, even though there is increasing evidence that it has lost all ability to control anything.

In this context, it is surprising to hear comments about the terrible apocalyptic scenarios were Quebec to refuse to ratify the proposals. If it has to make a choice, why would Quebec opt for the worst, namely for a federal, centralizing, controlling system which overspends without taking into account the distinct realities of Quebec? Quebecers have long understood that it is useless to ask what Canada can do for them. They now ask themselves instead what they can do for Quebec. And what we can do now for Quebec is to say: no thanks.

But what about the draft agreement of August 22 on which Quebecers and Canadians will be asked to vote? It is important to analyse what benefits Quebec can find in this hastily achieved agreement. A more equitable sharing of powers? Certainly not. Quebec is far from having gained a new arrangement which would give it the powers it has demanded for 30 years, at least according to François Rocher, professor of political science at Carleton University.

Is there any need to remind the House that Quebec has been asking for the same thing for the past 30 years, to assure that Quebec will have the powers required to manage its own cultural, social and economic development? The so–called agreement of August 22 does not grant any new powers to Quebec. It provides for six exclusive fields of provincial jurisdiction: tourism, recreation, fisheries, housing, mines and urban affairs, which all came under provincial jurisdiction in the 1867 Constitution. I must also point out that the minister of constitutional affairs has even watered that down. He stated this week in the House that some sectors in these fields of juridiction will continue to come under federal responsibility. He said so to reassure one of his Conservative colleagues who had asked a question on the subject. As an example, he mentioned housing, which is quite a large exception.

Let us deal now with culture and immigration. Culture will come exclusively under provincial jurisdiction but—and it is an important but—the spending powers of the federal government in this area are confirmed. In addition the federal government will continue to control certain institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board. It is another example of the federal government giving with one hand and taking back with the other.

As for immigration, the only so–called advantage is an agreement under which the federal government simply undertakes to negotiate agreements on immigration, which it has been doing since the sixties.

Finally, under the draft agreement, manpower training would come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction, but once more, there are restrictions, such as the fact that unemployment insurance would remain under federal control.

As for regional development, negotiations are planned for the provinces that desire to play a greater role; what role and within what limits we shall see. In any event, it will be renegotiated in five years.

We must therefore admit that Quebec gains nothing in the distribution of powers. The answer to the federal offers is a very simple no.

Turning now to the distinct society, which was the cornerstone of the Meech Lake accord, and considered the bare minimum required for Quebec, this concept is worthless in the new constitutional agreement concocted by our first ministers.

The distinct society clause in the draft 1992 accord has virtually no value for Quebec, based on its nature, its wording and its context. The distinct society clause loses all its value because it is followed by a clause providing that the Quebec and federal governments have a commitment to the growth and development of the anglophone minority in Quebec. This clause totally limits the scope of the distinct society.

In sum, the distinct society clause in the proposed constitutional agreement becomes a mere interpretation rule subject to the discretionary power of judges; furthermore, by mentioning three criteria that distinguish Quebec, namely language, culture and civil law, the limitations are increased.

This will make it hard for Quebec to defend its social and economic legislation on the basis of the distinct society clause. For example, the law on the language of

advertising and commercial signs could be overturned on the basis of this clause.

Since Quebec gets no advantage or, worse, loses the little power it has, the answer to the offers of August 22 is a simple no.

The proposed constitutional agreement provides for a new equal Senate that confirms the triumph of English Canada's vision of federalism which diminishes Quebec.

As Professor Guy Laforêt of Laval University says, by making Quebec a province like the others, the equal Senate is tantamount to official recognition, in the very heart of the Canadian political system, of the end of the dual vision of the country.

The equal Senate confirms Quebec's loss of power in the Canadian political system; its share of the representation will drop from 23 per cent to 9.6 per cent and maybe even 7 per cent, with the seats reserved for native people and new provinces.

In practical terms it means that a senator from Prince Edward Island will represent 21,717 citizens, whereas a Quebec senator will represent 1,140,833. It is quite a difference. To offset this loss of 18 seats, they are being transferred to the House of Commons. Quebec will have 93 members instead of 75 as now, but what will that change?

In any case we know that the 56 Conservative members from Quebec blend with those from the west and the maritimes. They have no opinion of their own. They will follow their party line.

Looking at the Senate and representation in the House of Commons, we cannot speak of advantages for Quebec. That is why I will again say no thanks to the offers of August 22.

• (1120)

Let us talk about this right of veto. Meech gave Quebec a general veto over changes to federal institutions and the establishment of new provinces. Now the federal government only has a moral obligation to consult with provinces regarding the establishment of new provinces.

What is Quebec gaining from this so-called right of veto? Nothing. Our only option is to say no to these offers.

This proposed constitutional agreement includes an interesting section concerning native issues. It is interesting because it reveals the open-mindedness of English Canada toward the aboriginal people, in contrast to its attitude toward Quebecers. The agreement recognizes aboriginal self-government without defining it, leaving the concept open to all kinds of interpretation.

After five years of negotiations the courts will have to settle the matter and will be free to define this important notion unrestricted by clear criteria.

It is just the opposite for Quebec where English Canada was determined to limit to only three areas the distinct society clause. Obviously English Canada's open-mindedness varies according to whom it is dealing with. Because of the insult to Quebec I say thanks, but no thanks.

All in all, English Canada's attitude is an insult to Quebecers who have shown through the years their trust in democracy, peace and negotiation only to face continued rejection. We must recognize that Quebecers are patient and tolerant.

Madam Speaker, you are indicating to me that my time is up so I will close by saying that Quebecers cannot accept the August 22 package. Because we must reject the centralization of powers at the federal level I say no on behalf of Quebec. Because we must refuse to become architects of our own failure, I say no on behalf of Quebec. Because we must prevent the decline of one of the founding nations of this country, I say no on behalf of Quebec.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find unanimous consent in the House for the debate to continue through the mid-day interruption, that is from one o'clock through to two o'clock.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The member for Outremont has the floor. I am told he will share his speaking time with the member for Manicouagan.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Madam Speaker, I have less time than I had hoped and I will have to use it sparingly. Time is precious and it is my pleasure, as you mentioned, to share this period with my colleague from Manicouagan.

I will make a few comments, primarily from my unique perspective.

First I want to make some corrections. Yesterday the leader of the Parti Quebecois gave his reply in the National Assembly to Mr. Bourassa's speech. He made a presentation that was a reflection of the man. He was calm and proper. On a few occasions, he referred to another premier of Quebec, Mr. Lesage. He did so with great gusto. He talked about him at length. Nothing was usurped. He alluded to the place occupied by a premier that belongs to the Quebec people and their past.

Nobody is offended by that. But then the Bloc Quebecois leader got all upset when the Prime Minister of Canada referred to another Quebec premier, Mr. Lévesque.

This premier belongs to me just as much as he belongs to all Canadians. No one has the right to be so intolerent and think that this man only belongs to a caste.

Finally I want to get back to my university colleague and repeat again that Mr. Parizeau is an economist. If you really want to know what the agreement is all about you consult a constitutionalist, and this is what I did. I consulted our colleague, Senator Beaudoin, who is a constitutionalist of international reputation. Senator Beaudoin tells me that this agreement is a good one. He is an expert on that issue. I accept his analysis and his conclusion.

I want to deflate another falsehood. The Bélanger-Campeau commission is not and was not the Bible. In fact it never will be the Bible. You had to be a member of that commission to see what went on. I was there. One must not minimize the work done by the commission, but at the same time you must not put it on a pedestal that it does not and never will deserve.

If you look at pages 53, 54 and 55 of its report where it deals with solutions, the commission makes a new attempt to redefine the status of Quebec. I am talking about the title of the paragraphs that follow and will follow within the Canadian federal regime.

They start by saying: "A first solution, as we saw, would consist for Quebec to try once again to obtain major changes within the federal constitutional framework". A little farther they add: "Federalism, as a principle of political organization, is characterized by the flexibility of the structures that it makes possible". A little further still we can read this: "The general concept of Canada and of the federal regime that prevails today appears rigid and clearly geared towards a search for uniformity and the negation of the differences".

What happened under the authority of other governments that managed the affairs of the country in the past no longer takes place since the Conservative government has been in power and since the present Prime Minister has been in control.

This man and this party want decentralization as well as the respect of regional entities and identities. Pages 54 and 55 of the document mention changes that Quebec would accept: the need to create a new relationship based on recognition and respect between that province and the rest of the country; a sharing of jurisdictions and responsabilities; the allocation of jurisdictions and responsabilities to Quebec regarding its social and economic developement, et cetera. Madam Speaker, all that you find in the Charlottetown accord is in this presentation made on pages 54 and 55 and on which the Bélanger-Campeau commission agreed.

As Mr. Parizeau says, the content of the question is clear. You answer yes or no. Just like in any relationship negotiation is a continuous process, but this process can be done with either a conciliatory or antagonistic approach.

• (1130)

I would like to emphasize the fact that the Charlottetown process made it possible to search for a consensus in a climate of confidence. The objective was not to look for a compromise, but to recognize the true worth of all parties involved.

When the Canadian people including Quebec vote yes, it will be to demonstrate their self-confidence and its wish to control their own future.

Research has shown that national unity is possible, both in theory and in practice, even if we also promote regional differences. The people of Quebec and the way French-Canadians and Quebecers can now function show us that this nation is going through a maturing process and is becoming increasingly self-confident. Thus, these negotiations will not be the last ever. It would be illusory to believe so, but they will be productive and positive.

Voting yes will give Canadians and Quebecers another opportunity to show their maturity.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Madam Speaker, Canadians are being invited to make an historic decision on October 26. On that day they will be asked to reply to the referendum question now being debated in the House of Commons.

The question is short, clear and, most important, non-partisan. Its wording will allow all Canadian citizens to vote on the most important constitutional renewal project since the foundation of our country.

It will certainly be no surprise for anyone here or for the residents of the Manicouagan riding to learn that I shall reply yes to the referendum question. I shall vote in the affirmative because I am deeply convinced that the agreement achieved in Charlottetown a few weeks ago will make it possible for our nation to meet two basic objectives.

The first is to maintain the unity and integrity of Canada as a country which is respected and envied throughout the world. The second is to strengthen Quebec within the Canadian nation.

The provincial premiers, the leaders of the governments of the territories and Yukon, the representatives of the First Nations and the Prime Minister of Canada have come to an agreement which represents an historic stage in the evolution of the Canadian nation. This agreement completes the process begun in 1981, a process from which Quebec was unfortunately left out at the time but which was relaunched and carried out tenaciously in November 1984.

I was there in Sept-Îles in 1984 when the right hon. Prime Minister undertook to bring Quebec back into the Canadian family with enthusiasm and dignity. All those who witnessed this commitment applauded the Prime Minister and gave him their support.

This commitment has now been met, thanks to the agreement achieved in Charlottetown a few weeks ago.

Why can we say today that Quebec comes back to the constitutional table with enthusiasm and dignity? Anyone who reads the text of the consensus report on the Constitution will understand.

Through this agreement Quebec consolidates its position in a number of jurisdictions including immigration, culture and shared cost programs.

Through this agreement Quebec makes major gains, including recognition of the distinct identity of Quebec's society, full responsibility for manpower and manpower training programs, and full jurisdiction over forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation and municipal and urban affairs.

This agreement recognizes Quebec's expanded role in regional development and telecommunications.

The agreement also confirms Quebec's right to appoint three judges to the Supreme Court and gives Quebec 18 new seats in the House of Commons.

These are historic gains for Quebec.

[*English*]

This agreement, to which the Government of Quebec agrees, recognizes in its Canada clause that Canadians and their government are committed to the vitality and development of official language minority communities throughout Canada. Here is a commitment that will reassure the anglophone communities of the lower north shore in my riding. This clause assures them that their rights will be respected, will be recognized, will be protected and will be promoted.

This historic agreement makes all Canadians proud to be Canadians and it also makes the people of Quebec proud to be Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The aboriginal people of Canada and Quebec have finally obtained recognition of the principle of self-government. I am glad our partners in Confederation recognized the need to include in the Canadian Constitution the principle of self-government for aboriginal nations.

In 1988 I made a commitment to support this principle, and it is with great pride that I invite my Montagnais constituents on the North Shore to examine the agree-

ment and measure the gains their people have made as a result of agreement.

It is of course understood there will be further discussions on this great principle of aboriginal self-government. The discussions will have to continue. Just because the principle has been recognized and will be enshrined in the Constitution does not mean discussions will no longer be necessary and that all obstacles have been overcome. On the contrary, we must be prepared to compromise and to continue the discussions on the principles of aboriginal self-government, in order to help undo the wrong done to aboriginal peoples since our country began and accept them as full citizens and partners in the development, including the economic development, of our country and help them achieve their legitimate cultural, language and developmental goals.

In concluding I would like to pay a real North Shore tribute to the right hon. Prime Minister, the North Shore boy who will go down in history as the man who made it possible to conclude this agreement. His perseverance and that of the right hon. member for Yellowhead have produced positive results for our country and Quebec.

[*English*]

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister characterized as a Canadian compromise is certainly cause for congratulations to the Prime Minister, and particularly to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

• (1140)

Those gentlemen, the leaders of our country, are entitled to bask in the glow of their achievement. For Canadians generally, however, the consensus at Charlottetown is more cause not for congratulations but for a collective sigh of relief. It is some release from the constitutional fatigue that has been building into a national trauma.

It all began when Quebec was excluded from the 1982 agreement. Reopening the constitutional issue in 1985 might have been a *beau risque*, to use the words of René Lévesque cited Tuesday by the Prime Minister. It was a dangerous risk, too.

Nonetheless, the Prime Minister did achieve an accord at Meech Lake. It was an accord which, to my view, supported by good constitutional advice from across the country, particularly from the then attorney general of Ontario—Ian Scott, who retired from the legislature early this week—was a satisfactory compromise allowing Quebec its recognition as a distinct society within our Confederation without yielding federal power.

Despite all the assertions to the contrary there was no sacrifice in that accord of the federal spending power. Indeed, the accord was specific in stating that nothing in that agreement altered in any way the balance between federal and provincial constitutional authority.

Granted, the accord responded primarily to Quebec's concerns but it would have been a useful first step in the renewal of our Confederation. It was contemplated by all the first ministers, and it was certainly contemplated by the Prime Minister, that the problem of western alienation and the injustice shown for centuries toward our original peoples would have been addressed thereafter.

I read that document of Meech Lake carefully. I have read the current document just as carefully. Meech Lake was a far cleaner deal than the document we now have before the House. In my view, those who opposed Meech Lake will bear the burden of history for the national disruption of the last three exasperating years, lost opportunities, a gnawing national frustration and who knows what permanent damage to the psyche of the country.

I have always been suspicious of referenda or plebiscites. Of course they are the ultimate democratic gesture. But the more complicated the national fabric of a country, the more divisive a referendum can be. A referendum is simplistic, reducing complex issues to a simple yes or no answer.

Moreover, under our parliamentary system we have representative democracy. In Canada we elect those who sit in the House and in the legislatures, and those who are municipal councillors. We elect those whom we charge or mandate to analyse the issues for us, to vote for us, and we hold them to account regularly at general elections.

A referendum tends to be an abrogation of that process because under our representative democracy we rely on the judgment of our members of Parliament and members of the legislatures. We rely on their ability, in

the best interests of their constituents and of the country generally, to act on our behalf and to vote on our behalf.

A referendum is an abrogation of that style of leadership. It is the quick fix. Having said that, what is done is done and there are provincial referenda in place. Therefore, I accept the fact that we now have a referendum. The people will decide and we will await their ultimate decision. I can tell you it is far from a done deal in many parts of Canada right now.

Looking at the substance of this consensus report from Charlottetown on August 28—I have never in 30 years since being elected to the House of Commons had trouble as a Canadian, certainly as a former member of Parliament from Quebec, with the concept of a distinct society. For me it reflects reality. A different majority language, a different system of law, a different history, a different culture, different traditions, and a different sense of humour.

It is now more clearly defined in this document. I reiterate what I said in the House once before, which was reconfirmed by the judgment of the late Justice Jean Beetz in the Supreme Court of Canada on the sign language law, that a distinct society in Quebec includes not only a French speaking majority but it includes the English speaking minority. That is part of that distinct society. There is no impingement of minority rights by the concept of a distinct society.

Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver, which you and I have the honour to represent, and elsewhere Quebecers are visiting us this summer, certainly on the Voyageur Program. They must feel pretty good seeing those bumper stickers that say "My Canada Includes Quebec". For me there is no Canada without Quebec.

[*Translation*]

If I were a Quebecer, I think I would be satisfied with this agreement. It might not be as good as I would have wished, but it is probably better than what I expected. I cannot present at length the case for Quebec, but this was done, anyhow, by my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, in his masterly speech yesterday. I can say that it was among the best pleadings I ever heard in this house.

If I were a Quebecer, this document would provide a better protection for my language, my culture, my heritage, my system of civil law. Quebec's control over its natural resources and immigration is improved, and Quebec is guaranteed a third of the Supreme court judges and, more importantly, 25 per cent of the seats in this House, that is to say 25 per cent of the shares in the business that is Canada. It has a perpetual guarantee of 25 per cent of the seats in order to protect the home base of French speakers in Canada: Quebec. On top of that it has veto power over any change in federal institutions.

If I were a Quebecer, I would say again: My homeland is Quebec, but my country is Canada.

[*English*]

I salute the justice finally accorded to our first peoples. Finally recognition of the inherent constitutional rights of our original peoples, the constitutional right to self-government. I want to caution the House that strong leadership is going to be needed from all quarters during the next five years to make it work.

These provisions—the distinct society and the inherent right to self-government for our original peoples—were perhaps what Sir Wilfrid Laurier had in mind when, in this House, he recalled a visit to Canterbury Cathedral in London, a cathedral made of granite, oak, and marble. This is what he said to the House:

> It is the image of the nation I wish to see Canada. For here, I want the granite to remain granite, the oak to remain oak, and the marble to remain marble. Out of these elements, I would build a nation great among the nations of the world.

• (1150)

What about the Senate? We argued this issue in this House on a government motion by the then Minister of Justice, now Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, on June 7, 1985. I remember it, it was my birthday.

At that time I repeated what I had written in a thesis that is now gathering dust in the library at the University of British Columbia, although there is a well worn copy in the Senate library here. The thesis was to the effect that the Senate should be abolished and, if not abolished, elected so that it became a real territorial balance against the overwhelming population of our central provinces.

Now we will have an elected Senate, an improvement certainly for western Canada. We are going to have an equal Senate, as the Leader of the Opposition said on Tuesday, at the price of being a less effective one.

I have always supported the British Columbia thesis advanced by the late W.A.C. Bennett when he was premier at the 1971 Victoria conference when I was attorney general under Mr. Trudeau. The British Columbia thesis of the five regional divisions for the Senate was the thesis advanced again by Premier Harcourt, which I supported.

Parenthetically, permit me to congratulate our current premier for his very constructive role throughout the long and difficult negotiations. He spoke for British Columbia but, as the unanimous report of the legislature advised him to do, he put Canada first. That is what the legislature, after touring the province, came to the conclusion that British Columbians wanted him to do and he did it. In my view, he deserves the support of all British Columbians in supporting this agreement.

There will be a better equilibrium in our Confederation as the result of an elected Senate, but it is impossible to predict how effective individual senators are going to be under our new parliamentary process. It is impossible to predict the interaction of the two Houses. One thing is certain, the power of the Senate to defeat a bill and then force a joint session of the House of Commons and the Senate will add a new dynamic in the power structure of this country and, frankly, I am optimistic that it can work.

On the issue of division of powers between federal and provincial jurisdictions, I do not believe that the federal authority gave away too much, although I have some doubts about culture, telecommunications and broadcasting and I deplore, as the Leader of the Opposition does, the weak economic union clause.

As I said during the trade debate, I have read the document. It is not a perfect document. It is not my document. But it is the only document we have. It happens to be the document resulting from hours and days and months of strenuous negotiations finally culminating with our democratically elected leaders from every part of the country and every segment of the country agreeing on this consensus. For that reason it deserves our support.

We Canadians ought to recognize that this referendum is more than just a debate about words, laws and powers. It is about the future of our country as a cohesive, emotional, economic union. This debate not only involves our future as a people, but our individual well-being as citizens. It involves our future as a country that can continue to welcome citizens from every corner of the globe as a proud country.

We have been warned by the new political gurus of our age, the omnipotent pollsters, that we should not preach fear in this debate.

Does that mean that we cannot say to our fellow citizens that there are economic consequences of failure for all of us, that we should not warn that dividing up the huge public debt will not be costly, that we should not caution that there will be an effect upon our credit rating in the markets of the world, or upon the exchange rate, or upon interest rates, or that our trade would not be affected, or jobs and investments not lost?

No, this is not an abstract debate. This has real consequences, on a daily basis, for every one of us and every one of our constituents. More important, if we fail, it will affect the way that we feel about ourselves. We will feel that we have let ourselves down. We will feel that we have lost, perhaps irretrievably, the uniqueness we had as a special nation.

Canadians want a positive conclusion to this question. Most of us in this country believe that we have a great and beautiful land. Most of us believe that Canada has been a wonderful experiment. Most of us believe that Canada has been a great achievement. We are reluctant to sing the praises of our country, restrained in our patriotism. Waving the flag is not our way, not our style.

I happen to believe that we need renewal. Certainly we need renewal of our Constitution. We need renewal of our pride in our country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We need to shed our cynicism and our negativism and our sense of frustration. We need to feel good about ourselves again.

Let us remember what we have here. Let us remember what we are talking about: a land of limitless space; a tolerant people, a fair people and a decent people. Let us reassert our belief in ourselves as a nation, using the

words of Laurier, "great among the nations of the world". We are the envy of the world.

It is time we woke up. It is time we shook ourselves out of this lethargy. I hope that this national debate encourages all of us, all Canadians, to stand up, to speak up strongly and loudly and clearly for Canada.

I support the motion and I will campaign for it.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1200)

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate first of all the speaker from Vancouver Quadra on a very excellent, eloquent speech this morning in his defence of the amendments and of the proposal to present the referendum to the Canadian people. I found it most illuminating and historic. I would congratulate him on a very well thought out and well presented speech and text.

I am also from British Columbia and I would like to present a slightly different point of view. I would like to discuss some of the concerns that we have in British Columbia with the constitutional representation in the referendum as it has been presented to us. The Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs has done an excellent job, an outstanding job, and at times an impossible job in bringing the premiers together to present a completed document with unanimous consent. Each one involved in this whole episode and exercise deserves our thanks and appreciation for the hard work and the compromising which they have done.

I would like to point out, however, that this is a debate in which various points of view are presented. I would like to present some points of view from British Columbia that I feel are significant and need to be discussed.

There are four points that I would like to make and the first one is that the redistribution of the seats or the increase in the number of seats compounds a problem which we in western Canada have complained about and have been concerned about for many years; namely, the increase in the centralization of power in central Canada. The idea of a Triple-E Senate was presented to resolve that problem. In a way it has done that in that the Senate is now equal according to provinces. As the previous speaker mentioned, it is a question as to how much effectiveness there will actually be. I think that is something that will have to be developed as time goes on.

One of our major concerns is the increased centralization of power within central Canada. Forty more seats in central Canada is the equivalent of more than what B.C. has in total in the House. It is equivalent to what the Atlantic provinces have. It means that there would be increased Cabinet representation, increased membership of committees and everything that is entailed in having more members in this institution.

The second concern that has been voiced to me by many British Columbians is the increase in number of seats. They say we want less government and not more. It is recognized that by reducing the number of senators and increasing the number of MPs, the numbers will remain essentially the same. However, we should point out that it is much more expensive to maintain a member of Parliament in today's atmosphere than it has been in the past to have our senators. The new senators also will be much more expensive to maintain with their increased office staff, their constituency offices and the many things which they do not have at the present time. There is a real concern in British Columbia about the number of members of Parliament and what they will be doing. At the present time, we find that 60 per cent of our time is spent with immigration matters and such things. This is not a responsibility of members of Parliament primarily and I think we could best spend our time doing other things.

A third area that is of great concern to British Columbians, probably more so than any province in Canada, is the concept of aboriginal self-government. To me it is a potential time bomb and one of the most serious concepts within this whole document that needs to be studied, examined and worked on with all due care and attention that is required. It will affect British Columbia more than any other province because we are not covered by any of the treaties by which the other provinces have been covered. None of the groundwork has been done. Concerning our land claims at the present time, 120 per cent of our province is claimed by the natives, by the aboriginal people under the land

claims. There are more Indian bands in British Columbia than in any other province. We have 53 separate bands, each with its own language and system of government. There will be a very complex problem of self-government.

The majority of aboriginals in British Columbia are not going to be satisfied with the status or the Sechelt pattern as has been described. Rather, they are concerned that their goal is to have either provincial or federal status for their people. We can see that there is going to be a lot of conflict. Some of these things need to be formulated. They have told me personally that they would not be satisfied with the municipal form.

In relation to this point the costs are unknown. It has been shown in the referendum document that the federal government will be responsible for the costs that are involved. As I say, with 53 bands the educational, legal, justice and administrative systems that will be set up will be tremendously expensive to maintain because of the small numbers of people that will be involved in them. This is a real concern for the people of British Columbia.

These are some of the major concerns of people. Another major concern, the fourth concern, is the unanimity clause that has been included. Every speaker so far has pretty well said that this document was flawed, that it had problems and that they had reservations. Yet we are going to carve in stone the unanimity clause which says that all provinces and the House must agree to changes in the Constitution. Rather than doing that, we should be perhaps writing it on paper so that it can be changed much more so than carving it in stone. I cannot see any reason for putting this clause in at this time when there are so many doubts about it.

The people of British Columbia have looked at these problems and considered them. On the other side they ask: "What are the benefits of getting this referendum through and agreeing to the constitutional package?" This is a major issue that is going to be present in this whole referendum. Re-establishing political stability within the country will allow our economic problems to be resolved. We will be able to direct our attention to the economic problems which each province and area is facing.

Residents of British Columbia will have to weigh these two factors: the shortcomings and the very positive commercial aspects. As a previous speaker pointed out, the great pride we have as Canadians within Canada about Canada must also be considered.

I look forward to further debate and discussion on this matter. I hope the final package will show fairness to all Canadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth has seven minutes.

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Madam Speaker, my first thanks goes to the hon. doctor from Delta who yielded half of his time to let me make about a three-minute speech on this vital issue.

My congratulations go to the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra who made one of the most magnificent speeches that I have heard him make in this House of Commons. He was fighting and has implored us to fight for this country. I really applaud him.

Some hon. members: Tell him that.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)): They say: "Tell him that". I did.

The other right hon. member in this House who should be applauded is the right hon. member for Yellowhead, the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. My wife and I are very proud of that right hon. member. I have never seen him in better form, tired as he may be, over the 16 months of trying to cobble together what is the most important Canadian exercise since we were formed 125 years ago.

The question that people are being asked is the following one:

> Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

I went into Zehr's Plaza across the street from where I live in Ancaster, in beautiful downtown Hamilton—Wentworth, and I asked the first 10 people: "What does the question mean to you?"

• (1210)

In effect, what they said was: "What the hell are you talking about? What package? What is in it? Will you be specific?" With the co-operation of editors of six weekly newspapers that I put my column in every single week, I decided to ask my own question. The question is in two parts:

1. "Do you want to keep Canada together? Yes ____ No _____"

2. "What is the best way to do that?"

Really what we have to decide is whether we believe in Canada. If not, why not? I am not putting that in writing. I am just saying that. I feel that you can examine nothing with a closed mind. Let nothing be invoked but the truth and the truth is we have the best country in the world to reside in according to the United Nations and according to all of us who live here. The truth is that the only answer can be yes to keeping this country together.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, I first want to say at the outset that as a British Columbian I have to respond to the statement made by the former Prime Minister of this country who happens to be not only a great Quebecer but a great British Columbian as well.

The member for Vancouver Quadra did a profound service for every Canadian, in my opinion, with his speech. Sometimes some of us can transcend political lines and talk about higher goals that the very nature of this institution attempts to implant in us. No one can accuse me of having done that very often. When I hear it and I recognize it, I must applaud it. I am proud to be a member of this House and to have heard the speech made by the member for Vancouver Quadra.

Let me say at the outset as a former premier of the province of British Columbia, I am not happy with this deal. It is imperfect. I imagine there are a lot of people in every corner of this country who are not happy with this deal and say it is imperfect. What else do we have in front of us? I do not like either/or situations. Like all politicians, I would rather move around, come out and duck back in again. However, there is no room for moving around, no room for coming out and ducking back in again. It is either/or.

Who placed us in this position? In my opinion it is the Prime Minister of Canada who must be responsible one way or the other, whether you agree with him or not on every other issue. He must take the political responsibility with the premiers to come up with a deal.

I am not crazy about referenda. Referenda catch the spirit of the moment. The population can be inflamed or cooled by intemperate remarks. Prejudices can be appealed to. Biases can be appealed to, and more important, the lowest common denominator can become the basis of debate which confuses people.

I intend to hold my nose and vote for this deal. It is not Dave Barrett's deal, but who is Dave Barrett to hold up the whole country? If I had my druthers, I would have written my own constitutional deal, voted on my own referendum and said here it is, it is my best and it is mine.

Fortunately or unfortunately, nobody asked me to do that and I am presented with a human document that I am forced to make a decision on.

I was against Meech Lake. My simple pithy comment on that was go to another lake. They did and they nearly got drowned by the demands of every single sector of this nation that has a single issue it wants represented, mine included.

I am forced to look at the document. Some of the injustices that this nation has unconsciously or consciously inflicted on our aboriginal people are finally being dealt with. That is morally responsible. No politician has a monopoly on morality. When we see a morally responsible decision being made by politicians, we should have the courage to applaud it. I applaud it.

Dealing with the regions, yes, there have been compromises and deals and back room arrangements, and yes, the adjustments will be made over a period of time. The fairness of Canadian people and the fairness of our system, if you have confidence in our system, will ensure that every region is adequately represented.

I am going to vote for it. I regret that we cannot have a political debate on the economy, on NAFTA. I would have preferred to see a vote along with this on NAFTA, but that is not going to happen.

Now I am being asked, as a British Columbia politician and as a former premier, to state publicly what my position is. I say unequivocally, because the document is not perfect, it is not Dave Barrett's, but I am going to vote for it.

I want to talk some politics. I am profoundly disturbed that Conservative backbenchers, upon the immediate release of this document, attacked the premier of British Columbia for nothing more than crass political purposes. To this day, those certain Tory backbenchers have yet to say publicly if they are for or against the deal. They are spreading false and malicious information about this document without having the courage to challenge the Prime Minister on this issue or to state publicly in my

province if they are for or against it. That is crass, cheap politics that is damaging no one else but every single citizen of this country.

If any Tory backbencher thinks that by their equivocation and their attack on Mike Harcourt, the premier of British Columbia—whether it was W. A. C. Bennett, Bill Bennett, Vander Zalm or myself—if they think playing politics is building Canada, let me go on record as saying that it is despicable and doing great damage to this nation.

I am not opposed to their having an opposing point of view, I am not opposed to their having criticism, but if you are going to oppose and criticize, have the courage to say yes or no. Do not play the middle ground to stir up animosities in my home province of British Columbia. Those backbench Tories who saw their own leader and the other premiers of this country craft a deal that was a compromise for everybody have yet to say publicly what side they are on. They are still stirring up dirt on an ignorant basis in my home province, hoping to gain some cheap political points.

I hope I have made my point clear. I hope I have made my point clear that if you are opposed to this, stand up and say you are. If you are in favour of it, stand up and say you are. For God's sake stop playing cheap politics by ducking in and ducking out, dumping on individuals who participated, without having the courage to say exactly where the hell you stand. I find that reprehensible.

I want to address some remarks to the Liberal leader in the province of British Columbia. My dear friend, the Liberal leader of British Columbia, has decided to go on national television and attack this deal without offering alternatives, and that is his right. He, too, has yet to come out and say whether he is for it or against it. I challenge him publicly to stand up in the province of British Columbia and say he is opposed to this deal, and as a Liberal he will not support one federal Liberal candidate who is running who supports this deal, and he will write a letter to his federal leader and say he will not support him because you he is in support of this deal.

Why would he not do this? Is he, too, playing crass politics? Is he appealing to the lowest common denominator in my province of British Columbia, trying to lie in the bushes?

• (1220)

Many would suspect it. Not I. I am waiting for his answer. However, I would advise the Liberal leader of British Columbia to carefully read what the former Prime Minister of this country said, what the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and his leader said in this House. They were profound statements on the basis of the Liberal Party.

My last parting comment to the Tories in British Columbia who are playing this game is: Go to their leader in his office and tell him point blank that they will not be supporting this deal or will be supporting it. Have the courage of your convictions to face your own leader. Tell him what you have been doing in British Columbia. Tell him what you have been spreading in British Columbia and the problems you are creating in the long run for every single Canadian by not taking a position on this. Say yes or no, but for God's sake stop stirring up the water in a malicious political way that is hurting all Canadians along with the Liberal provincial leader in my province.

It appears that I am being somewhat emotional about this. It is true, I am being emotional. I come from very humble beginnings and I have never forgotten that. This country for which my father fought in the First World War, where he ultimately lost his sight, was worth fighting for. This country, with all its diversities, all its races, creeds and cultures, has been contributed to by every single one of them, including the Quebecers who have given a unique experience that has enriched all of our lives, just as we British Columbians know that we have given the rest of Canada a unique experience that enriched their lives—different maybe, different necessarily, because each one of us in each region has given something to make this country Canada.

I am not a flag waver and I never have been. I have never wrapped myself in the flag. I have just been damn thankful that I have lived in a country that has never had false pride and chased itself around with a flag. It has pride in its regions, as Quebecers have pride in themselves and we in British Columbia, who know we are the best in Canada, have pride in our region. I have also

understood that British Columbia is my home, Canada is my country.

Where else on the face of this earth could such a debate take place as we have had over the last year? Where else would you see members from all sides of the House with passion and feeling sitting on committees and working their guts out to come up with some kind of compromise? There are not many places. Ask the Czechoslovakians, ask Yugoslavia. It will never come to that in this country, but we could reach the same kind of emotional wounds that physical wounds create. That is the danger.

We have another agenda in this nation that must be dealt with. It is our duty. I am talking about the economy, the different philosophy of the Liberals, the different philosophy of the Conservatives, the different philosophy of the NDP and the Reform Party. Tragically the Bloc is trapped in a mindset that does not see the potential of building Canada but wants to pull it apart.

The essence of this Chamber is for competing philosophies to come up with goals. This single issue transcends all of those.

I appeal to those who are opposed in my province of British Columbia who sit in this Chamber to stand up and say yes or no. Stop playing games. To the Liberal leader in British Columbia, I say the same thing. I am proud to take my place with the Prime Minister on this issue. You will not catch me on any other one, not even in Tia Juana as the offer was yesterday, or non-offer. I would do it with the leader of the Liberal Party and with the leader of my own party. I regret the tragedy of the Reform Party that has fixed itself in some far distant past that never was there.

This is a multicultural nation, a multi-racial nation, a nation of multi-religions, multi-beliefs and multi-creeds. We have tolerated it all. I hope to God in my children's, my grandchildren's and my great-grandchildren's time the same attitude prevails; no flag-waving, perhaps a birthday party every 125 years, but get on with being Canadians and not with cheap political games.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, on October 26 the people who live in the riding of Halton—Peel will be asked to vote yes or no to a package of changes to Canada's Constitution and the way this country is run.

It is a serious decision and it is also an historic one. It bridges many years in our nation's history from 1864, when a constitutional accord was starting to evolve in Charlottetown, to 1992, when again in Charlottetown we have another constitutional accord that brings Canada into the future.

It bridges as well our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, with our current Prime Minister. I am sure that history will document both as being nation builders. The people in my riding will have an historic opportunity to vote. They will also have an historic opportunity to make real input into the political system.

In fact this government is the first one in 50 years that will actually be trusting the people to decide on the way their own country is run in an exercise of direct democracy. Of course it is expensive. It is going to cost approximately $150 million to have this referendum, and that is a real concern for those of us who worry about financial responsibility.

Given the geography of Canada and its sparse population it is probably inevitable that amount of money will be spent. However, there is also a lesson in the cost of this referendum for those people who would have those of us in the House of Commons take every decision based on this form of direct democracy.

The Reform Party, for example, thinks that every decision we take here of major consequence should be put to the people. The budget for the House of Commons for this whole year is about $250 million. That would represent just two decisions taken by referendum or direct democracy. It is important for us to remember that.

In summary, we have an exceptional event ahead of us and we have to take it seriously. While doing that it is important that we not view this event out of context. Some people would say that this is a measure of loyalty, that every Canadian now must vote for Canada or against Canada. That is wrong.

As the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, a man who deserves praise from all sides of this House, said in this House yesterday: "This is not a test of loyalty". Instead it is meant more to move the country

forward into the future. I think we all know what is coming in the future.

It is evident that Canada is moving into a future that will be dominated by trends like globalization, as trade barriers around the world come down and countries have to be more competitive in order to prosper and succeed in the world to come. As well, we are looking at a country with rapid demographic change. Canadians are growing older. The population is getting more stable. We have to consider what that means for our finances and economic future.

We are also coming into a future with new technologies. Technologies are changing so rapidly that the countries that are going to compete and be successful in this globalized world will be those that have modern, flexible constitutions, rules that govern their countries.

We know what is coming in the future. Therefore it is important to put constitutional change behind us so that we can concentrate on what is coming. Trade, prosperity and national unity are linked.

Trade is important to the people in my community, to the people who live in Halton—Peel. This riding is home to many companies that compete globally. They not only compete, they are successful.

The issue of Canadian constitutional unity and peace is important to the people in my riding. That is one message that I think the people of Halton—Peel would like me to record here on the floor of the House of Commons. However, there is another even more important message, which is about democracy, freedom and all the things that make this country the best in the world in which to live.

To the voters in my riding who will face a decision on Monday, October 26 I have one brief message for them. Soon you will be asked to accept or reject the package of changes to the way the governments of Canada are structured. It is an important vote. The future of our country will be very much determined by its outcome. However, while the federal government, the provinces, the territories and the aboriginal leaders are all supporting this package, that does not mean that you have to. You have a clear choice and a right to vote as you see fit.

• (1230)

As the member of Parliament for the riding of Halton—Peel I would like to tell the voters of my riding that I do not intend to tell them over the coming weeks how they should vote. Politicians have no corner on patriotism. I will be supporting the agreement and I have an obligation to tell people why I will be doing that.

Many of the people in my riding know that I have campaigned for things that are not in this agreement, things that I would like to have seen such as a guarantee of property rights and a stronger economic union. People in my riding also know that I wanted less government, not more government. I would like to have fewer politicians, not more members of the House of Commons.

I would even like to see an end to the 19th century concept that this country is comprised of 10 provinces, widely different in size, population and economic structure. In the future other rounds of constitutional reform can perhaps restructure Canada on the basis of five regions.

In this deal I did not want to see a social charter that inhibits the flexibility that we need for the future. I did not think a reduced role for Ontario in an elected House of Commons was fair. Having said that, let us remember a fundamental truth as we reform Canada. Let us remember that there are no perfect countries, as there are no perfect marriages or perfect business partnerships.

Canada is a huge place. Many people are very attached to their regions. It is also a country that was founded by two peoples in 1867 and that remains true today and needs to be recognized.

Addressing all of these things takes compromise. In fact, if we cannot compromise we may not be able to keep our country together. The former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Croatia, is a place where they have not been able to compromise.

Some people in my riding will not like this accord. Today members of the Reform Party are deciding whether they can support it or not support it. I sincerely hope they are with us. I hope we can speak with one voice to accept this.

My personal conclusion is that the accord that people will vote for on October 26 is not the one that I would

have written, but is one I can support. I ask the voters in my riding to take time to understand this agreement, to study it, to appreciate it and then come to their own conclusion.

God bless Canada.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has seven minutes left.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak for a few minutes on the constitutional agreement reached on August 28.

A constitution is a framework of law, the fundamental law of the land. It is also more than the rules by which we govern ourselves. A constitution should reflect the values, the characteristics, the beliefs and the tolerances of a country.

For quite some time there has been a desire, a need to re-evaluate our present Constitution. Many areas of our country have expressed dissatisfaction and concern that their particular needs were not being addressed. The constitutional proposals reached in Charlottetown on August 28, after over two years of consultation and discussion by citizens across our country, represent a great deal of dedication and hard work by the individuals who were there: the Prime Minister, the premiers, the leaders of the territories, the aboriginal leaders. They worked together to develop this compromise agreement.

I give special tribute to the chairmen of the meetings, the Prime Minister and at other times the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, for the leadership they provided, as was brought to our attention by the participants at this final meeting.

The challenge was to remake the Constitution in the image of the country that we have become, not the country we once were. I believe that the proposals certainly achieve this goal.

Canadians have expressed a desire for change. They have demanded more responsive institutions and accountable government, justice for our aboriginal peoples and the rebalancing of the roles and responsibilities between federal and provincial governments. This agreement, although not perfect, is a solid step toward making our constitution work for the entire country of Canada.

The agreement that I am sure will be endorsed on October 26 by the Canadian people will mark an incredible milestone that has eluded many Canadians for a number of years. Outlined in this agreement is a statement of what it means to be Canadian—the Canada clause. This is important for it gives us a sense of the values that we hold in common while also accommodating our diversity in this country.

The Canada clause entrenches certain fundamental characteristics such as parliamentary democracy, linguistic duality, Quebec's distinct society, and equality of race and gender, to name a few.

For aboriginal peoples this agreement represents a long overdue justice through the recognition in the Constitution of the inherent right to self-government. Our first peoples will now feel that they are truly Canadian. They can now confirm their commitment to share in building a new and stronger Canada.

By reforming our Senate to make it equal, elected and effective in responding to the demands and concerns of Canadians the Senate should become a more effective legislative body and not simply a rubber stamp.

This agreement provides for better discipline in the use of federal government spending power and the protection of intergovernmental agreements. Provinces will now receive exclusive jurisdiction, if they desire, in many areas they were requesting.

These proposals will also deal with the important issues of social and economic policy, regional development, equalization payments and the amending formula.

As I said, this agreement is not perfect. There were compromises made on all sides, but in the end I feel we have reached an agreement that all Canadians can live with. It resolves the most pressing concerns that have dominated the national debate for many years. Quebec's interests were satisfied, western Canada got its equal and elected Senate with more legislative power, and our aboriginal peoples finally achieve self-government.

In my constituency of Sarnia—Lambton I get the distinct impression from those I have talked to that over all there is great support for the constitutional amendments that have been agreed upon. I have also talked to my provincial counterparts—and I will not get into politics—the elected members of the NDP Government of Ontario. They certainly have expressed their interest

in working in my constituency and theirs in support of these amendments. I will certainly be available there to provide support. I am supporting these amendments.

I also will be available in my constituency as a resource person to answer questions and provide information. I ask all my constituents to take this very seriously and to be sure to cast their ballot as they see fit. I ask them to study it with serious concern and interest. I know they will. If they need information I certainly will be available to provide it to them. It is a chance for our great country to stay together and to make this a better place to live.

My family came to this country in 1849. They were also, as said the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, hard working, solid families. We came here and have thrived in this great Canadian family. Certainly my family, and also my neighbours, friends and constituents, look forward to carrying on our all-Canadian future with all of us in a confederated family staying together. These important amendments will allow us to do that.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I will be supporting this set of proposals. I will be voting yes on October 26. Obviously the first question is why. Undoubtedly the major reason is that I really want to unshackle this Parliament and future parliaments from the constitutional crisis we have suffered over the last several years. Many of my colleagues in this House and I want to get the country working again, Parliament working more smoothly and Canadians back to work.

• (1240)

There are other reasons I want to go through quickly to give my constituents and other Canadians a sense of where I am coming from. We all know that in any negotiation no one party ever gets everything he or she wishes. This is the case in this particular instance.

I believe that under current circumstances it would have been difficult to have had a better set of proposals that most parties could have bought into, that most parties would have supported. I think that is a significant achievement.

We have an over-all consensus. Let us remember that. The Prime Minister, 10 premiers of our 10 provinces, the leaders of the two territories, and the leaders of four major aboriginal organizations are supporting this set of proposals. Clearly there should be some sense of satisfaction in recognizing that these individuals feel this is a good deal for Canadians and for Canada.

Let us not forget as well what is happening on October 26. It is a referendum, an opportunity to go to the people and ask Canadians whether or not they will support it. I am hoping with all my heart that the majority of Canadians in every province and each of our two territories will say yes. I am very much hoping that will happen. This referendum is something my party under the leadership of the hon. member for Beauséjour has been calling for, for a long time. I am delighted the other parties have agreed this is a good idea.

Let us not forget as well that as a result of this referendum there will be no future substantial changes to our Constitution without going to the referendum. That is a major gain for all Canadians.

What are some of the other gains? Obviously aboriginal self-government. I have always felt, and I wish it had been different, that many of our aboriginal peoples from a social economic perspective can be compared, and not always favourably, with Third World nations. That is a shame. I am hoping this particular initiative will permit them to break out of the cycle of poverty.

The distinct society has been recognized and accepted. It has now been defined for those who had real concerns. There have been other gains for Quebec. If I were a Quebecer I know I would want more. Obviously I would want more, but I think we have to recognize it will be better for Quebec after this referendum, assuming that it is won, than it was before.

Canadians from origins other than French, English and aboriginal have had some modest gains as well. Linguistic minorities have much of the protection and the support they sought, providing the political will is there of course.

In the division of powers it is much clearer today, or it will be once this is accepted, what level of government supplies what kinds of services for its population. That has always been a contentious issue.

There is a social charter and albeit perhaps not as strong as many people would have liked it is there and it gives us a sense of direction as to what are our social values and our commitment to social programs.

There is a "reformed Senate". That will be contentious. There are some reforms but people will question the significance of them.

Those are some of the major reasons I will be supporting this agreement.

Do I have concerns? Obviously anyone who has read the agreement, anyone who has read any agreement, will have concerns. Yes, absolutely I have some concerns. I have several.

Self-government just because it is realized in the constitutional agreement is not a reality. We will require an openness of mind, a generosity of spirit, and political will if it is to happen.

Canadians of origins other than English, French and aboriginal have not felt they were sufficiently included in the process coming up to this agreement. They do not feel, certainly the people with whom I have spoken, they are sufficiently recognized in this set of proposals. Therefore there will be some problems there.

The linguistic minorities have had what they sought in terms of constitutional guarantees, but you and I know that even the constitutional guarantees will not necessarily correct the injustices that have occurred.

If there continues to be laws such as those passed in Quebec, Alberta, and Saskatchewan limiting the use of one of Canada's official languages, be it English or French, there will continue to be tensions. That will go on until we can in fact open our hearts and recognize there is enough space in this country for everyone.

I would hope as well that subsequent to this agreement—

[*Translation*]

Provincial governments are realizing that the Supreme Court of Canada reached numerous decisions that indicated that French minorities outside Quebec had the right to administer their education system, had a right to school administration. It is a priority for that group.

I hope that finally we will go ahead and that we will not hesitate to give them their responsabilities, that we will allow them to grow, to take their own decisions for the future of their children.

[*English*]

The division of powers will also cause difficulties because even though it is written and somewhat defined there continues to be a need for additional work. It will require further discussion and negotiation. There is no getting around that.

The complexities of government when one looks at the federal, provincial and municipal levels are such that one cannot possibly define it in one document without having some further discussions.

On the reformed Senate the major issue is the whole notion of effective. Is it effective? We could debate that. It has probably made some gains over what exists but I wonder how many gains.

I would have much preferred the proposal my party had advanced that called upon an elected Senate, an effective Senate, and an equal regional representation of senators. It would have been better to have accentuated the effective rather than equal provinces, but it is not to be. I can accept it with some difficulty, but I am prepared to do what I can to improve that effectiveness within the tools available to us.

Because it is unclear as to whether or not senators will be appointed or elected—they may be—potentially that is very contentious. I would hope that all provinces and the territories would decide to elect their senators. I really believe it is a must.

I believe as well that we should have a system of election which is proportional, which will make sure that the under-represented groups such as women, Canadians of aboriginal origin, Canadians of origins other than English, French and aboriginal, will get an opportunity to be elected as senators.

If not, what are we going to do? We are simply going to extend that which we have at a national election, which is probably more of the same, that is more of the same people who are from the governing party. I think that would be unfortunate. We need to have mechanisms that will permit women, visible minorities and others to serve this country. This is a great opportunity to start doing something significant about it.

We should also be exploring the feasibility of having French speaking senators outside Quebec and English speaking senators in Quebec to ensure those two large linguistic minorities are fairly represented.

I would like to see a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. Rather than go to 337 we could virtually keep the same number or reduce it and still keep the same proportions if that is necessary.

We would be responding to that cry out there that we are overly governed. We would be responding to that cry out there that government is too costly. We would be saving a lot of money. A 15 per cent reduction, for example, would amount to roughly 287 members of Parliament rather than the 295 that we have now and the 337 that is expected with these new proposals. That would save over $20 million a year, and that is not without looking at additional costs of infrastructure and a number of additional costs to support MPs.

[*Translation*]

I would really like for us to recognize that even if the proposals are there, even if there has been an agreement between the first ministers, the leaders of the two territories, the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of the four aboriginal groups, there is still time to improve some aspects without changing the basic principles.

• (1250)

I think that if we examined what people with some concerns are saying, we could reach a better consensus with much more support.

[*English*]

I want to point out that in my opinion the no side will have to put up. It is not sufficient simply to say that one is against something. It is necessary to propose an alternative.

What is the alternative going to be? Will all the people voting on the no side be able to get a coherent package together that the Prime Minister, whether it be this one or another one, and the premiers, the leaders of the territories and the aboriginal leaders, whether it is the ones who are there now or others, will be able to accept? Will they be able to do that? No, I do not believe it for one moment.

If they think they can, let them put their package on the table and let us take a look at it. It is not good enough to stand on the sidelines and swipe and snipe and attack. It is necessary to put forward constructive proposals.

I think there is still time to improve the package. I have made some suggestions, some modest proposals. I stressed the election of senators. I really believe that is essential. That gives senators legitimacy. It gives them additional power. If they continue to be appointed there will still be the criticism that is legitimate today.

I believe that there should be proportional elections of senators because there are under-represented groups that are not serving the nation as members of Parliament, as senators and at other levels of government.

I also believe that we have to look at whether or not we have done an injustice to those Canadians who are labelled disabled, those Canadians who have disabilities. We are not without knowing that they feel they have not been treated fairly. We saw evidence of that yesterday in this House. They believe that they were included in the first set of government proposals and that they should be included again. Let us not forget that these Canadians with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor and that they do not sufficiently often have people who advocate to better their economic and social conditions. Therefore we should look at that.

We should seriously look at the reduction of MPs. What is there to lose? We could save money. We could keep the same proportions if it is necessary. On the other hand, those two large provinces, Ontario and Quebec, if they chose, could accept fewer MPs than they would have received in order to bring about a reduction. If we could reduce the number of MPs it would not only save money, but it would give senators a greater proportional weight when there is a joint session. Of course if there were a generosity of heart from Ontario and Quebec to take one-half of what they would have received in these proposals then clearly that would be well accepted by other parts of Canada.

[*Translation*]

I suggest that we go ahead, that we try to reach specific conclusions in order to get to other issues, in order to ensure that Canadians who rely on us, on all members of this House to try to resolve the deep problems of this country, can do so.

[*English*]

As I complete my remarks I want to just make a couple of very brief points. We must remember that it is much easier to destroy than it is to build. That is one of my great fears as we go out on this adventure. We also have to remember that it only takes a little drop of poison to

poison a whole lake. My great, profound fear is that the several drops of discontent that will occur could kill Canada.

I believe that if we look at the pluses and the minuses over all this accord is worth supporting.

[*Translation*]

I intend to support it. I will not tell my constituents how they should vote, but I am ready to talk to them about it.

[*English*]

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I take pleasure in taking part in this debate because for weeks, months and literally years the Canadian public has been treated to the vicissitudes and the vagaries of constitutional debate.

There has been a constant emotional tug of war for all our people because inevitably this constitutional debate is divided into camps of them versus us, winners or losers. Did they get more than we got?

Finally, we are coming down to the debate. This tug of war has created feelings of uncertainty about the outcome and what would happen to our community, what would happen to Canada and what would happen to our place within the nations of the world.

Now we have the benefit of debate with a text before us. We are no longer dealing with promises, conjectures, vagaries and anticipations. We are now dealing with a text. I am encouraged by the fact that people in my community are calling my office asking for copies of the text. We are not talking any more about newspaper reports, what the hotlines are saying, what the news is saying. We are now talking about a document which everybody can have before them. We are talking about the precise wording in that document.

The difficulty of the debate is that there have been some premature conclusions made all across the country because of assumptions, because of fragmentary news articles, because of rumours and feelings that it is them or us and feelings of conflict within the country that have been generated by this debate. This has developed the mindset of for or against the proposals, the consensus. Too often it has been a premature decision to be against the proposals even before the text is seen.

I want to emphasize throughout this debate that we have to return to the text and what it says, not what other people say, not what other people think it says. But actually, what it does say. The first question we have to ask ourselves is that very one: What does it say?

Today we have to make a decision in this House. On October 26 the people of Canada have to make a momentous decision for the country. Again, not on rumour, not on speculation, not on fragmentary quotations, but on the entire text and what it says to us.

In the process we have to reject some myths. The first myth is that we have to agree with the total package. That is an impossibility. Nobody is going to agree to the total package. The 17 people in the room negotiating and reaching a consensus on this did not agree on the total package. I do not agree with the total package. There is not one member in the House, I believe, who agrees with the terms of the entire package. What we are talking about is not individual items but the wholeness of the package. We have to destroy the myth that says if we do not agree with the package, we cannot vote for it. The fact is, we have to deal with that myth.

As the member from Winnipeg said previously, I do not believe the membership of the House should get constantly larger. Maybe we could do with a reduced number of members in the House. With the Senate being reduced in numbers, they do not necessarily have to be added to the House. We could reduce the proportion.

I do not agree with the economic package. I do not think it is strong enough. I find various segments of this package wanting, but as the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs said in Halifax some weeks ago: "If I had been alone in a room writing this package I would not have written it this way. But I was not alone in the room. There were 16 other people there".

What we have to do is deal with the myth that we have to agree with the whole package. Nothing could be further from the truth. It could never be true that 27 million Canadians are going to enjoy unanimity on all of this.

There are Canadians who have genuine detailed concerns about individual items in the package. These need to be explained. We have a duty to go to those people as much as possible and explain the items in the agenda so that we can deal with those concerns. Many of those concerns are very legitimate. They are based not on speculation or on feelings, but on text.

• (1300)

We need to look at the implications of each of the ingredients and see what those implications are for the future of Canada, whether it is in the Senate proposals, the distinct society, the aboriginal agreement, or the economic package. We need to look at those implications and see what the future of Canada would be like once we have implemented those particular proposals. In the end, it is impossible for 27 million Canadians to agree.

The second myth we have to deal with is that we can oppose this. We can vote it down and simply return to the *status quo*. There is no stable *status quo*. We cannot return to the past.

The very process we have been going through has been one of dynamic change. People's attitudes have changed. People's viewpoints have changed. There is no returning to the past. Does anybody believe if we reject this package that the west will tolerate another 10 or 20 years of wrangling about institutional reform? Does anybody believe that?

If we reject this package, will the aboriginals easily accept another promise when this one is so close to being fulfilled? Can we return to some mythical *status quo* there? Would anybody believe the people of Quebec will quietly defer their cultural aspirations if we reject this package? Will the business community or the economic climate withstand any further postponement of this issue?

The fact is there is no returning to some kind of a mythical *status quo*. We have to deal with it and not pretend that we can vote it down and simply return to the past and start all over again.

Ultimately there is a big question. I am speaking now to my friends in my constituency and to the country at large. If you oppose individual items in this package, what changes would you require to be made on individual items to make the package acceptable for you?

Write them down. Is it the Senate package? What do you need changed in the Senate? Is it the 25 per cent floor for members from Quebec? What is it that you need to have changed? Write them down and then come with me to the maritimes, to Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. I will introduce you to fellow Canadians there who also have a list of bottom line demands that they think are imperative to make this a complete package. Sit down with this Nova Scotian and compare those lists. I can assure you they are not the same lists. They will be different.

How will you accommodate two intransigent positions and satisfy both regions of the country? For the west, any federal government involvement is intrusive. For the maritimes, federal government involvement is imperative. Try to reconcile those. If we in the west feel so very strongly about individual items on the agenda that are so important for us, let us sit down with people from other parts of the country and compare with them what their demands are.

A second big question is: Do we really want to have a break in the impasse? Do we want to have constant wrangling? If we want to have a break in the impasse, what is it that we are willing to concede in order to break that impasse?

I am reminded of the words of Leo Tolstoy who once said: "Everybody thinks about changing humanity; nobody thinks about changing himself". It is the other person who has to change, not me.

In an impasse it is impossible to think of a change, a resolution or a reconciliation unless both parties make a concession. The danger we have in this debate is we will overlook an ancient truth. Believing is not so much an act of gathering more information, but an act of the will. We decide to believe. We make a conscious decision that we will believe or reject certain things. Look at the people who smoke and the limp excuses they use to prove it does not hurt them: "My Uncle Fred is 90 years old and smoked two packs a day. He never died of tobacco use. He was hit by a bus". They will believe that because they want to and they have decided to believe that.

In an issue much more critical for our country, we cannot embrace ancient and continuing prejudices and accommodate new realities all at the same time. We cannot do that. We decide to believe or we can decide to reject information.

The whole commitment to education is built on the notion that we spend billions of dollars so that students change. We do not expect them to come out of educational institutions the same way they went in.

Now we are asking the public to participate in a process of change for our country and to experience what 17 leaders of our nation experienced over the last few months in intense negotiations and in intense dialogue. Can you imagine 17 more diverse people with strongly held views sitting here in Ottawa or in Charlottetown discussing what bottom lines are for them?

Compare Premier Wells with Premier Rae and their bottom line positions, Premier Getty and Premier Bourassa, or the aboriginal leaders and the premiers. They have very opposite points of view and yet they came to an agreement. Would anyone suggest that Premier Wells or Premier Rae denied their convictions when they came to an agreement? The fact is they kept all their convictions. What they did was they found it acceptable to acknowledge the validity of somebody else's point of view. They did not deny their own convictions. They accepted additional ones.

We ask ourselves whether there is a risk in all of this. Of course there is. There is risk in any change and we fear change because there is risk involved. Ask any businessman about an investment that he has to make. Is he afraid? Is there risk? Of course there will be risk and there is risk in this, but that is the nature of change. There is change and there is risk in the nature of change of relationships and we must accommodate that risk, not overlook it.

We are not asking for reckless, blind acquiescence to the terms of a document. What we are asking for is a willingness to be objective about the terms of a text and what it says and that we look at it with reason in the cold light of day. We ask for a willingness to accommodate change and the change of mind, the change of attitude and the change of heart.

The fundamental simple question is: Will Canada be better off with these changes? Will Canadians' futures be brighter as a result of these changes to which these people have agreed? If we ask that question and look at the text in that context, we will say a resounding yes to the package and we will have a bright future for Canada.

I close with one statement from William Penn who said: "Oh, Lord, help us not to despise or oppose what we do not understand."

• (1310)

May we look at this text in the cold light of reality and find it in our hearts to look at other people's points of view at the same time.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, let me commence my remarks by congratulating the member who has just spoken. I think he presented a very thoughtful speech to this House.

On October 26 Canadians will be asked the following 21 word question:

> Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached August 28, 1992?

That is really the preamble. The question itself is yes or no.

I like the question. It is short. It is easy to understand. All Canadians can participate in the process and feel comfortable that at least they will understand that which they are voting on.

Contrary to the past constitutional accord, the Meech Lake agreement—and I voted for Meech Lake—this deal was not only approved by the first ministers. It was also approved by the territorial leaders, by the aboriginal leadership, and it will be subjected to a referendum.

Furthermore, it has been the result of extensive consultation.

[*Translation*]

Extensive consultations were held for nearly two years: the Spicer commission, the consultations I had in my own riding, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, the Unity Forum sponsored by the aboriginal people which I attended, the meetings of first ministers, with the exception of the premier of Quebec, followed by further meetings, this time with the premier of Quebec attending.

[*English*]

To those who say there has not been sufficient consultation, I think that Canadians have heard enough. They probably feel they have been consulted and they want to get this issue over with.

Meech Lake took too long to ratify and I think that is one of the causes of its demise. Once the deal is approved by this House, once it is ratified not only by the Canadian people, which it will be on October 26, it has to be ratified by all legislatures and by this Parliament. I really hope we can do that quickly, having received that instruction by the Canadian people.

[*Translation*]

I would like us to do Canadians a favour and promise them the agreement will be ratified before Christmas. Would that not be a nice Christmas present? I know my constituents would appreciate the fact that we would not be talking about the Constitution for a while.

Talking about the Constitution is not a bad thing in itself. We will have an agreement approved by Canadians in a referendum and by the legislatures of all the provinces and both Houses of Parliament. Of course we can talk about the Constitution at some point in the future, although right now I have a slight case of constitutional indigestion.

As soon as we have that consent we will be able to talk about it without the threat looming on the horizon of Canada breaking up.

[*English*]

Discussing constitutions is not in itself wrong. There are constitutional talks in the United States. It has had one since approximaltely 1787 and that is not unhealthy. Every time it discusses a constitutional change, the fabric of the country is not threatened by the fact the U.S. talks about it.

Once we ratify this Constitution by way of a referendum and the subsequent votes of our legislatures and our Parliament, we could talk in the future if we so wish about constitutions without threatening ourselves and our very existence.

[*Translation*]

There are a few parliamentarians who say there is not enough in this agreement and who do not like certain measures. Granted, some measures may not be winners, and if I put on my partisan hat for a second, I would say my leader is a better negotiator than the leader of the party opposite. If I did not think so, I probably would not be a member of my party.

Of course the agreement could be improved on, but that is not the point. The point is not whether the agreement is perfect. As far as I know, the last perfect person was crucified nearly 2,000 years ago. The point is whether the agreement is good for our country, and my answer is yes. Of course the naysayers are grabbing the headlines today, but you can bet they are not going to stay in the House. Everybody knows who they are. Everybody is talking about them. Everybody is saying, or at least some people are, "he said more or less what I was thinking".

People will remember Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Étienne-Cartier. People will remember George Brown who set aside partisan concerns for the sake of this country more than 125 years ago. But who remembers William Hannon, Antoine-Aimé Dorion, L. H. Holton and A. J. Smith who were against Confederation in 1867? With the exception of Mr. Dorion who had been a Prime Minister several years before, I had never heard of them.

We all know about George Washington and Thomas Jefferson in the United States. How many of us would remember names like George Mason, Richard Henry Lee, George Clinton and Robert Yates, the American anti-federalists of the time? They are no longer in the news today. No buildings or bridges were named after them.

[*English*]

There might be a moment of glory in being against this deal. Those who at this moment seek that advantage for their own personal gain, in the long term will be forgotten much easier because of what they are doing today.

I have the intention of voting in favour of this referendum.

[*Translation*]

I will urge my constituents to do likewise. This Saturday, I will set up a group in my riding to form a common front for the yes campaign in this referendum. Yesterday I contacted the presidents of the NDP, Progressive Conservative and Liberal riding associations and other groups. I invited them to a meeting on Saturday to form this common front in support of our country.

[*English*]

I also intend to organize three rallies in my riding, at least three. Perhaps this committee that I am appointing will recommend more. There will be one in Glengarry, one in Prescott and one in Russell.

They will be rallies which people could attend and hear speakers in favour of this constitutional accord. I would like to invite Conservative members of Parliament to come to my riding to speak at those rallies. In turn I would volunteer to go to theirs if that is what they choose.

I have never done that before as you can probably imagine.

[*Translation*]

Earlier today I was talking to the hon. member from Quebec City. He is a cousin of mine—once removed, but a cousin just the same. His family is originally from Cornwall, next door to my riding. In fact, his great-aunt, who is my great-aunt as well, still lives there. I asked the hon. member from Quebec City, the President of the Treasury Board, to come to my riding and make a speech during the referendum campaign and he said he was interested.

• (1320)

I invite other friends opposite to do the same, and perhaps I should explain that despite the impression we get from watching television, just because our role in the House is an adversarial one does not mean we are enemies. When I refer to my friends opposite, I mean what I say, because there are a number of members opposite I consider good friends. I would ask these parliamentarians to pay us a visit and I would be glad to share the platform with then.

[*English*]

The Leader of the Opposition said it well a few days ago when he reminded all of us that he had shared the stage in his own constituency in 1980 with the Leader of the Opposition, voluntarily doing so at that time in the 1980 referendum to speak with a united voice in favour of this country. It was that speech which inspired me to try to do the same thing in my own constituency in an attempt to show that we, as parliamentarians, not withstanding our divergent opinions on many issues, can work together for the unity of this country.

[*Translation*]

That is why we all have a duty to work together to defend the interests of this great country of ours.

[*English*]

I am a Quebecer by birth, a franco-Ontarion.

[*Translation*]

I have lived in the province of Ontario for many years, and the riding I have the privilege to represent in this House is right on the border with the province of Quebec. For instance, the eastern part of my riding borders on Quebec to the north, east and south.

Although I represent an Ontario riding, I feel at home and I am at home in both Quebec and Ontario, but I also want residents of Quebec to feel at home in Vancouver, Newfoundland and anywhere else in this country. Canadians should be made to feel once again that this country belongs to all of us. I would ask the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean and those who are like-minded to consider, when he flies over the Rockies in Alberta and British Columbia that those mountains belong to his children. He tends to forget that, and he is not alone.

I do not say this out of contempt for nationalist feelings, because there are times when members of a minority feel they are being treated unfairly, and they are often right. However, there is a difference between feelings aggrieved and refusing to have anything to do with the rest of the country.

I believe this constitutional agreement has managed to combine a certain measure of autonomy for the provinces and regions in this country with what I believe will remain a strong central government.

I also think that the principle of guaranteed representation for Quebec in the House of Commons provides a unique safeguard that recognizes the distinctness of Quebec.

I have read the agreement. I have also read what it says about language minorities outside Quebec. Of course there were concerns, but I am satisfied that the agreement contains sufficient safeguards for the minority in my own province and language minorities elsewhere in Canada.

[*English*]

I will vote for this accord. I ask all my constituents to do so as well. To all members of this House, to the few who disagree with my position on this, I say that there is still time. There is still time to reconsider for the greater good. George Brown did it some years ago. There is still time for all of us to think that way. Just maybe we will be remembered if we do it that way, not forgotten like some of the others who were against Constitution 125 years ago.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I will gladly share my speaking time with my colleague, the hon. member for Abitibi.

At this critical time of our history, this special moment when all Canadians, from Halifax to Quebec City to Vancouver, are about to decide the constitutional future of their country, I have the great honour, as member of Parliament for the beautiful riding of Ahuntsic, in Montreal, to take part today in this important debate to end the constitutional adventures, so to speak, of the past few decades.

Since 1867, the year the Confederation came together, the year that saw John A. MacDonald and George-Étienne Cartier decided to found a new country, Canada, a land where freedom and democracy would flourish and both founding nations, the French and the English, would unite to build a multiethnic and multicultural society. The Canadian people have encountered political ups and downs and obstacles that they have always managed to overcome and which in retrospect have strengthened their determination to live in freedom and unity.

This constitutional agreement is fair to the French speaking province of Quebec, with the distinct society clause protecting their higher interest for years to come, as well as to the English speaking provinces which scored some points with the Triple-E Senate.

This is also an historic moment in our life as a nation, as the native people of Canada, these oft forgotten First Nations, were invited for the first time to participate freely and fully to negotiations aimed at reshaping Canada as a land whose sons will all have equal opportunities to blossom, from Halifax to Vancouver.

As far as I am concerned, as a Quebecer and the member for Ahuntsic, one of the most francophone ridings in Montreal, I am proud to be a Canadian and to support this agreement which will allow Quebec to re-enter the Canadian family, as our Prime Minister had promised.

He did keep his word. Not only does this agreement which will close a chapter in our national history and open a new one respond favourably to the historical demands of Quebec, the economic, social and cultural development of which continued within Canada over the past 125 years and has been rather outstanding, but it sets out the main thrust for a renewed country with a nice spot for a truly empowered province of Quebec to blossom freely.

On top of the five conditions contained in the Meech Lake accord, Quebec made gains in the areas of training, manpower, forestry, mining, housing, municipal affairs, tourism, recreation and culture, the most important of which, in my opinion, aside from the distinct society clause, is the guarantee that at least 25 per cent of the representation in the House of Commons would be from Quebec at any given time, whatever the population of our province may be.

• (1330)

Because of our disappointingly low birth rate and our aging population, this guarantee gives Quebec unmatched political and decision-making power. Once they have learned about all these gains, Quebecers in general and the people of Ahuntsic in particular will approve this agreement, the only hope for a better future for their children. They will not listen to the sirens of independence who proclaim the division and breakup of a country that despite all its problems and difficulties has the best quality of life of 160 countries in the world, according to the United Nations. The place Quebec holds in Canada and in the world is envied by over 160 countries.

By giving a majority yes vote to this agreement, Quebecers, aware of the past that they have built with the other peoples of Canada and of the present that they are building with them in mutual respect, will give a clear answer that Quebec belongs in Canada and avoids hatred, racism and division.

I know that in the Quebec referendum, the advocates of independence will accuse us of being prophets of doom who frighten people. Is it the truth that frightens

them? Their idyllic talk of bright tomorrows has more to do with passion than with reason, with narrowness than with openness, with destruction than with construction.

By saying yes to this agreement, Quebecers in general and the people of Ahuntsic in particular will say yes to Canada and especially yes to Quebec.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi has eight minutes.

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, as part of my speech today, I would like to read into the record excerpts from an article by Roch Carrier published in the September 1992 edition of *L'Actualité*, in which he described incredibly eloquently his vision of Canada. I can only do him justice by quoting him. He said: "I have inherited Canada as a whole".

I do not intend to settle for a piece of it, be it celebrated by the poets. I feel no urge to leave Canada when people from all over the world are seeking refuge here. If we are to get off this boat, we better make sure that, like our separatist shepherds we can walk upon the water.

The global economic context will remain unchanged. What will become of us? We will be a smaller nation, so tiny next to the United States. We will also have lost the authority we presently have over the Canadian territory. No proclamation will change that.

The separatists claim that independence will give Quebec the tools required to control its own economy. When the reaction of the Tokyo or New York stock exchanges to some event sends shock waves world-wide, newly redefined boundaries—and what would they be—would not afford Quebec better protection.

Did Confederation prevent the growth of Bombardier, Lavalin or that of the Cirque du Soleil? There are admittedly a few irritants. That is no reason to scuttle a country. It calls for discussion, negotiation, not brooding!

China and Asia are restructuring their economies. Europe, Mexico, the U.S. and Canada are preparing for free trade. Latin America is putting its Mercosur into place. Black Sea countries are grouping together, and what is Quebec doing? Sadly a high percentage of our fine minds which have been preoccupied by constitutional humming and hawing for too long have been driven to stupidity by nationalism. Proclaim independence if you wish, but which state can claim to be independent in the world today with a 20 per cent illiteracy rate, with too many workers unable to meet today's challenges, with too many teenagers with very little education?

Is it really necessary to separate from Canada to put an end to this tragedy of so many young people condemned to a life of menial jobs, unemployment, prostitution and welfare? Unfortunately nationalist ramblings leave little room for those who want to decry the urgency of the situation.

I learned the lessons of tolerance from the French philosophers and I am extremely wary of nationalism. It can serve to unite a people without resources, as we saw 25 years ago. We no longer need nationalism. We should now be sufficiently lucid and self-confident to no longer need to worship the twist of fate which determined our place of birth.

The separatists want to take over all the economic tools in countries with a strong economy. It is quite obvious that the only economic tools are work, education, imagination, information, planning and ambition. No constitution can replace those tools.

According to nationalist doctrine, English-speaking Canadians constitute a homogeneous group whose only purpose is to threaten Quebecers. I find this vision of ourselves narrow minded, frustrating and disheartening. Are we really suffering that much? Is the St. Lawrence River overflowing with the tears of our distressed population? The only thing that matters is interdependency. A country can only be free if it is interdependent. In the chaos of recent years, certain populations have broken their chains. In the future, they will group together and probably reinvent what we now have in Canada.

Confederation is the best invention after democracy. It is based on the respect of differences. Someday, all countries will join in a world confederation where individuals will no longer be sacrificed to tribal rivalries. I may be naive, by I would rather be politically naive than adhere to an outdated nationalist ideal which takes its fear for courage, its withdrawal for conquest and its small mindedness for greatness.

I believe that it would be a disaster in the long run to isolate ourselves. In Abitibi the people would rather work and have a stable job. They have families to support. What is most important for me is to help my constituents to put bread and butter on their table.

These are feelings that all of us, Canadians and Quebecers, should share because we have the marvellous opportunity of living in one of the best countries in the world, from sea to sea to sea. My Quebec understands Canada. On October 26 I shall be saying yes to this agreement, for Quebec and for Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, last week I was fortunate to attend a conference in London on the new Europe. The Danish foreign minister was in attendance at the same meeting and was asked the question: "What happened to the referendum in Denmark? Why was it defeated?"

He gave a very interesting answer that is important for all members to understand. He said: "We lost touch with the ground. We lost touch with the people. It was a matter of all the people in powerful positions, the politicians, the journalists, the academics all saying it was a good thing to have a new Europe but we had not been able to touch the hearts and minds of the people we represented".

I raise that point because it is a lesson that is important for us all to recall as we embark upon this important referendum in Canada. We must not lose touch with the people. We must understand that their concerns and interests spread way beyond the legal wording of the Constitution. This important debate must be a time of listening. We cannot simply rely upon the public relations campaigns, the slick advertising, and the television promotions, but must be out there listening to what they have to say, listening to both the advocates and the critics, those who support it and those who are against it.

They are all going to be trying in their own way to define what this country is, to use this important occasion, as Canada debates where it wants to go, to discuss where the country should be in the future. It is a chance, if you like, to awaken the slumbering potential for goodwill within the country, to bring people together from all parts of the country in a common cause.

[*Translation*]

I remember this past summer we welcomed the young voyageurs from Drummondville riding, which is represented by their good MP. We had a party on the shore of Lake Winnipeg, which was discovered by La Vérendrye over 100 years ago. It is very important to have groups from Quebec and Manitoba get together to discuss concerns like work and our common future.

[*English*]

These young people from Quebec and from Manitoba were not making false distinctions based upon some kind of frontiers that were divided 100 years ago. They were young people searching for their own concern about the future and looking forward to a relevance coming from the political system that maybe we had not been providing as well or as effectively as we should have in the past.

Let us use this time effectively. Let us use this time well to make sure that those rare meetings that I was part of in my constituency this summer on the shores of Lake Winnipeg when two groups of young people got together to talk in both their languages about their common problems is an example for the entire country to fulfil.

Let us make no illusions. There are concerns out there that will not be answered by this particular set of propositions in this deal. In my own part of Canada there is deep unrest and unhappiness about some of the proposals as they relate to the Senate. It is not a matter of being equal, it was a question of having a better balance of power in Confederation. Western Canadians felt that they had a better chance of having their voice heard and being listened to in this Parliament and in the councils of national influence and decision making. For many westerners that was not achieved in this deal. That is not in itself reason to oppose it because what we should be saying is that there are chances in the future to improve, to augment and to change.

My own leader, in his speech a few days ago, indicated that one of our concerns and interests will be to use the debate on the legislation of the Senate to ensure that there is a clear understanding that the Senate is not simply another chamber to which we refer legislation. It is the balance wheel of Confederation for the less populated regions, for the hinterlands. We must bring that together to make sure that it is not a question of

numbers, it is a question of fairness and equity. Equal was not the operative word, it was equitable and fairness that had to be applied.

There will be much work to do to make people understand how we can use this constitutional referendum to listen to people from western Canada who are going to talk about Senate reform, and we will hear that, to say that this is not the end of the chapter, it is just that we have to write more chapters to improve upon them.

Similarly, think about the concerns, and again I reflect on my constituents, of what is happening in our cities across Canada such as the incredible case of joblessness among our young people and older workers being laid off, a real shortage of social housing and, real problems of public safety on the streets.

In this deal we talk about exclusive concern for urban affairs, housing and training being turned over to the provinces. It is going to be very important that we show Canadians during this time that simply giving exclusive jurisdiction does not mean the end of concern or involvement or an attempt to work together in a co-operative partnership way to deal with those real underlying, deep abiding sores that afflict Canadian society at the present time.

I look forward to and welcome this referendum. I think it is a great opportunity for us not only to encourage Canadians to agree to a deal that will repair some of the injuries of the past but will also provide some building blocks for the future.

We must do it in the proper spirit and the proper sense. In that sense I go back to a saying that I will never forget. Vaclav Havel, the former President of Czechoslovakia, had just left office. He wrote a book, *Summer Meditations*, which I read just in the last month or two. He said: "Those who find themselves in politics bear a heightened responsibility for the moral state of society, and it is their responsibility to seek out the best in that society, to develop it and to strengthen it".

We have a rare opportunity, one that has come around maybe only every third or fourth decade, to bring Canadians together and to give them the leadership that we in elected office have to provide, to bring out the best in society, to awaken the best potential, to make sure that we understand that this is not a matter of a battle between good and evil. It is a matter of how we find the best potential for all Canadians. We must reason together in both our languages, in all our regions, to ensure that the referendum becomes not a matter of dividing Canadians but of bringing them together and showing them that we can now go on to deal with the issues that concern the people of this country so that they do not lose touch with the ground but rather bring us all together.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, I rise today as a Canadian who is proud of my country and a Quebecer proud of my province to say that I support the constitutional proposals and I encourage all Canadians and especially the people of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville to say yes to the referendum question. I encourage all Quebecers to say yes to a promising future in which the French language and culture will be protected in a country of 27 million.

I encourage all Quebecers to say yes to employment and a more stable economic future. I encourage all Canadians to say yes because the time has come to change political priorities. The time has come to talk about the economy and to find solutions for the problems affecting everyone.

[*English*]

Provincial premiers, territorial leaders and representatives of our native communities have said yes to a new constitutional deal. They have said yes to a new Canada and have now asked us through this question to say yes to Canada as well.

I believe that this deal will at the same time protect the interests of Quebec's francophone population and ensure the survival of a vibrant English speaking community in a Quebec that is strong and that is also a strong member of the Canadian family.

[*Translation*]

We are gathered here in this House today to approve the question that will be presented to Canadians on October 26. The question is simple and the options are clear.

However, some people do not want to have anything to do with Canada. Members of the Parti Quebecois and the Bloc Quebecois want an independent Quebec. They oppose these offers because they are basically against political union with the rest of Canada.

Their leader, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, says that the Charlottetown accord gives Quebecers nothing. That is completely wrong. Quebec is guaranteed 25 per cent of the seats in this House and is entitled to 33 per cent of the judges on the Supreme Court. Recognition of Canada's linguistic duality is reflected in the distinct society clause.

But the separatists' struggle will continue not because they want to improve Quebecers' daily lives but because they have an ideological agenda. They have a personal agenda that has nothing to do with the betterment of our province.

[*English*]

These people would never be satisfied with any offers from the federal government because they are ideologically committed to the break-up of our country. Do you think they really care about the average citizens of our province? Do you think they really care about the well-being of the aging population, the seniors? Do they have a plan to look after the homeless or the poor? Do you think they have a plan to battle skyrocketing unemployment and to settle political instability? The answer on all counts is absolutely no.

[*Translation*]

I think it would be a good thing at this time to remind ourselves that the agreement reached in Charlottetown on August 28 represents the conclusion of a long consultation process undertaken across the country. Everyone had the opportunity to participate in this process to express their expectations, their doubts and their hopes. Every Canadian had a chance to speak out and today we see the results. The active participation of the Canadian people through briefs, submissions and interventions was the first step. The second step will be the upcoming vote for or against the proposed package. It is important that every one of us as Canadian citizens has a say in the final decision. It is our duty. Nothing should be taken for granted. We must work together to win the fight for a strong Quebec within a united Canada. We live in a wonderful country offering the highest standard of living in the world.

Our country is rich in physical and human resources. We cannot risk losing everything because we have become indifferent to what is happening. Every vote is important because the total number of votes will dictate the policy to be followed by the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

October 26 must be at the same time an end to a process and a beginning of a new time in our history, a time when we will be able to declare once and for all that the Constitution is settled.

This constitutional deal needs the support of all Quebecers committed to a united Canada. That is why I am making a personal appeal to the people of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville and Saraguay to get out and vote. Tell all of Canada that you want to remain part of this country. Tell the separatists that they do not speak for Quebecers or Quebec and tell them so by voting yes on October 26.

I would also like to send a message to members of all three federal parties in my riding. We need your help. We need your fight and your help to keep Canada united. As the Prime Minister and leaders of the oppositions have said, this is beyond partisan politics. There will be time for that later. We need each and every one of the people committed to Canada to join us in a proud fight for our country and our province. The alternative is not a pretty sight. There is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and there is no paradise in a separate Quebec.

Let us not kid ourselves. A vote for the no side on October 26 will set in motion the gears that will result in independence. A vote for the yes has the chance of putting a nail in the coffin of the separatist option.

[*Translation*]

The question should be simple and specific, quite a challenge in an environment with a tendency to elaborate endlessly. We seem to have succeeded, as Canadians will soon be able to judge for themselves. The people of this country will read, debate among themselves and make up their own minds so that they can tell us in the referendum what they want their country to be.

The coming days will be tense. There will be discussions and differences of opinion but we must remember, however difficult it may be, that we are first and foremost citizens of a wonderful country. Let us make every effort to keep it strong and united. On October 26 vote yes for a strong Quebec within a united Canada.

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Madam Speaker, on October 26, 1992, Canadians, Quebecers and the residents of Lévis will have to vote on the constitutional agreement that was recently proposed to all of Canada.

In the days following this agreement I had the opportunity to discuss it with some representatives of my riding. Their comments could be grouped into three categories. First are those who question specific points.

I was told that more could have been done to abolish trade barriers among the provinces of Canada. They could have been made unconstitutional or lower trade barriers could have been encouraged and east-west trade made easier. I was also told that some duplication in some departments was overlooked. However, we know that this agreement is the result of consensus and that a perfect agreement is not possible. Perfection is the enemy of the good, something like acrobatics is bad for gymnastics. We must try to have what can be obtained and not something unrealistic. We have an agreement. This is the best agreement since 1867. It does not contain everything that each of Canada's 27 million citizens might want, nor does it have some features that the 7 million Quebecers in Canada might desire, but it bears the signatures of the Prime Minister of Canada, the ten provincial premiers and the First Nations' representatives.

This agreement is the conclusion of a generation of effort. It includes the historic demands of Quebecers. Among other things we are guaranteed three Supreme Court judges, 33 1/3 per cent of its members, forever, because of our civil code is different. This agreement guarantees that we will have 25 per cent of the members of the House of Commons of Canada. It confirms what the Quebec Act, 1774, said, namely that Quebec is a distinct society. It confirms that formally and irrevocably. This agreement gives Quebec full authority over immigration, education, manpower training, the management and exploitation of its natural resources, etc.

I also heard some very negative comments. People spoke to me of humiliation, defeat, groveling, kowtowing; they said Bourassa is a traitor and so on. That is the kind of talk usually heard where Quebec separatists congregate, but is it even worth commenting on? Can such language be justified? On the contrary, does it not show the lack of practical substantial reasons for Quebecers to take their province out of Canada? These comments are exaggerated. When we ask for positive things that would flow from separation, they answer "Campeau". Who is Campeau? He was an accountant at the Caisse de dépôt, which handles mainly funds from government employees. When he went into management, the first thing he did resulted in a $500-million loss for Domtar; the second thing he did with other people's money cost Quebec $100 million in the Steinberg affair.

They tell us about Parizeau. Parizeau incurred a $500-million loss, the press reported recently. The asbestos corporation is being sold again because Parizeau made a half billion dollar mistake.

They tell us about Larose. They say that he must be a sensible guy. I talked about Larose to my constituents. In my riding the shipyards employ 3,500 people. I talked to the wives, the workers, their children and relatives and I told them, "Ask Larose who uses your dues to attack the federal government what has kept the shipyards going for ten years". Every cent comes from the federal government. What is Larose proposing to them? Nothing. He tells them, "Separate and we'll see after".

Finally, I met supporters of the agreement who will say yes for its intrinsic qualities and its positive effect on the economy and because the alternative would be a fiasco for our families and middle class, who would have to pay more tax for a generation as Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard have admitted.

• (1400)

Mr. Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard admitted that those people will have to pay more tax for a generation. Remember that Mr. Parizeau is capable of doing that because he is the one who cut Quebec public servants' pay by 20 per cent at one point. It would be a fiasco for seniors who are worried about their income security and social services. Where will they get the money so that our old people can continue to live comfortably? It is a fiasco for the less fortunate. Where will they get the money to continue to assist our disadvantaged? We have no specifics from the propagandists of separation. It is a fiasco for our young people as well except for those who camp in front of the legislature. Young people who want to develop the country but not break it up, who want to continue and not start all over, still want a solid founda-

tion. That is why they ask us to vote yes and yes is the way the riding of Lévis will answer.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being two p.m., the House will now proceed to statements pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Madam Speaker, when I first heard the question "do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992 in Charlottetown", I smiled inwardly as I contemplated the public's reaction, a public that has become cynical because we have not dealt with this matter more expeditiously.

As I have said many times in this House compromise lacks perfection. Perhaps perfection is achievable only at another level, but now we have an outstanding compromise before us.

We should learn from the turmoil in other parts of the world that this is an extremely important matter. Constituents of Regina—Wascana will treat it as such.

Early this year I circulated a comprehensive questionnaire on constitutional matters. The intelligent, informed and passionate results form the basis of my own personal constitutional position which I circulated to each household in my riding.

Decision time is here. I pledged to my constituents to make myself available, for it is important to send signals to other Canadians of how important our respective contributions can be. We must show ourselves that we do not have to be exactly the same to be equal and by living in different areas of this vast country, we still have the same aspirations.

We must become informed Canadians in order that on referendum day we can all smile inwardly as we vote with intelligence and understanding to support a country which for 125 years has supported us.

* * *

ROYAL OAK MINES INCORPORATED

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with my colleagues, many of whom have said they will be voting yes in the referendum. I think there are very few people in this House of Commons who would be on the no side.

I would like to draw your attention to the serious labour dispute between Royal Oak Mines Incorporated of Yellowknife and the members of the Smelter and Allied Workers Union. This has been ongoing since May 23 of this year.

I and my colleague, the labour critic for the New Democratic Party, feel the time has come to proceed with an industrial disputes inquiry with a view to restoring confidence and jobs in Yellowknife. My colleague, the member for Western Arctic and I have been particularly worried about the rapidly deteriorating situation which has led to tension and the feeling of unnecessary and unduly harsh police intervention in this matter.

I would like the House to take notice of this point.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO MRS. LOUISE ARCAND

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to Louise Arcand who was a host, a reader and a journalist with Radio-Canada for more than 20 years and whose sudden death last month, at the age of 48 from brain cancer saddened us all in Abitibi and in Amos where she was born.

All agree that Louise was a remarkable woman, a formidable go-getter with great strength of character, like her parents and the members of her family, who are pioneers in Amos.

Louise found out about her illness in the spring of 1991. At that time, she had been a journalist for three years on the program *Les affaires et la vie* on Radio-Canada.

Louise will remain present in the hearts of the people of Abitibi. She will remain close to us all.

* * *

[*English*]

DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, with Bill C-91 being rammed through this House next week low priced generic drugs will be sacrificed on the altar of the Mexico-U.S. free trade deal.

The promises made in connection with the Canada-U.S. trade deal in the previous drug patent bill of 1987 have not been honoured. The promised 3,000 research jobs have not materialized and more than 700 jobs in the drug manufacturing area have been lost. The promise of not a single cent in higher drug prices is ignored.

This government even ignores its own drug price regulations when 40 per cent of all new drugs are allowed to exceed the price guidelines of the Drug Prices Review Board.

Bill C-91 will compound these mistakes because the NAFTA negotiations required the sacrifice of the cost efficient generic drugs as part of the George Bush trade deal.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, every spring tens of thousands of farmers take to the fields from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia planting millions upon millions of acres of fertile soil in the hopes they will receive a good bountiful harvest.

This year, although the weather was damp and different, that bountiful harvest seemed to project a tremendous result and guess what happened. As we stand here today, there are thousands of acres of grains in the west, in Alberta, that have been pushed down because of snow. We have had tremendous rainfalls which hamper the harvest and now we have had frost to damage the quality of the crop.

As I sit here, every member of this House and everyone in this country should pray that some good weather will come so that we can in fact reap this harvest. Then Canada can once again sustain the markets that it has and it can feed those in great poverty around the world. It can also help the farmers end up making a little bit of profit.

Thank God we had the foresight to put in programs like GRIP to improve the crop insurance programs farmers can turn to. Yes, we are hoping to bring the cash advance because farmers need help today. Pray for good weather.

* * *

THE DISABLED

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities are disappointed that they have been left out of the Canada clause in the constitutional agreement. This came as a surprise because the federal government's draft proposals last September, *Shaping Canada's Future Together*, included a clear reference to disabled persons.

The Canada clause contains a number of provisions to protect specific groups in society including aboriginal people, linguistic groups, ethnic groups and women.

Persons with disabilities want to know why they have not been included this time. They would like some assurance that their rights will not have a lesser degree of judicial protection than those other groups.

There is particular concern about disability rights following the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program earlier this year. This program helped disabled Canadians and other communities clarify their legal rights under the charter and in the courts.

Canadians with disabilities are looking for some sign that this government is committed to the protection and promotion of their rights.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, during the past summer an experiment was tried in British Columbia allowing for a native commercial fishery.

Also this year there has been an alarming decimation of some salmon spawning runs with only a small percentage of the salmon expected actually arriving on the spawning grounds. One of the factors is no doubt the native fishery.

This is not due to the fact that the fishery occurred but that there has been a complete failure to enforce the regulations, to keep accurate catch tallies and to control the escapement of adequate spawning stocks on several rivers.

An extremely tense situation is developing between whites and natives and between various native groups. I call on the government to get control of this fishery situation immediately by enforcing all regulations to ensure that which occurred on the Fraser does not develop elsewhere, notably in the Port Alberni and Cowichan areas.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, veterans affairs offices across this country have received thousands of calls of concern, fear and anger from veterans whose independence program benefits have been drastically cut. This valuable program allows veterans to remain in their own homes at minimal cost to taxpayers.

The minister's office has assured me there may have been miscommunication to veterans, but in reality there were no cuts. I would ask the minister to relay this good news to the thousands of veterans and hundreds of councillors who indicate quite definitely that the cuts are real and dramatic.

I cite one example of a recent stroke victim whose monthly benefit has been cut from $300 a month to $6.11 per month. Health needs were not a consideration of those who made an arbitrary, unjust decision against the advice and judgment of those who work in the field.

Rumour has it the minister is reconsidering this decision and will restore the original monthly allotments already promised to veterans. I ask him to do so promptly. Veterans are the least among us who should be subjected to this kind of treatment.

There is a positive prologue. In discussion with the veterans affairs office in Prince Edward Island I was told things will be well very soon.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

RENEWAL OF THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday August 22, in Charlottetown, the federal and provincial governments agreed on a new project for the renewal of the Constitution.

This agreement is one of the most ambitious constitutional renewal projects ever undertaken by our governments since 1867. This accord is extremely important for Quebecers since it takes into account the traditional claims made by their province throughout its history. In spite of some flaws this is a good agreement. It gives Quebec solid guarantees concerning its identity as well as new powers.

This new deal negotiated by Quebec provides Quebecers with the necessary tools for their economic, social and cultural development. I am proud to give my full support to the agreement because it represents the best possible compromise between Quebec and its Canadian partners.

* * *

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, not long ago, Canadians marvelled at Silken Lauman's determination and Sylvie Fréchette's dignity and grace during the Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Indeed the Canadian team got the best results ever obtained by Canada in any non-boycotted Olympic Games. With 16 medals our athletes represented Canada with honour and the highest sportsmanship, showing once again the unifying power of sports in Canada and its role in the history and culture of our people.

Sports fans across Canada enthusiastically encouraged our athletes. They did not care where these athletes came from. The important thing was to know that they were giving their best.

On behalf of the House of Commons and all Canadians, I salute the Canadian participants in the Barcelona Games whose outstanding performances dazzled us. I also want to extend my best wishes to Canadian athletes who take part in the Paraolympic Games for paraplegics in Barcelona.

[*English*]

EDUCATION

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, this week the OECD issued its report card on Canada's economy. It had some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that Canada's economy is expected to grow 2.3 per cent this year and 4.3 per cent next year. Inflation should hold steady at 2.4 per cent this year and next and the unemployment rate should drop to 9.9 per cent by the second half of next year.

The bad news is that we are not getting value for our money when it comes to education. Canada is the biggest spender on education in the G-7. However, too many students are graduating from high school functionally illiterate.

The OECD message is that if we are to prosper as a country in the future we have to ensure that our young people have the skills to meet the challenges of the next century. Education is a type of investment. Let us make sure that we invest wisely.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, once again the Minister of Employment and Immigration has failed workers in the rural area of Westmorland. After giving them a glimmer of hope in June he has refused to take any action and is now ignoring them. The unemployment situation in the area is as serious as anywhere else, and workers will be unable to find enough weeks of work to make them eligible for unemployment insurance.

[*English*]

The minister cannot ignore the situation in which the workers find themselves. He has to find a way to render justice to the workers of rural Westmorland who are in a completely different situation from the people living across the street in the riding of Kent.

[*Translation*]

The people of this region deserve better from this government.

[*English*]

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to the family of six-year old Corinne Gustavson. Tragically, the day before yesterday, her body was found sexually assaulted and smothered. This incident is only one of many violent sexual assault crimes which occurred this summer in Edmonton.

Many Edmontonians have called my office and those of my colleagues to express their belief that our justice system has failed.

We need to send a clear message that such crimes will no longer be tolerated. We need to increase the education in our society about sexual abuse and provide education and treatment for those offenders. We must impose tougher penalties on violent and dangerous offenders. We must restore the faith of Canadians in our justice system.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, within the last month veterans have received a letter from Veterans Affairs informing them that the department is changing its payment process for some VIP services. Instead of submitting receipts every month, the VIP recipients will receive an advance cheque to cover their average monthly expenses. This amount was derived from the expenses incurred by the veteran last year and does not necessarily reflect the ceiling amounts allotted to each individual by the department.

Many veterans have contacted my office and expressed fear that this was changed without cause.

Have the veterans and their organizations asked that this change be made? We can ask ourselves and the minister if this change has been brought about to benefit the veterans, or has it been brought about to benefit the government that will now be able to run a more computerized and less personal service to the veterans? Will the minister assure the House that this change has been carefully thought out and is not the forerunner of diminished service to our veterans?

We must always remind ourselves that the payments made to veterans are not a benefit but rather their right as a grateful country tries to pay them back for the valuable service they performed.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, this government's failure in the mid-1980s to develop a national youth policy helped create Canada's generation *x*, a generation largely ill prepared by education and training for the present or future economy. Statistics on youth suicide, crime, violence and drug use depict a rising level of social pathology linked with a high youth unemployment rate of 19.2 per cent, nearly double the national rate.

Neo-conservatism and its Darwinian economics continue to fail these youth as well as other Canadians. The government gives us free trade and now NAFTA so that profits are reaped by sending jobs south. It talks of the new competitiveness while cutting training, post-secondary education and job creation expenditures for youth.

What could be a stupider approach to a high value added economy? What more perverse a denial of the opportunities necessary to build it? When will the government understand that future prosperity is indispensably dependent upon the opportunity for Canadians to learn and to create, or that economic growth and social justice must go hand in hand? Or, will the continued failure of this government lead to Canadian generations *y* and *z* and perhaps omega?

* * *

NORTHERN COD FISHERY

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, in June of this year the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a ban on the northern cod fishery, and I supported that decision. But that decision has deprived a great number of fishermen and plant workers in my riding of a substantial source of their revenue.

I would like to ask the minister today to speed up the process so that compensation payments start flowing to those communities as soon as possible.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Prime Minister.

My question is related to the merger of Air Canada and Canadian Airlines yesterday. As we all know, Canada's first Prime Minister drove the last spike in building the national railway and the present Prime Minister is driving the last nail in the coffin of airline competition in Canada.

In the face of the announcement yesterday, what is this government planning to do to maintain some competition in the air in Canada?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, representatives of both national airlines have indicated yesterday in separate press releases that they had agreed in principle to a merger, that a merger committee would be put together with representatives from both airlines, and that the details of the transaction would be ironed out in that committee.

When that deal is complete, it will be investigated by two agencies of the government. At that time we will know what the content of the transaction is and we will be able to act accordingly.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the light of this airline merger, will the government take steps to ensure that Canadians will not be grounded as a result of further increases in domestic fares which are already too high? Everyone is worried that Canadians will no longer be able to travel in this country, thanks to the disastrous policies of the Minister of Transport.

• (1420)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is common knowledge that one of the main causes of the financial difficulties of both companies is the price war which has been raging during the past few years. As I said earlier, as soon as the transaction is complete it will

be examined and the Bureau of Competition Policy will ensure that competition will continue to exist within Canada's civil aviation system.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

As everybody knows, a very conservative estimate of the loss of jobs in that transaction is at least 6,000. Of course the Minister of Finance who seems to be comfortable with 1.6 million people unemployed might not be too preoccupied with that.

I would like to quote the Deputy Prime Minister. On July 16, 1985, when he was Minister of Transport, he said: "We promise to assist those who might suffer severe economic dislocation under a new regulatory regime".

Will the Minister of Finance keep the promise he expressed in this House in 1985?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, during the talks held in recent weeks the federal government made sure that Canadian Airlines International would have a chance to examine all the options, including the generous proposal made by its employees. We did our utmost, and we hope that other levels of government would do the same.

[*English*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to remind the Minister of Transport of something that was said by his predecessor and now Minister of Finance in the House of Commons on April 12, 1988. He said: "The results of regulatory reform and the passage of the National Transportation Act have created a new environment and with it a stable, viable and very competitive airline sector in Canada".

Now we know that the result of the policies pursued by this government is an unstable, non-competitive and in fact monopolistic airline environment in Canada.

The minister now has two choices before him. Is he planning to re-regulate the industry and turn back the reforms of his colleague, or is he planning to let U.S. carriers compete on Canadian routes against this new merged carrier? Which one will it be?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has probably not examined the results of deregulation properly, because he would have noticed, for instance, that total passenger traffic grew by 19.5 per cent from 1986 to 1990 to almost 37 million passengers and passenger kilometres on scheduled services grew by 25.3 per cent to 50 billion.

The situation in which the Canadian airlines are finding themselves at the present time is equivalent to what other airlines around the world find themselves in not because of deregulation but because of the Persian Gulf war which was the spark plug of the present situation and the world-wide recession that ensued.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister might look at the war of attrition between our two air carriers that was carried on without any direction or policy interference by the Government of Canada.

[*Translation*]

All the experts agree that the airline resulting from this merger will not be able to survive without a major injection of capital. Surely the government examined the same figure. Can the minsiter tell us how much Canadian taxpayers will have to pay to help this new giant of the skies, with its super debt of $8 billion?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first we hear concerns about competition and then we are asked why the government failed to intervene to prevent companies from competing with each other. The Liberal Party will have to make up its mind. Either it wants competition or it wants regulation, which by its very nature eliminates all opportunities for competition.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The merger of Air Canada and Canadian International goes to show what a failure deregulation has been. Yet when extolling the virtues of deregulation, government promised increased competition, lower fares and better services. What we are getting is the exact opposite: no competition, high fares and fewer services. Will government undertake to demand that this new monopoly serve our communities well and offer reasonable rates to the public?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the hon. leader of the NDP should examine carefully the effects of deregulation which has resulted in reduced air fares across Canada and better services. All consumers have benefited from deregulation and their situation at present is no worse than that of all other airlines in the world.

This all started with the Persian Gulf War and the world-wide recession that ensued.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, we have very carefully examined the effects of deregulation. When the Liberal Party proposed deregulation we opposed it as well.

We see now that the effects of deregulation are in fact creating a failure and this government's policies are crash landing. If this government's deregulation policies on the airlines continue and we do not have some kind of regulation, the only thing flying over Canadian airspace is going to be Canadian geese.

It is the workers of Canada who are paying the price for this government's failed policies and now we have a projected 6,000 more job losses in the airline industry.

What adjustment programs will this government bring in for the workers who have lost their jobs as a direct result of the failed policies of this government and their families?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if the NDP leader is so much against the merger that took place, she could have used her good services over the past couple days to convince Bob White and his union to contribute to the plan proposed by the employees to make sure that two airlines would continue to exist in Canada.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the minister does not want to deal with questions about the effects of the deregulation program and will not deal with the loss of jobs to Canadians and the projected 6,000 job losses.

I would like to say to the Deputy Prime Minister that deregulation has been bad for the economy. Bad trade deals have lost 360,000 manufacturing jobs in this country. We are about to lose another 6,000 projected airline worker jobs.

It is clear that from coast to coast Canadians are suffering from the policies of this government. There is one thing this government could do right now to begin to reverse that trend, and that is say no to the NAFTA deal.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister do the right thing for Canadians and say no to the NAFTA deal?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Western Centre for Economic Research reports that the merger between Air Canada and Canadian Airlines will result in the loss of over 4,000 jobs in western Canada and a substantial loss of services. This means the loss in western Canada will be disproportionate in terms of the entire country.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. When will the government take its responsibility to govern and give assurances that the airline industry in western Canada will be maintained and that there will be proper, effective, accessible services to the people of western Canada in our airline industry?

• (1430)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are hearing the usual gloom and doom hypothesis of the Liberal Party. The airlines have indicated that they are going to enter into a merger elaboration of the transaction. When the transaction is completed we will know exactly what will happen. They have committed themselves to maintaining as many jobs as possible.

It was known by everyone in the country that there were too many people employed in the airline industry compared to every other criteria used by airline industries throughout the world.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to provide one correction for the minister. The problem in Canada is not that there are too many jobs. There are too few jobs and everyone knows that.

I want to ask the minister this very specific question. Under the Air Canada Privatization Act clear guarantees were given for the continuation of a maintenance base in Winnipeg and the computer centre and other maintenance services across Canada.

Will this government say today that it will stand by that guarantee and ensure those important facilities in western Canada will be maintained?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind people that I never said there were too many jobs in this country. I said that because of the over capacity in the two Canadian airlines, there were too many people for the jobs available and this has caused them great problems.

As far as the law of Air Canada as well as the law that created PWA by the Alberta legislature, we have said and the Alberta government has said that they do not intend to change the content of these two pieces of legislation.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, it is a very bleak day for people in many parts of Canada because of the job losses that are inevitably going to result from the takeover of Canadian Airlines by Air Canada. Another vital institution to western Canadians is being gutted with the complicity of this government.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. The Air Canada president said on September 2 that the proposed joint holding company "will strive to ensure the equal and fair treatment of employees and to minimize job losses in each region".

Does the minister actually believe that the new CEO of Air Canada, who has probably never been west of Chicago, will really care about the jobs of British Columbians and Albertans in this matter?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I certainly have no intention of undermining the credibility of the chief operating officer of a respectable company.

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. member puts a supplementary question, I wonder if I could just point out to hon. members that the question as phrased was very marginal indeed and I am not at all sure that the minister needed to answer.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, if the minister thinks that his government can wash its hands of this deal, he is sadly mistaken.

It was his government which blocked loan guarantees to Canadian Airlines and did not have a five cent piece to assist the employees to try to rescue this plan. Now as many as 10,000 people can lose their jobs as a result of this takeover.

My question is for the same minister. He has a clear obligation to ensure the livelihoods and careers of people who will lose their jobs. What is he going to tell this House about it today?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate how the member opposite is completely wrong, here is an excerpt from Mr. Rhys Eyton yesterday at his press conference: "The federal government was there all the way". The only government that got involved in this to make sure that Canadian would have all the time to examine all their options was the Canadian government. All other governments turned them down.

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NORTHERN TELECOM

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for whoever is answering for the Minister for International Trade.

Recently Northern Telecom, perhaps Canada's high-tech jewel, announced that it is moving 36 jobs from its Saskatoon production plant to its factory in Mexico. The company says that these are lower-skilled, assembly-type jobs and moving them to Mexico "makes a lot of sense to us".

While this action may make sense to Northern Telecom concerned only with its bottom line, and perhaps the 36 people involved may be only small potatoes to the Prime Minister, this does not make sense to hard working Canadians who have lost their jobs.

When will the government start realizing that the future and family of 36 workers in Saskatoon are more important than his discredited fantasies of free trade prosperity?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, there are a few facts that the hon. member overlooked mentioning to the House of Commons. The first is that it is the intention of Northern Telecom to invest some $5 million in the Saskatoon plant to increase its fibreoptics manufacturing capability. This will result in new employment opportunities.

Second, as a result of NAFTA, we will have access to a market in Mexico estimated at $10 billion with the result of the creation of jobs in Canada.

I invite the hon. member to send a message throughout Northern Telecom to say that he wants those jobs lost. He does not want those sales possibilities to Mexico.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, the investment that the minister mentions will create only ten jobs in Saskatoon. Thirty-six jobs will be lost and ten jobs will be created. If we carry on like that, nobody is going to be working in this country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: Some logic.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Perhaps I could ask one simple question of the minister which is not dealt with in the government's propaganda which is presently being circulated to Canadians at taxpayers' expense.

What are the government's projections for the number of Canadian jobs which will be lost to Mexico over the next five years? Would you at least tell Canadians how many of them will have to pay for this government's disastrous economic policies?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that if what is happening in the telecom industry in terms of sales to Mexico continues nobody will be working in this country.

Our telecom industry is making millions and millions of dollars of sales to Mexico with the creation of thousands of jobs in Canada.

The potential in coming years for growth in telecom jobs in this country is enormous. If the NDP is opposed to creating those jobs let them say so. For our part, we want those jobs for Canadian workers.

COMPETITION POLICY

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

More than any other minister in this House this minister has the responsibility for representing the interests of Canadian consumers at the cabinet table when issues of public importance are being decided.

Now that we see the results of this government's destructive air transportation policy, Canadians demand to know where his voice was. Why did he on their behalf agree to a transportation policy that may very well result in an unregulated monopoly in the air, higher prices and poorer services for Canadian consumers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is well aware that we have in Canada a competition policy as well as a Bureau of Competition and a Competition Tribunal. These mechanisms are there so that we may keep an eye on mergers, relocations, expansions or acquisitions purchased abroad. The hon. member is well aware of that. I can also tell the House that the director of the Bureau of Competition, under section 9 of the Competition Act, has already begun to look at this situation.

My colleague will certainly agree that the two parties have simply announced their intention to merge. As soon as the papers are filed and the merger has occurred it will be examined closely by the Bureau of Competition, which is completely independent from the government. The bureau is free to take any action, to make recommendations to both parties and even, if necessary, to go to the Competition Tribunal which can then intervene. I truly believe that Canadian consumers and competition generally are very well protected.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, the Competition Bureau is the responsibility of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

During testimony before a House committee in September on this very issue the chair of the Competition Bureau gave every indication that a merger between these two national airlines would have great difficulty in being approved by that bureau.

The question I want to ask the minister is this. Will he give this House and the public his assurance today that neither he, his officials nor members of this government will interfere in any way, shape or form with the examination of this merger proposal by the Bureau of Competition Policy?

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I have no intention whatsoever of interfering with the responsibilities of the Director of the Bureau of Competition.

I can assure my colleague and all members of this House that we should let those people do their jobs, make a full assessment of the proposal and make their decision. That is the way it is and that is how I will let them do their job.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, let us call this deal for what it is. This merger was a conspiracy between the Conservative government in Ottawa, provincial NDP governments and Bob White. That is exactly what it was.

I can understand the total embarrassment of the Deputy Prime Minister not wanting to rise to his feet. After all, it was he who said back on July 16, 1985 that the government would monitor the effects of regulatory change on the employees and respond to any adverse consequences as humanly as possible. He promised to assist those who might suffer severe economic dislocation under the regulatory system.

Now that this tentative merger has been negotiated, what is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared to do in order to halt the loss of the 6,000 to 10,000 jobs in this country?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said many false things in his speech before asking his question, but I only want to address one. He said that a deal has been completed. He is completely wrong.

It is in all the news media that they have agreed in principle to a merger. A committee will be formed to determine what the conditions will be of the merger. Both companies have indicated that they will do their utmost to reduce as much as possible the burden of job losses.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, let us ask the government to think ahead a little bit.

An hon. member: Don't ask the impossible.

Mr. Keyes: Since it is a given fact that Air Canada and Canadian Airlines control most regional air carriers, I want to ask the Minister of Transport what he is going to do to ensure the viability of the smaller carriers and their employees and to ensure that the high levels of service and competition between regional centres such as Hamilton, London, Windsor, et cetera, continue?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, over the past years the aviation industry has served all corners of Canada. There are a number of small airline companies that are servicing different parts of this country.

The question of competition, as we have repeated many times, is going to be examined by the Competition Bureau and it will make its recommendations after it examines a deal that has yet to be completed.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

In his interesting and constructive speech yesterday, which was very general and certainly did not paint broad strokes, there was little detail. Since this matter is not going to a parliamentary committee and the education process for Canadians has to start somewhere, could the minister answer this question to clarify a lot of confusion? How many aboriginal self-government units are we talking about in the package and is the law for that self-government to be paramount or subordinate or equal to the federal and provincial laws?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as is clear in the agreement, what is proposed is that aboriginal self-government will after

the adoption of this proposal be one of three orders of government in the country.

As a result of intensive negotiations at Charlottetown and concerns that have been expressed by several governments, there was an agreement on the part of the aboriginal people as to the sequence by which aboriginal law would come into place. There was an agreement that aboriginal law would always be within the context of Canada and would be subject to arrangements which are essential to peace, order and good government.

While I am on my feet, and I know there is a concern about legal text, I simply want to correct an impression that was left by the Reform member yesterday who will not be here to vote tonight. I am sure she was acting inadvertently.

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I do not think it is proper to be commenting upon whether a member was here or is here.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer of the minister as far as it went. Could he tell Canadians with some certainty how many self-government units we are talking about? Where does the charter of rights apply in this matter?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a precise number today just as I could not offhand give an indication of the number of status Indian bands there are in the country, or the number of aboriginal communities such as Métis communities, for example, that there are in the community.

What I can say is that when we speak at the national level about a third order of government we are talking about a very limited number of people who would take their place in time at the constitutional table.

The proposals that have been brought forward after, I must say, extensive public hearing including by committees in this House, will allow status Indians who are now governed by an Indian Act enacted in colonial times to assume more rights and more responsibilities for themselves.

It will allow Métis people, who have been the forgotten aboriginal people in Canada for generations, to have greater control over their own destiny in Canada. It will allow urban aboriginals, who in very many cases are the victims of the most cruel personal injustice inflicted upon aboriginal people in the country, to be given some capacity to exercise more control over their own lives.

It does involve to some degree some faith on the part of the rest of us in giving effect to this agreement. It also involves a recognition that the system that we have now is dead wrong and has to be changed.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Weather conditions across the prairies are having a severe impact on the quality and harvestability of crops in that region of the country. Already Alberta, including the minister's own riding, and Saskatchewan have suffered huge losses and Manitoba's crop is very vulnerable.

Not only is the weather reducing the amount and quality of the harvest, but the recent addition of $1 billion to the Export Enhancement Program by the U.S. will further drive down the prices on the crop that is realized.

Does the government have any plans to financially assist those areas that need it? If so, what are those plans?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

It is a very urgent situation. I am advised by my colleague the Minister of Agriculture that an assessment is currently being undertaken of the crop damage. I think the hon. member knows that there are a number of programs available such as crop insurance, GRIP and NISA, which hopefully will offset any losses that may occur.

I can assure the hon. member that it is being monitored and assessed very closely. Working with the provin-

cial departments of agriculture, we will certainly respond if there is a necessity or a need to respond.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer.

In a normal year 75 per cent of the crop in fact would be in the bin. However, this year only something like 6 per cent has been harvested. This is the type of prairie disaster for which a third line of defence payment was originally designed.

In the U.S. George Bush is making disaster relief payments available to farmers in areas that are affected by weather, including North Dakota. Will this government admit that farms in rural communities throughout the west are facing an economic disaster of monumental proportions? Will it commit itself to providing economic assistance under the third line of defence?

I remind the minister that some crops such as alfalfa are not covered under any program.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that a preliminary assessment shows that up to $500 million could be provided under the crop insurance program and well in excess of $1 billion under GRIP.

To suggest that there are no protective programs or safety net programs in place is wrong. These programs are in place. If the losses are there they will clearly be triggered for that amount, which is not a very small amount I must say.

* * *

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. After so many studies on railway passenger service in remote regions of Quebec, has it been decided to maintain and improve the VIA Rail service from Montreal to Clova, Senneterre, Barraute, Amos, Taschereau and La Sarre in 1993 through to the year 2000?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Abitibi will agree that VIA Rail recently showed how well it could adjust to the new realities of rail transport in the Gaspé region by renewing its transportation methods and material.

As for the other remote areas I would like to be able to give an immediate answer to the hon. member, but we are now completing a very detailed study on this very matter. We shall shortly be able to suggest solutions to the problem so that Canadians can enjoy reliable and safe railway transport services throughout Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. As the minister knows, northerners fly four times as often as people in the south. Air travel is not a luxurious option. It is our lifeline in most cases.

Will the minister please explain how he plans to maintain and implement airline competition in the north? For instance, what will be the impact on the Inuit-owned First Air, an independent airline that competes in the north with Canadian Airlines through an alliance with Air Canada?

An hon. member: Good question.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I was able myself these last few months to note the efficiency of the transport service provided by the Cree line. I can assure the hon. member that under present circumstances there is no reason why this airline should not continue to provide the same quality of service to its users.

[*English*]

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that this minister does not communicate with the head of that particular independent airline, Mr. Creighton. He would have quite a different thing to say about it.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. It is only a matter of time before the new merger forces increased fares, fewer flights to remote communities such as in the Northwest Territories and the streamlining of jobs. In fact, for our really depressed economy in the north it will be a colossal loss of jobs. The north's already fragile economy cannot withstand another devastating

blow. Will the minister promise northerners they will not suffer from another increased cost of living, increased isolation and a decreased standard of living?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): I would like to inform the hon. member that I have met on occasion the president of the Cree line and again I will tell her that the deal has not been completed. We do not know what will be the conditions of that merger situation between the two airlines. I repeat that I do not see any reason why the quality of service and the price offered in the north would be changed as a result of that merger.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, my question deals with the same subject. It is obvious from both sides of the House that we have a very grave concern in this proposed merger.

First of all, I am convinced and committed to the logistics of a competitive, viable Canadian aviation industry. Given this turmoil that has been before us, I am convinced that the employees must certainly be facing a period of uncertainty.

I would like to ask the minister, though, given all this turmoil and given the fact that we are involved in the U.S.–Canada air bilateral air transportation agreement, has the federal government considered it wise to suspend these negotiations, or what is the status of them?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to underline the excellent work of the hon. member two years ago on the committee in charge of examining a bilateral agreement with the United States. We entered these negotiations because we wanted Canadian airlines to have better penetration on the American market. Far from wanting to slow down these negotiations which should be very useful, we shall be intensifying our efforts to ensure that Canadian airlines will be better able to penetrate the American market and increase their profitability.

[*English*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, in March the Minister of Transport invited proposals for the privatization of terminals 1 and 2 at Toronto's Pearson airport. The government's announcement was based on the assumption of the continuation of two domestic airlines. Now, six months later, we are to see the merger of the two airlines into one.

Does the minister intend to accept the original proposals which were based on the two airline system or does he intend to ask those bidding to accept the major losses that would be involved in submitting new proposals?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the assumption of the hon. member, our assumptions were not based on the number of airlines. They were based on the number of passengers.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows perfectly well that those assumptions based on the number of passengers necessarily involved two domestic airlines. He knows that and there is no point in him trying to duck the issue.

Let me ask him this. In light of the statement and indeed of the fact that today we are going to see the merger of the two airlines, does he stand by his earlier promise made in this House: "that the privatization of terminals 1 and 2 will create 3,200 jobs for the people in the Toronto area for five years"?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, again I would say to the hon. member no. In fact the assumptions were not based on the number of carriers. They were based on the number of passengers.

We based our projection of passengers on a 2.3 per cent increase annually. The Association of Air Transport Companies recently indicated that its prediction is a 5 per cent increase, and yes, I maintain what I said earlier in the House.

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works.

One of the great symbols of Canada's history is Old Government House in my riding of Fredericton—York—Sunbury. This magnificent property reflects the proud traditions of all three of our founding cultures, native, French and English and was the site of some of the early meetings which led to Confederation more than 125 years ago.

Today, as the minister knows, these premises are in a state of serious disrepair and a restoration plan for its long range future has been adopted by all three levels of government.

I want to ask the minister what progress and consideration has been given to the proposal which was presented to him for a partnership funding of this restoration.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as members know, my colleague has been a very eloquent proponent of this project. Our government has already made a financial contribution in this regard.

I will take his question as a representation and point out to him that it will require some co-operation from the province of New Brunswick at a time when considerable capital expenditure will be required to complete this project. We will look at it carefully and if possible we will see what we can do.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Of the helicopters purchased by the government, 35 are supposed to be used on the new frigates and the destroyers that are being refurbished at great expense to the Canadian taxpayer.

When the Minister of Finance approved the purchase, was he aware that the helicopters are too wide to fit on the frigates and too heavy to land on either the frigates or the destroyers?

• (1500)

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be helpful if my hon. colleague actually checked his facts. He is incorrect in the facts he has put before the House.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the minister may be aware that today the government is spending $5 million on consultants to figure out if the ships are compatible with the helicopters.

Why did the government, before it set out on this purchase, not simply invest $2.89 plus GST on a ruler?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of jest of my hon. colleague, I would just like to reconfirm to him that we are well aware that the helicopters will indeed fit on our new frigates, which are the most modern state of the art ships almost in the world and are our top ships. Some minor adjustment which will be required—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Collins: No, no, let me finish—for any new equipment, not for the weight and not for the width but just to ensure that they will fit within all of the factors on our new ships. Nothing major, I can assure you. We do not use rulers any longer; we tend to use computers.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could advise hon. members that there has been some discussion among members about a matter which I know the House will want to deal with this afternoon, a tribute to one of our deceased colleagues. But I will accede to the request of the hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition and take the usual Thursday afternoon question which will be followed by tributes, and then I will be hearing a question of order from another hon. member.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House Leader. Would he indicate to the House and to its members the business for Monday, Tuesday and

Wednesday, as well as the remaining days of next week in terms of government business.

While the minister is on his feet, could he also indicate to the House whether or not he anticipates any new economic measures will be introduced next week to deal with the terrible situation confronting the Canadian economy at the present time?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think the second half of that question might have been more appropriately put during Question Period. Of course, with the OECD and the IMF predicting that Canada will lead the world in 1993, I think most countries of the world are looking to what we have done to see how they might emulate it.

As to the question on House business, when we return on Monday I will be calling Bill C-80 with the intention that it be finished at report stage and third reading next week in order that we would be able to commence cheques flowing to children in need effective January 1, 1993.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: Judging by the clamour on the other side, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member could use this long weekend to read the bill and determine that I am accurate in my description of its intent.

I am still having discussions with colleagues, but it would also be my hope that we would consider having second reading on the extension of the Patent Act since there are a lot of research investment decisions and a lot of scientists in this country anxious to see that commitment followed up on. I will have to get back to the hon. member in terms of that.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. friend the government House leader. As we leave shortly to participate in the unity campaign we recall one or two announcements that the government made recently that many of us thought were not necessarily helpful in the unity campaign.

I wonder if the government House leader could give us an undertaking that during the six-week referendum campaign that government announcements about major products and so on would be made with some sensitivity to the campaign under way?

Mr. Andre: Obviously all government announcements are intended to have a positive effect. The House leader of the Liberal Party just asked for a kind of budget next week and the House leader of the New Democratic Party asked for silence I gather next week and beyond. We will try to balance these two different points of view and bear in mind what the hon. member says.

Seriously, we certainly do appreciate that. I would expect that all members on this side, as well as all members on that side, will recognize that for the next few weeks leading up to October 26 we have at issue something far more important than a partisan game for any of us and that we will all bear that in mind in terms of our public utterances.

Mr. Speaker: I now ask the House to contribute to tributes to a former member of this place and a former colleague, the Hon. Pauline Jewett.

* * *

THE LATE PAULINE JEWETT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute today to a very special woman, a very extraordinary member of Parliament and a passionate Canadian, Pauline Jewett.

Before I begin I would like to mention that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby who replaced Pauline Jewett, who worked for Pauline Jewett for many years, is not able to be here as there was a memorial service last night in Vancouver for Pauline and she sends her regrets for being unable to return in time today.

Pauline Jewett had a remarkable career as a professor, as the first woman to become president of a Canadian university, a university chancellor and a member of Parliament. Pauline was a fighter who took on the struggle for social justice and never let it go. She was a pioneer who opened doors that had for far too long been closed to women. The changes that she helped to make still echo today both through the halls of higher learning and on the floor of this House of Commons.

One of the changes she made of course was moving from the Liberal to the New Democratic Party, an example of her great wisdom and an example I know that all members of this House will agree is sure to be followed by millions of Canadians in the years ahead.

Pauline Jewett was indeed a woman of great vision. She had a vision of a world free from nuclear threat where common security and international development took the place of arms races and poverty. She saw in Canada a country that could embrace all its peoples and in particular the people of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Pauline firmly believed that the Constitution should be renewed. Almost every time I spoke to her during her last months, she wanted to talk about the Constitution: every new development, every new turn in the debate, every new information. She wanted to know everything, to hear everything. She was a fanatic about the Constitution because she was a fanatic about her country.

She never relented in her struggle for equality. She stood up to everyone. She gave in to nobody, neither to the administration of Simon Fraser University nor to four prime ministers of Canada.

[*English*]

Sometimes Pauline Jewett won her struggles and sometimes she knew victory would have to wait for a little while, but she never gave up. Perhaps the greatest of her struggles was with the disease that eventually claimed her life. Despite the pain of that last fight, she faced it with humour, courage and dignity.

In many ways, if I may allow a personal note, I learned more from Pauline in those final months than I will learn from many of the fine speeches made in Parliament.

With Pauline's passing my party has lost one of our most passionate and dedicated voices. Canada has lost one of our real heroes, but Pauline Jewett's spirit will live on in our work for fairness and equality, for the healing of our country's divisions and for a world that rejects mass destruction and embraces peace and justice for all.

Canada will miss Pauline Jewett. Her party will miss her. She is a great loss to us all.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I rise too with my colleagues to pay tribute to our former colleague, Pauline Jewett, whose death this summer has really saddened us all.

Pauline was a very special person. She was a trail blazer in so many different fields. She was a woman who never feared to speak her mind and she was never consumed by blind partisanship. I think that is one of the reasons she had so many friends on all sides of this House and I know the deepest respect of the Prime Minister.

She served in this House for two different periods. Of course the first one was as a Liberal and then later as an NDP, the period when I got to know her.

• (1510)

However, that was not her only contribution to Canada. We all know of Pauline's outstanding work, particularly her presidency of Simon Fraser University. She was the first woman to hold the presidency of a major Canadian university. She was indeed a trail-blazer during those years. She refused to be daunted by the sometimes sexist comments or arrangements that existed. She broke down so many barriers for women.

She was a founder and president of the Canadian Research Foundation for the Advancement of Women. She was on the forefront in all areas for the advancement of equality of women, not only by what she said but by what she did. It was for those reasons that she was indeed a role model and a mentor for so many others.

Pauline will certainly play a very major role in the history of this country and she will go down in the history books. As the leader of the NDP has said, she loved this country with such a great sense of passion. She understood its diversity and its uniqueness. She lived in many parts of the country. She cared deeply about international issues, the arms race and the fundamental equality of all persons.

I had many opportunities to meet with Pauline as friends, and we spent some time on trips together. Her contribution was very special. I was so pleased when that contribution was recognized, not only with an Order of Canada but by being made a member of the Privy

Council in the last days of her life, an honour that she so richly deserved.

She would show strength and determination throughout all her life but perhaps none more than during those last months when she was faced with her illness.

Pauline was an example to us all. We are very much the lesser by her passing. I would ask that we all be left with her legacy, which is the empowerment of all of us in public life, to reflect on her spirit, her decency and her determination to achieve fairness for all persons. Her life has left us richer and in a better country.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak in honour of the life of a distinguished member of Parliament, an officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Privy Council of Canada, Pauline Jewett.

Although Ms. Jewett spent most of her years in this House as a member of the NDP caucus she began her House of Commons career in 1963 as the elected Liberal member for my riding of Northumberland. Although she was born in St. Catharines, Ontario, she felt a kinship for the village of Brighton in my riding where several of her relatives lived.

As relayed to me by constituents, Pauline was a very self-directed person, bright yet very personable, and an inspiration to many. She determined to seek the Liberal nomination in Northumberland and to this day she is remembered fondly in Northumberland by many of all political stripes.

Pauline not only made her mark in Northumberland but across Canada. As a member of the NDP caucus she held critic portfolios in external affairs, arms control and disarmament, post-secondary education and federal-provincial relations, among others. Pauline was also a very strong advocate of women's issues and rights and we owe her much for advancing women's legitimate role in Canadian society.

Pauline Jewett was the first female elected as a member of Parliament for the riding of Northumberland and certainly broke important ground for me as a female successor some 25 years later. It was not an insignificant feat to become a female member in the rural conservative riding of Northumberland in 1963.

We remember Pauline Jewett for her many contributions to Canada, especially to post-secondary education. I personally remember her vividly and fondly for the phone call of congratulations I received from Pauline shortly after my election. She spoke affectionately of her former riding of Northumberland and with pleasure that once again a woman held that seat.

As she maintained a special affection for Northumberland, so many constituents remember Pauline Jewett with a similar affection and with respect for her many accomplishments.

We are the richer for her contributions.

May her family and friends be healed of the sorrow of her loss with the memory of the important contributions that Pauline Jewett made to Canadian society.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in this tribute to Pauline Jewett.

Both the member for Yukon and the member for Northumberland referred to her previous career both in the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party. The member for Yukon mentioned her both as a politician and as a professor.

I first knew her as my professor when I was at Carleton University. She was my supervisor when I was doing my thesis essay. Through that experience I came to know much about her commitment to issues, public life, and public policy formation.

The thesis that I was working on concerned the role of public opinion in Canada, its formation and its influence on Parliament and public policy making. Certainly a lot that I came to understand about that, which subsequently gave rise to things like my initiative here with a referendum on a plebiscite bill, goes back to some lessons that were learned with Pauline Jewett out at the Rideau River campus of Carleton University in the early and mid-1960s.

In concluding, I would like mention the song of another woman from British Columbia, Ann Mortifee. In one of her lyrics she talks about the fact that life is not confined by time. Pauline Jewett in her experience

andlife voyage has shown us that. She has also shown us that political commitment is not confined by party or by party boundaries.

More important than party boundaries is a commitment to fundamental principles. That was the hallmark of her career throughout. It is fitting that these tributes are being paid to her at a time when in the House of Commons, which she served so nobly for so many years, we are setting aside party differences to concentrate on something fundamental like the formation of Canadian public opinion about our country and its future.

In a broad sense that is a way that all of us as parliamentarians through our words and actions in this place today are paying tribute to what Pauline Jewett stood for.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the late Pauline Jewett.

I had a chance to get to know her and work closely with her for a number of years. I regarded her as a close personal friend, as I know many other members did. She was a great Canadian who made a great contribution to this country and had a very distinguished public career. She was also a very warm individual, a very outgoing and friendly human being. She touched and moved thousands of people whom she came in contact with over her lifetime.

I know all members of this House join in paying tribute to the contribution she made to this country and the impact that she had on our lives and those of so many others in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: I want to express my thanks to hon. members for the comments that have been made. Perhaps I can also observe that I knew our former colleague very well, especially during her years in British Columbia.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my point of order concerns the failure of the minister of Indian affairs to comply with Standing Order 109.

Point of Order

That Standing Order requires the government to respond to a report of a standing or special committee within 150 days, if the committee requests such a response at the time the report is tabled in the House.

On February 13, 1992, at page 6919 of *Hansard*, the chairman of the Select Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs tabled the second report of the committee relating to the Arctic exiles of Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island.

The chairman made the request, pursuant to section 109, that the government table a comprehensive response within 150 days. I have checked with the minister's office and with the Journals Branch. To my count 210 days have now passed and the government is seriously in violation of Standing Order 109. The minister is saying that he refuses to meet with the Grise Fiord people until the report is tabled in the House and on the other hand he refuses to table the report in the House, contrary to the Standing Orders.

• (1520)

I would urge you, Mr. Speaker, to investigate this matter and to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the government respects the Standing Orders of Parliament.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I had not had any knowledge of this particular issue. I will certainly take it under immediate advisement and endeavour to get back to my friend at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members know that under the particular rule which has been raised by the hon. member for Comox—Alberni there is no sanction that the Speaker can apply. In these matters I am dependent upon the goodwill of ministers and the government to do everything they can to comply with the Standing Order.

I note that the hon. parliamentary secretary has answered for the government and I would hope that that would resolve the problem. I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Clark (Yellowhead) (pp. 12785-6).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte for seven minutes.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, to begin I will pick up where I left off on Tuesday, September 8. Under Standing Order 31 I did have a few comments on the national referendum.

In my comments on Tuesday afternoon I pointed out that the question we will be facing as Canadians on October 26 will be very simple and very straightforward. At that time, not knowing exactly what the question would be, I suggested it might be as follows: "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached August 28, 1992? Yes or No". That will in fact be the question we will be addressing on October 26. Canadians will have to decide if the answer is yes or no.

One of the things I pointed out in my comments was that although the question itself is simple and straightforward, the constitutional package that we will in fact be voting on is rather complex. There will be many Canadians, in fact there are many Canadians today, asking what is in that package and wondering if they will know on October 26 exactly what they are voting on.

This will be the first time in 50 years that Canadians have had a chance to express themselves through a national referendum. That question concerning whether they will know is a very important one. That is where we as members of Parliament come in. Many of us in the last couple of days in the House have taken the opportunity to step through the package and attempt to explain in our own way what we see in it.

That is what we will have to do back in our constituencies as well. That is what I am committing myself to do back in my home riding of Carleton—Charlotte. In other ridings around the country if I am invited to speak I will.

This is really a follow-up to a consultation process. We are going back almost two years, spending at least 17 months on this whole process of constitutional renewal. We all know what has happened in the last couple of years.

As suggested this morning by, I believe it was the hon member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, after the collapse of Meech Lake he said that the message was to go to another lake. As he suggested, and I suggest, they did that. The Canadian people did. We have done it together. We have moved on from that and we have gone through a very lengthy consultative process.

We have gone through the various committees and the Spicer commission. Provincial governments have done the same thing. Individual members of Parliament have gone back to their constituencies and have carried that process forward as well, wanting to know the views of individual Canadians on the Constitution.

I did that as a member of Parliament in Carleton—Charlotte. We had 20 such meetings in my constituency. We started out late last fall and into the early winter months. I had a chance to hear what my constituents thought. It was a very helpful and healthy process.

The logical conclusion to this is for members of Parliament to get out into their constituencies and explain the proposals. Much of what we discussed in those late autumn days of 1991 and early winter months of 1992 are in these proposals and that is very refreshing.

Obviously much has been left out and there is some in there we do not agree with, but it will be up to me and others who will join me to explain what is in there so when our constituents from coast to coast go out on October 26 they will have a real sense of what they are voting for. That is the challenge for me and other members here.

It is refreshing to see we are going to do this on a non-partisan basis. In those constitutional meetings I had late last fall and early last winter I invited our provincial members of the legislature to join me in those discussions. They did for the most part, as did mayors and councillors from the municipalities and ordinary folk. They did that. They responded well.

We are going to carry that process forward in the rural riding of Carleton—Charlotte. Many have already accepted the invitation to join me in explaining the package to the people of Carleton—Charlotte and indeed, the people of Canada. It is important that we understand this package when we go out to vote on it.

I want to quote from an article by Peter Newman in the September 14, 1992 issue of *Maclean's* magazine. I think he sums it up best when he says: "The real issue of the October 26 referendum is deciding whether we have a future, not the shape of what the future will be". It goes on and concludes by saying: "Maybe the 20th century never really did belong to us. But if we do not as a country vote yes on October 26, we will not belong to the 21st century".

I do not think any of us could put it any better. It is incumbent upon us to get out there, work through this process, bring it to its logical conclusion. The logical conclusion of this very consultative process is to support a united and strong Canada that will lead us into the 21st century. If we can do that, maybe we will preserve this nation for at least another 125 years.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for sharing his time with me. It was very gracious of him and I will try to use the time wisely.

• (1530)

October 26 is a very important day for Canada. We have gone through endless discussions on the Constitution over the last number of years. At one point during the infamous Meech Lake talks it looked as if Canada was going to have a resolution of this, at least for the time being. However, for various reasons that did not come about. Over the last couple of years a number of lessons were learned from the failure of Meech Lake. As a result, Canada is now looking at substantial improvements on that agreement.

One of the lessons we learned goes to the heart of the referendum before the House today in which the people will be participating on October 26. That is it is critically important that the public of Canada be allowed into the process of Constitution making. It was simply unsatisfactory for constitutions to be dealt with exclusively by first ministers behind closed doors. We have now had an unprecedented public process which has brought us to where we are today.

We had the Spicer commission and the citizens' forums across Canada. Despite the cynicism, thousands of Canadians participated in those sessions. That produced a beginning of a change in the atmosphere which had been so poisoned by the failure of Meech Lake. This was followed by parliamentary committees which heard over 3,000 presentations and then decisions in this House as to the position we would take to the legislatures and across the country.

This summer first ministers spent hours working to come up with a package, an agreement which can be put to the people of Canada. Now, for the first time in our history, Canadians as individuals will vote on constitutional amendments that will eventually come back before this Parliament and the legislatures.

The final stage will come after the referendum takes place on October 26. That is the ratification of the decision of the voters on this constitutional measure. When that happens we can then turn our full attention to the other critical issues that face this country, jobs, the environment, the free trade agreement with Mexico, and so on. This is a very important process we are undertaking and it is a very important date for Canadians.

My experience in Victoria has been that most of the people I talked with until now have left the detailed discussions to those who have been involved. Therefore, there is yet to be detailed understanding and knowledge about what is in this agreement. There is an initial scepticism born from long experience that the system can produce anything of value. In that atmosphere there are voices already passing out myths about what is in this agreement.

It is said, for example, that Quebec has too much. It is said in British Columbia that British Columbia has too little. As well, it is said that this agreement seriously weakens the capacity of the federal government to provide the necessary leadership on national programs.

I have had a chance to review the agreement and I look forward to assisting my constituents in reviewing it carefully. Let me say the highlights in this agreement offer a real opportunity for Canadians to come together in a common understanding of our purpose as a country and to reform substantially the systems by which we govern ourselves.

This agreement provides for a renewed Canada clause, a new clause in the Constitution which sets out the fundamental characteristics of Canada. Not only does it include as it did at the time of Meech Lake a clear statement, an entirely justifiable statement that Quebec constitutes a distinct society within Canada which includes a French speaking majority, a unique culture and a civil law tradition it also acknowledges the commitment of this country to parliamentary and federal democracy, to the aboriginal people and the critical role they have played and the need to recognize their institutions and the integrity of their societies. It acknowledges the multicultural communities and goes on to acknowledge as well the individual and collective rights of Canadians.

The agreement provides for a social and economic union. It spells out the commitments of government not only to such things as the health care system, but also to free collective bargaining and to the rights of workers in this country.

The agreement deals with major reforms of our parliamentary institutions and these are very important gains. Above all, the agreement finally offers to our aboriginal people the fundamental rights to which they have been entitled within our Confederation and which so far have been denied them.

This is a very important agreement. I look forward to sharing the details with my constituents over the next few weeks and to working with those of whatever persuasion to see if this cannot be an important, clear and rational debate within our community.

Let me close by referring to a speech made in 1874 by the hon. Edward Blake. I am grateful to Hilda Judd of Calgary for providing this to me. My friends indicate he was a Liberal then and I knew that. But since then the New Democratic Party has come on the stage and I am sure he would have been particularly interested in what we have to offer. But all of us share the sentiment that he then offered when he said:

> The future of Canada, I believe, depends very largely upon the cultivation of a national spirit. We are engaged in a very difficult task—the task of welding together seven provinces—

That was said in Aurora in 1874. Since then we have gained three provinces and we have the territories and our aboriginal peoples. The issue remains today. We are building a nation and we are building a federal nation. It is an important task we set on today. I commend this agreement to the people of Victoria and to the people of Canada.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, recently a letter to the editor in *The Nanaimo Daily Free Press* quoted someone making the observation that there are people in Quebec who think they can get along very well without the rest of Canada and there are people in the rest of Canada who think that they can get along very well without the people of Quebec. The people would survive. I believe we would all be worse off but, whatever, we would not be Canadians. It would not be the Canada into which I was born and not the Canada into which you were born, Mr. Speaker, and not the Canada in which I have lived all of my life and expect to live the rest of my life.

I am very proud to live in Canada. I am very proud to be a Canadian. I am very proud that people know I am a Canadian when I travel. That is the kind of Canada I want to remember. That is the kind of Canada I want to continue. For that reason I am supporting this referendum. I will be voting in favour of it.

I am sorry there are people who feel otherwise. They have the right to their opinion. In my opinion, they have the right to be wrong. I could not help but agree totally with my hon. colleague, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, when he took issue with those who, for political advantage, are attacking the government leadership in the province of British Columbia.

The premier of British Columbia was one of the 16 at the table bargaining, giving and taking, on behalf of Canada as a whole. To try to destroy that person is to try to destroy the referendum result in British Columbia. What would be the result? How would we interpret it if, when the referendum ballots are cast and counted, we find that British Columbia has voted against accepting that referendum? I think that would be a very bad situation for Canada and very bad for British Columbia. Trying to destroy that premier for partisan political advantage, as important as that may be to some of us, is doing a disservice to British Columbia and a disservice to Canada as a whole.

I must separate from the group of government backbenchers, the hon. member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, because of the way he spoke in the House today. He blasted critics of Premier Harcourt. He

knows that in blasting Premier Harcourt what they are trying to do, without saying so, without admitting it, without having the intestinal fortitude to come here and say it, is saying they really do not like it and they want the referendum to be defeated although they do not have the nerve to stand up in the House and vote against it.

• (1540)

I intend to do what I can to see that a Canada Yes Committee is established in my riding. I intend to do as much as I can to see that it will be widely representative of the people of that constituency. I intend to make myself available to that committee, to speak anywhere and everywhere in the riding where I am invited so that I can tell people how I feel about Canada, about how I feel about the referendum.

I was never so proud of a cabinet minister as I was when the minister of labour, the Hon. Moe Sihota, spoke at a public meeting in my riding a couple of months ago. In speaking about the Constitution he said that "there is no single issue which of itself is important enough that we should risk destroying Canada because we can't achieve our ultima". That is what the leader of the Liberal Party is saying in British Columbia. He has an ultima, a single issue. Because he cannot have that, he thinks that the government of British Columbia should have walked away from the deal and destroyed Canada.

It is not worth the price. We have to do what we can to preserve this nation. I do not think when this is all resolved, and I am hoping it will be resolved soon, that the people of Canada are going to notice very much difference the morning after, the week after, the month after or the year after. The economic problems besetting this nation are the ones that will make them feel differently now and into the future, until we do something about them.

Let us get this behind us. Let us vote in favour of the referendum so that we do have a country that can hold up its head among the nations of the world, setting the kinds of standards that Canada has become famous for: in social services, in peacekeeping. There are important jobs that we as a nation can do that we could not do if we were to fall apart or separate deliberately. We would be weakened tremendously, and the world would lose as well as Canadians. That must not happen.

I believe the way to save it for the present is to vote in favour of this referendum. That will give us time. We can always sort this out in the future. We might even decide to send the Constitution back to Westminster and let them look after it. It was not nearly as much trouble when it was there.

In the meantime we have to start talking about economic problems, dealing with economic issues, dealing with unemployment. Once we get this behind us, surely then the government will have no reason, no excuse, for not dealing with the real problems facing Canadians today.

I will be doing what I can to support this referendum in my riding and I will do everything I can to make sure that it passes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, while Canada ranks first world-wide among 167 UN nations for quality of life, this government put the future of our country in the hands of the people.

It is normally the job of the elected representatives to administer and manage the business of the country in the interest of its people. Now, for some exceptional reason, we the elected representatives are asking the people of Canada to decide what they want from this country. What kind of constitution do they want? Would they agree that the Constitution of Canada be renewed on the basis of the agreement the premiers has reached in Charlottetown on August 28?

The proposal before us today is not a haphazard one. Let us be reminded of how hard is has been for many Quebecers to find the will to go on following the failure of Meech.

I come from a fiercely nationalist region, the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the riding of Jonquière to be more precise, where being nationalistic has come to take two meanings over the years. For some, to be a nationalist means to advocate a sovereign Quebec. For others like me, it does not necessarily mean that. It means defending the interests of your province and trying to the best of your abilities and talents to guarantee that your province can develop and progress within Canadian federalism.

Many wanted to give up after the failure of Meech Lake. The Prime Minister asked several members of his caucus, including myself, to try again to renew our Constitution and to find solutions to our problems. We had two options: to try again or to give up and throw in the towel.

For my part, I took up the challenge to defend the interests of my province as a member of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee and then of the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee.

It took a lot of courage on the part of the Prime Minister to make such a decision, but he wanted Canadian unity and he had the courage to want to try. Because of this several of my colleagues from the opposition parties and from the government met a large number of individual Canadians and representatives of various organizations. We listened to what they wanted for their country and to their suggestions on how to amend the Constitution.

It is only human for a member or a chairman of a committee to hope that the decisions of the government will reflect exactly what was recommended in the committee report. It is only human and quite natural. However, should we say no simply because the contents of the constitutional proposal does not reflect exactly our own recommendations? What we must do is evaluate the agreement. This is our responsibility. We must evaluate it.

Let me give an example. The chairman of the Allaire Committee simply gave up because the agreement does not contain all of his own recommendations. He simply gave up and said: I cannot agree to that. There is the matter of the environment, for instance. Mr. Allaire wanted the environment to come under provincial jurisdiction. The people of Jonquière are well aware of the fact that the environment and pollution know no boundaries. It cannot come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. It is impossible.

In negotiations we have to ask for a number of things and afterwards see if the contents of the agreement as a whole give us enough of what we wanted.

I am a Quebecer. Let us look at the proposal. What does it contain for Quebecers? What are we being offered? We are offered a veto on Senate reform. Quebec has wanted for years to make it impossible for the other provinces to change the Senate without our agreement because we are one of the co–founding peoples of this nation. Today this is what we are being offered. We are being offered a veto on any change to the House of Commons. Under the present Constitution seven provinces could decide, for instance, that there will no longer be proprotional representation in the House of Commons. They could decide on equal representation for each province. Such a decision could be made by seven provinces and without our agreement. This proposal offers us a veto on any future change to the House of Commons.

Third, Quebec is being offered 25 per cent of all seats in the House of Commons from now on. Why is that important? Each year, a large number of immigrants are admitted to Canada. They can go to any province. Under an agreement on immigration which will now be entrenched in the Constitution Quebec can accept between 25 and 30 per cent of the total number of immigrants admitted to Canada each year. However, these immigrants do not have to remain in Quebec once they are there. They can go elsewhere, to any other province, and vice versa.

There is no guarantee that Quebec will always represent a quarter of the population of Canada. In spite of that the other provinces and premiers agree that Quebecers will always hold one–quarter of the seats in the House of Commons. This is very important. We would have a quarter of the seats in the House. A majority of 50 percent plus one is needed to pass an act in the House of Commons. Since we are assigned 25 percent of the seats, we represent half of the votes required to pass or reject any bill in the House of Commons. In the future Quebec members would be, for all practical purposes, protected against any form of abuse from future governments. We only have to consult with each other. We have the tool we need in our hands. How will we use it? It is up to us to use it to shape our future.

• (1550)

I have another point. We are being offered a veto over any change to the Supreme Court to be composed of nine members, of whom three must be from Quebec. This is another permanent form of protection. It is important because this country was founded in 1867 by two peoples: francophones from Quebec and anglophones from other provinces. Over the years, since there

are now 20 million English Canadians and 6 million of us, Quebecers have asked for such a protection.

The constitutional offer that will be put to a vote on October 26 finally recognizes Quebec as a distinct society. Section 2 of the Constitution would be amended to read "Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society, which includes a French speaking majority, a unique culture and a civil law tradition". Another important clause has been added: "The role of the legislature and Government of Quebec to preserve and promote the distinct society of Quebec is affirmed". To those who claim the term distinct is not good or strong enough, I say this: should a Quebec law concerning our language ever be challenged before the Supreme Court of Canada? We could as Quebecers use the distinct society clause to justify such a law. If the Supreme Court rejected our arguments we could still invoke the notwithstanding clause to tell the judges: Notwithstanding your decision to declare our law unconstitutional we will keep it. We enjoy a double protection.

Furthermore—and Quebecers and Canadians alike must realize this—when we were sitting on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, the first ministers and lobby groups were telling us not to impose something against their will while insisting they wanted the same as Quebec. It was pretty difficult to deal with.

The distribution of powers as provided for in the constitutional offer meets this demand. How? Any province can ask the federal government to withdraw from areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction such as mining, tourism, forestry, recreation, housing and urban affairs. At the request of a province, the federal government would be obligated to withdraw. It would then be required to negotiate how to provide reasonable compensation. All this would be entrenched in the Constitution for five years.

Any other province preferring the federal government to remain involved can stay that way. This is what I call flexibility. To those who say that it is not good enough because it is only for five years, I say think again. The Constitution will be around for a long time. The 1867 Constitution lasted until 1982 before getting a facelift and even today we see how difficult it is.

If we had an intergovernmental agreement giving us back a certain power with all the related responsibilities, we would be stuck with it forever. We could even have done ourselves a disservice. The proposed formula gives us more flexibility. It would allow a province to make corrections as the need arises. It meets Quebecers' expectations. We want more powers. Others may want less than we do. It is their choice. But let us look at the offer on the table.

Let us now talk about the aboriginal issue. In 1867 those who preceded us drafted a constitution that did not include the aboriginal peoples. Today we want to correct that mistake. We recognize that the aboriginal peoples have the inherent right to self-government with basic forms of protection. Just what is important? It is always to try to correct or avoid, as much as possible, any abuse of power by anybody. We have benchmarks regarding what is looming on the horizon for aboriginal peoples, namely that the legislation will always have to conform with the notion of order and good government. It is even provided that, as the aboriginal peoples gradually take control of their destiny, they will be able to contribute financially, in proportion with the resources that they have.

The fact that the aboriginal peoples blossom within our society does not take anything away from me as a Canadian; on the contrary, it makes me grow. I grow when people next to me improve their lot. To recognize that the most beautiful country in the world can continue to move forward while respecting the needs of everyone as well as the characteristics of its different provinces.

I notice that I only have a few minutes left. I want Quebecers to think seriously before saying no. If we say no to this offer it means that we say no to something that I have been trying to get for a very long time: a veto on the reform of institutions, a guarantee providing for 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons, the enshrinement of our agreement on immigration, as well as other powers.

I took a close look at the accord. I did not read it only once. Of course there are times when we would like to get more in life, but there also comes a time when you have to look at what is offered. For Quebecers, this is a good offer. It is interesting. We have guarantees concerning our language, our development as well as the

characteristics of the country and our own as francophones from Quebec.

When you have all this you have the necessary tools to continue to blossom as Quebecers. Before rejecting all this let us ask ourselves this question: Has that country served us that badly? Honestly, the answer is no. We come first among 167 countries in the world in terms of quality of life.

I intend to support this agreement in my riding of Jonquière, elsewhere in Quebec and also in Canada. I believe that this time a majority of Quebecers, and particularly people from the Saguenay—Lac St-Jean region, will say yes to Canada.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, the question that the government tabled yesterday reflects the true nature of behind the scenes dealings in Charlottetown. It is an acknowledgment of the failure of federal-provincial negotiations, an acknowledgment of impotence when faced with the renewal of Canada, because the Charlottetown accord is somewhat a real house of cards; the more you blow on it, the more it crumbles.

Without a real agreement the government, in collusion with Liberals and New Democrats, wants to ask Canadians and Quebecers to sign a blank cheque. Whatever my former colleagues from the Conservative Party are saying we are very far from the Meech Lake accord substance. The Meech Lake accord was subjected to a real constitutional diet. The Meech baby was not very fat in the first place. We can imagine how he looked after the drastic diet and deprivation of a few days imposed on it in Charlottetown. The five minimal conditions became trifle. Indeed, eight distinguished constitutional specialists from Quebec examined the distinct society clause and concluded it was a setback for Quebec. Surely they cannot all be wrong, and I say this for the benefit of the member for Jonquière. The distinct society concept has been completely diminished. The only distinctness remaining is culture, language and civil law. Quebec's distinctness is far more than that. Quebec is also a distinct society in the social and economic sense. Consider its social measures, including health insurance; measures affecting labour relations, such as anti-scab legislation, legislation to regulate real estate transactions, credit unions and so forth.

• (1600)

At the time of the *beau risque* which the Prime Minister of Canada likes to recall, René Lévesque stressed the importance of recognizing the existence of Quebec as a people in the Constitution. The concept of two founding peoples has now been swept aside in favour of provincial equality. Genuine special status has been obtained only by small provinces like Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

The distinct society, which was to be the subject of an interpretive clause, is lost in the Canada clause which says that governments are committed to the vitality and development of official language communities.

Political scientist Léon Dion, who has been advising Premier Bourassa and Minister Gil Rémillard during the constitutional talks, expressed his apprehension with respect to Bill 101, especially concerning the language on signs and the language of work. If the agreement is ratified, Bill 101 might become a target for people who feel frustrated. Quebec wanted veto rights over any changes that might affect Quebec's role within federal institutions, the structure of those institutions and their jurisdiction, the appointment of members of these institutions and the creation of new provinces. Instead, we now have only bits and pieces of a veto that is no longer significant and, more important, no veto over the creation of new provinces.

As for the division of powers, Quebec now has fewer powers than it had at the beginning of Confederation in 1867. What was supposed to bring Quebec back into the constitutional fold with honour and enthusiasm has now become a millstone around its neck. What the draft agreement gives Quebec with one hand, it takes away with the other. All this for a few more seats in the House of Commons which is no guarantee that Quebec's superior interests will be defended. Remember the patriation of the Constitution in 1982. At the time, with more than 28 per cent of Quebec members in the House, of which almost 50 per cent were part of the Liberal caucus, the party in power, Prime Minister Trudeau negotiated the unilateral patriation of the Constitution, without Quebec, thus creating the unfortunate situation we have now.

Perhaps I may recall that at the time, Quebec members voted in favour of this proposal, although the Quebec National Assembly objected almost unanimously.

Although my former colleagues in the Quebec Conservative caucus can boast the same membership as their Liberal counterparts in 1982, they nevertheless ignored Quebec's demands with respect to environmental issues during the debate on Bill C-13. They ignored Quebec claims during the debate on Bill C-62 on telecommunications and the same applies to the federal government's recent intrusions into the areas of education, health and regional development.

In this week's *L'Actualité*, Quebec Communications Minister Lisa Frulla-Hébert says in a very outspoken article, and I quote:

"If the Minister of Communications of Canada were a Quebecer, he would wonder about the federal government's lack of respect for Quebec's cultural priorities".

She adds: "I saw during my trip to Seville this summer the gap between the Canadian and Quebec conceptions of our culture and societies. The Imax movie showed Canada as a land defined by its vast open spaces, its multiculturalism and its native people. There was no mention of a country founded by two great cultures, past and present. Nowhere is the existence of a French Quebec mentioned".

So says this Liberal minister of the Quebec government in this week's *Actualité*.

The August 28 agreement renews the main elements of the July 7 accord negotiated by the federal and provincial governments except Quebec.

In fact, the only guarantee offered by the agreement means we would remain a minority forever.

The slim guarantee of 25 per cent of seats can only get smaller as representatives of the territories and the aboriginal people will be added.

We are a long way from Quebec's traditional demands of the last 30 years.

Before this agreement Quebec had three options: some were opting for the *status quo*, others for a genuine renewal of the Canadian federation, while the majority preferred sovereignty.

Whatever their preference, all Quebecers have a duty to say no to this agreement.

For some, rejecting the agreement means going back to the *status quo*.

For others, rejecting the agreement means scrapping this so-called constitutional renewal and forcing politicians to go back to work.

For others still, rejecting the agreement means calling for a real debate on sovereignty.

All Quebecers must reject this agreement that leads nowhere.

This is an agreement whose clauses are being challenged even before the legal text becomes available, an agreement that is only a rough draft.

From the drawers of water we did not want to be are we going to become permanent beggars of federal-provincial accords in our own areas of jurisdiction?

No, Quebec deserves better than this.

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in the discussions that have led to the Charlottetown agreement.

It is not often that a group of people with sometimes very different interests, such as the Prime Minister of Canada, the premiers of all the provinces, the representatives of the aboriginal peoples, and the leaders of Yukon and the Northwest Territories, can get together and reach a consensus, particularly on an issue as crucial as the future of the country.

I also want to aknowledge the important contribution made by my leader.

As the member representing Acadie—Bathurst, a riding in the only bilingual province in Canada, I am pleased that at last the substance of Bill C-88, an act recognizing the equal status of the two official linguistics communities in New-Brunswick, would be enshrined in the Constitution.

This element of the agreement reached in Charlottetown is a major gain for the Acadian people in my province. There is no doubt that those who want to find flaws, shortcomings or omissions in this accord can easily do so.

In fact perfection is a rare thing and it never happens in politics. If we want to look for a winner, let us say that all of Canada is the big winner in this last round of negotiations because I am convinced that we have succeeded in preserving our country.

I do not hesitate to express my profound belief that a united and strong Canada is more indispensable to the four Atlantic provinces than to any other region of the country for obvious reasons.

We must not be naïve. Do we want a Canada that goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic? Or, do we want to run the great risk of dismantling bit by bit this great country and have nothing left? The choice is clear. The answer can only be yes to the question: "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?"

[*English*]

Our world is undergoing as dramatic a change as any since the birth of the nation-state. All over the planet people are demanding independence. Too many are dying for their dream of statehood and at least here in Canada we can still debate our differences.

The evolving world political order demands of us that we be a model of how diversity can be welded together to create a strong and prosperous nation.

We had best take a close look at what is happening here at home, analyse the problems and consider what kind of future we face in this country. Listen to the despair of the Atlantic fishermen and plant workers. Hear the resignation in the voices of the unemployed from coast to coast. Feel the frustration of the young men and women from Quebec who cannot understand why their identity is being questioned and bargained over like so many poker chips. Listen to the men and women from the prairies who had their hopes of being equal partners in Confederation dashed over and over again. Recognize the anger of thousands who have lost their jobs in manufacturing in Ontario who are told "it is all right, Jack".

Most of all, beware of the undisguised contempt for the political process held by Canadians from St. John's to Victoria.

If we listened to the people, we would hear a simple message. They are angry. They are profoundly alienated but thankfully they still believe in the country though not necessarily in its politicians or the system.

Canadians despair because their political institutions are not working. They are disillusioned because the *ad hoc* process of constitutional reform over the past 15 years has failed to adequately address their concerns and their needs. Those involved in fine tuning the Constitution, which should lead Canada confidently into the next century, have spent much of their time and their energies not on improving Canadian national institutions and our political structures in the best interest of Canadians but on shuffling the deck, on redefining federal-provincial relations, never really addressing the underlying fundamental reason for the crisis in confidence that is eroding the fabric of Canada.

The political pendulum continues to swing between federal and provincial interests. The price has been the alienation of the people of Canada from their governments and their politicians. That is the source of the deep malaise in Canada.

Economic, social and political problems are traumatic and painful but more dangerous still is the lack of hope, the absence of trust and the discouragement of Canadians upon realizing our political system seemingly is incapable of dealing resolutely with deeply felt concerns.

Our protracted constitutional debate has demonstrated just how out of touch we are with what Canadians are really troubled about. Years have been spent trying to codify what nearly all of us already know and accept, namely that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society, that aboriginal people have a right to self-government, that an elected Senate should have real power and that Canada should be an open and free economy from sea to sea to sea.

Everyone wants reform but reform of what? I believe reform must begin at the heart of the political system in Parliament itself. We must reform the Senate and also the House of Commons. To do this we must be prepared to reveal the failings of our system.

We must explain why elected members of Parliament do not play a meaningful role in the governing process, why the House of Commons is a rubber stamp and why

we have allowed the executive to usurp the legislative functions of government.

When there was agreement to reduce the number of Senators, the size of the House of Commons should have been decreased, not increased. The charade must end that ordinary MPs on all sides of this House exercise any real power of any kind.

Canadians want a democratic Parliament. We need a responsible government and accountable politicians. Surely Canadians are creative enough to devise a system of government that will combine the best elements of the various models we are very familiar with.

Until this happens we will not be able to encourage more capable and competent men and women to participate in the political process and confidence will not be restored in our institutions.

Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail and we will have much to answer for because we have had every opportunity to get it right.

Canadians want to continue to survive as a nation where people have overcome diversity of language, culture, ethnic origin and religion and lived together in relative harmony.

There is no doubt in my mind that we must agree to answer the referendum question that is before us in the affirmative, but we had better begin the process of restoring integrity and credibility to our political institutions. Any student of history will tell you that great nations are not the result of constitutional, legalistic arrangements, but rather are the achievements of men and women committed toward working together to create a system of government truly responsive to the needs and aspirations of its people and to the building of a society that strives to achieve the ultimate goal of providing everyone of its citizens with an equal opportunity to live in peace, prosperity and dignity

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, it is quite difficult in the eight minutes allotted to members on this side to try to begin to discuss what is the premier piece of federal legislation for Canada, its Constitution.

For the benefit of this debate we have an onus to distinguish between the constitutional package and the constitutional process.

On the process, we are voting later this evening on a referendum question to be put to Canadians. I recall as early as last year that we as a national party and our leader as the national leader were alone in advocating a national referendum. Many people and experts thought that would never see the light of day. Others suggested we were only posturing in terms of calling for a national vote.

We took that seriously simply because it is our firm and unshakeable belief that the Constitution in the end belongs to the people. There needs to be that voice. There needs to be the consultation with the shareholders of this public company called Canada. It cannot simply be run by the chief executive officer or its board of directors which we are.

I do not think we should quibble with one or two words in this evening's question on the referendum because quite frankly by the end of the 36-day debate, Canadians from one coast to the other will certainly size up the stakes and the consequences of voting one way or another and not necessarily on the meaning of one word or another.

It is also important in that process not to castigate Canadians for raising particular concerns, that they are no less Canadians, that they are not small Canadians, or little Canadians, or enemies of Canada as they have been referred to earlier by the Prime Minister, or not to coerce Canadians into voting one way or another.

I have received calls, for instance, that a number of ethnic organizations are quite uncomfortable with being called by the political staff of the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship to ensure they vote the right way, the yes way, and at the same time talk about funding from the federal government to that particular organization for the coming year. The message is very clear but it is also a message that is quite intimidating and quite improper.

On the package, our leader and our party in April, 1991 came up with a nine-point constitutional framework that not only guided our deliberations to this moment but also was utilized as a measuring stick by which we would measure any constitutional proposal.

The deal we are discussing this evening and for the referendum campaign is not a perfect deal and no one should pretend perfection. It is also at the same time not perfect to our nine Liberal points and we on this side are not pretending it is either. We also have to recognize

fairly and squarely there are a number of victories contained in this constitutional proposal.

The first is the referendum that allows Canadians to decide the future course of their country and their Constitution.

The second one is the unanimity that was achieved by all representatives around that constitutional negotiating table.

Third, the Quebec government on behalf of Quebecers and Canadians in Quebec has signalled a yes that it is in the constitutional tent, not out of it, and I think that is highly significant.

Fourth, the distinct society clause has been defined and has gone a long way in trying to address properly the concerns flowing out of Meech that Canadians had perhaps with the concept of special status for some Canadians in one region of the country. By its very definition it tends to be more limiting as opposed to being more expansive.

• (1620)

Fifth, the entrenchment of aboriginal self-government is a landmark and an extension of our nation's hand to the aboriginal community of Canada, a hand that reflects the best in respect and in tolerance, which is Canada.

Sixth, the principles of linguistic duality are protected unlike in the earlier Meech Lake accord, which means that the French language will not be ghettoized and relegated only to Quebec and the English language in the other nine provinces, but rather, as our leader has always eloquently said across this country, you can be comfortable whether you are French Canadian or English Canadian or Italian Canadian in any part of this great country.

Seventh, a Canada clause that describes the fundamental values of who we are as a people and is much more inclusive than was the opening preamble of the Meech Lake accord which talked basically of two fundamental characteristics. Now all of its people and the breadth which is Canada are included in that opening Canada clause that does us proud.

There are concerns. We have talked about them. We have talked about the fact that there is not an economic union package. We have also talked about the fact that the Senate has lost a great deal of effectiveness in order to achieve equality. It is our hope and intention to try to modify those shortcomings, but on balance those shortcomings do not outweigh the victories that I and others have spoken about.

In closing, it must be said that since the Prime Minister opened this file in 1987 we cannot ignore the role that the five-year time period has played in today's equation as we consider a referendum campaign in two ways: fatigue and the situation in Quebec. I am not suggesting that fatigue should be a motivation for voting or changing our Constitution but it is an undeniable variable of this equation and it is also something that translates into frustration by Canadians because they feel the government has spent so much political capital, so much political energy in the constitutional dossier to the detriment of an economy that is aggravating the lives of Canadians.

In my own city the unemployment rate is higher than the national average and highest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. That is why Parliament should continue to sit.

On the situation in Quebec, in 1987 we were told that we needed to overlook the deficiencies of Meech Lake in order to allow Quebec to be pulled back from the edge of that political constitutional cliff. I did not believe that it was at the cliff then, nor did many Canadians. Now, after five years of debate, now that Quebec is finally at the table, now that Quebecers are waiting for that offer, now that Quebec has its own rendezvous with its own referendum and now that we have a federal wing of the separatist Parti Quebecois, namely the Bloc Quebecois, to say no to this deal would be to allow the separatists in Quebec to push Quebecers to the edge of the cliff.

In summary, on October 26 I will be voting yes to Canada and yes to a Quebec within Canada. I urge my constituents to participate, to involve themselves, to speak up, to read the document and then choose the one option that is in Canada's interests for its future, and for their own future in Canada.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will not be surprised that I want to register right from the outset my very strong and unequivocal support for the proposition that we are debating here this afternoon and which will lead to a vote later on in the evening.

It has been a long and arduous process. We are all a bit fatigued but perhaps not more so than the Canadian general public itself.

At the same time I am sure we have all had the experience I have had that every time we talked about the Constitution to one of our constituents we would have a response of frustration with the ongoing interminable process. Yet, as soon as those frustrations were expressed, people would give their own version of what their perfect model of a Canadian Constitution should be.

We have all learned over these many months and years that there is no perfect model that would satisfy all the legitimate needs and all the aspirations of all of us, no matter where we live in this great country or the different interest or ethnic groups to which we might belong.

We live in the largest country in the world, which is also by all objective criteria the most prosperous country in the world. I ask whether it does not stand to reason that our predecessors and perhaps we ourselves in our modest way have not done a few things right to bring us to this enviable position.

We are a very young country relative to the other democracies after which we have fashioned our public institutions. When you think about it in terms of our Constitution we are also among the older countries of the world in the sense that we have not changed our Constitution very much over the last 125 years.

As an example, let us look at Germany. It is an interesting comparison in the sense that it was precisely at the same time in 1867 that the northern German states first organized themselves into some kind of loose federation. Shortly thereafter, in 1871, the first German Reich was founded which in turn led to the so–called Weimar Republic. It in turn was followed by the Third Reich and after the war it turned into the two Germanies. Of course we all remember the dramatic events which in 1990 led to the reunification of Germany which gave form to the present federation.

One would hardly be inclined to envy the Germans for their eventful and colourful 125 year history. They did manage to relieve themselves of the kind of rigidity through these various reforms which we find necessary now to change in our own Constitution.

The historic facts which led us to where we are today date back much further than 125 years. They go back to 1763, the royal proclamation, which established a relationship between the settlers in the new world and the aboriginal people they would encounter. In 1774 the royal proclamation established certain rights the French would enjoy in the new world. The Quebec Act, 1791, dealt with language rights, the Napoleonic civil code and certain religious rights that would have to be granted to the French population in the new world.

To ignore or to attempt to wipe out these rigid historic facts would require nothing less than the kind of convulsive and revolutionary change that shaped the history of countries such as the one I mentioned earlier.

Canadians never had a taste for that kind of change. We are more inclined to agree to changes through consensus and through honourable compromise which requires tolerance and understanding and good will toward others. In fact, as some of our colleagues have mentioned, this is what we are known for throughout the world. This is what is distinctively Canadian. It is also what led to the accord which is now before us and which we are asking the consent of the House of Commons and the people of Canada to support on October 26.

Cartier said in 1867, and I quote him as did the Prime Minister yesterday:

> We sealed our pact without bloodshed and without exploitation of the weak by the strong. All it took was fairness, justice and some compromise on both sides.

Sir John A. Macdonald added:

> If we had not met in a spirit of conciliation and with an anxious overriding desire to form one country under one government we would never have succeeded.

In order to rally the Canadian people around the accord with the kind of conviction that we should all bring to it, we must not avoid speaking about the main irritants underlying the resistance we are experiencing from some quarters.

• (1630)

Bilingualism, the Official Languages Act and Bill 101 in Quebec are such irritants. I cannot make any excuses for the Quebec sign law except to say that perhaps had Quebec been included in the 1982 constitutional changes with the kind of reasonable guarantees which are included in this accord, I doubt that the Legislative Assembly in Quebec would have deemed it necessary to proceed with such laws, particularly since they were

deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I represent an area of the country where the Reform Party claims to have strong support. Bilingualism is one of the areas around which it is trying to mobilize dissent. The Reform Party members and their leaders are generous enough to accommodate the people in Quebec with their right to speak French all they want as long as they do not have it shoved down their throats, to use the expression these kinds of people normally use.

In other words, they want their right respected to speak only English. If Quebec people want to speak only French they say that is okay too. Incidentally the Reform Party is also in favour of a strong federal government, not two but one strong federal government.

Does it not stand to reason that it requires a bilingual Public Service in order to guarantee such rights to both the English and the French ethnic groupings? Is it not a fact that the Official Languages Act applies only to federal services to which all Canadians should be and must be entitled?

What I see in the Official Languages Act and the regulations that give it effect is nothing more than a guarantee of service from the federal government and its regulated service industries for every Canadian regardless of his or her choice of language.

Is there a cost to the federal taxpayer for this guarantee? The answer is yes, but this is the cost of having a united, strong and prosperous country.

If we wanted to draw another comparison with the European experience we should look at the European Community. The Maastricht treaty will lead the European Community by the year 2000 to a total integration of their economies, their trade, their monetary system. There will be no more liras, francs, marks and whatever other currencies there are in Europe. There will be one single currency, the ECU. There will be a single standard throughout Europe. A pharmacist from Portugal can open a shop in Manchester, England.

There is also and there always has been a clear understanding that there cannot be an integration of culture. There will always be French, English, Italian and all the other languages spoken. No attempt has ever been made to deprive someone of their culture, someone of his or her soul, which some people say language equates with.

Our friends in the Reform Party are talking about a new society, a new Canada. Will this new Canada be a more prosperous, more peaceful and secure Canada? Will it be a more tolerant and more compassionate Canada? We do know it will be a more God-fearing society if we listen to the leader of the Reform Party.

What about those of us who would prefer our God to be a loving God? We already know it will be a more fundamentally Christian society, but are there not enough signs around the world to indicate that religious fundamentalism is as much an obstacle to peace in the world as anything else?

Preston Manning's politics are the politics of another age, an age through which Canadians lived 50 years ago. I for one, and I am certain the majority of my constituents, have no taste to be reliving this age. People like myself who are neither of English or French extraction, particularly those for whom that fact is visible, are fearful of Preston Manning's politics and perhaps for good reason.

The changes that are now proposed will provide us with the opportunity to streamline our government structure and to streamline the operations and our relationship with the provinces, particularly in the area of avoiding duplication. In my own department or area of jurisdiction there was never a dispute about whose exclusive jurisdiction forestry should be. But the new deal allows us to better define a perhaps more legitimate role in forestry.

It will provide the provinces the opportunity to assist us in determining how we might best manage the international obligations that we have as custodians of 10 per cent of the planet's forests and how to best respond to our society's ever-changing needs and the values we attach to our forests; how we in Canada might be able to modify through research our practices in forestry to give meaning to the concept of sustainable development.

There will be opportunities to arrange bilateral arrangements that will have legal status and will be designed to meet both the national and the regional

interests and objectives in this critical area of our national life.

I look forward very much to negotiating and working with my colleagues through the Council of Forest Ministers and in a bilateral sense the different ministers of forestry throughout the country to accommodate a new deal.

I conclude my remarks on perhaps a very personal note. I came to this country 41 years ago at the age of 19 years. I came alone and brought with me only the dream that was inspired by what I knew and what I had learned and read about Canada. Incidentally I discovered to my surprise that I knew much more about the history of my adopted new homeland than what my children are now learning in school.

The same might be true for most post-war immigrants and that might be the reason why we have heard very little from any of the ethnic groupings in this debate. Not only are they aware of the historic facts that I have mentioned, the constrained constitutional reform process in which we were involved, but they also have a much deeper sense of appreciation of what this country can offer its citizens.

In my case I had the good fortune to launch a successful career in business together with my wife and family. I earned the privilege which all of us here enjoy, to be elected to the Parliament of Canada, and in my case to become a member of the Privy Council.

But my story by itself is not an exception. It is the story that is repeated and celebrated every day in every part of this great country as part of our national life. It is not a story you would find repeated anywhere else in the world, incidentally. It is a reflection of my Canada such as I want it preserved for my children and my grandchildren.

We can expect a resounding yes from the one-third of Canadians who were not as privileged as others were to have inherited this country by birth but who chose this country by themselves.

I will join our colleagues over the next few weeks, not so much to sell the accord to which we have agreed here in the House, but to explain it to the Canadian people and to appeal to their good will. I sense that there is a lot of good will in this country and that we will find a yes answer to our plea.

I too can find lots of flaws in the proposition we are now debating. But I also know that it represents the best possible, the fairest and the most honourable compromise that was possible.

I congratulate sincerely our Prime Minister whose exceptional skills, strong conviction, his passionate love for our country and his faith in a united Canada were, after all, the glue and the bond that brought it all together. I would like to congratulate the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs and thank all of the premiers, the native leaders and the territorial leaders who sat around the table and who deserve our thanks.

History will be extremely kind to all of them.

• (1640)

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the question we are debating today is the following one:

> Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

In the minute amount of time that I have been allotted to speak on this question and on the broader question of the accord, I do not intend to get into lofty constitutional discussions but I do want to make a few comments from my perspective first as a lawyer and second as a representative of the people who live in the riding of Scarborough West.

As a lawyer I have come to respect the value of words, what they mean and how they are used. I look at this question and I see a word which offends me. The methodology of the use of the word and the attempt to manipulate which offends me. The word is renewed.

One might ask: Why quibble with words? My answer to that is that the way we communicate, the way we convince ourselves, is through the use of the word, spoken or written. We have seen in the very recent past how the courts have interpreted words, how they have written meanings in where there were no such meanings, and how they have taken words out that were written in. Therefore it is very important to be as precise as possible when using words.

There was no need to use the word renewed in this question. A simple word which would have made the question completely neutral would have been: Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be amended on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992? It should have been amended instead of renewed. Renewed puts this sort of who would be against renewal spin on it. That to me is an attempt to manipulate, that is to play us, myself, my constituents and the people of Canada, for fools. I personally resent it.

Is that going to be enough for me to vote against this question? Of course not, because I believe that this question should go to the people of Canada and should be considered by them.

However, I want to put on record that it is unnecessary for the Prime Minister of this country to fool with words when a simple neutral question could have attained the same results.

Let me take a few minutes to talk about the Charlottetown accord. Many constituents have called my riding office and have asked: "What is this accord? What does it mean? What does it say? How are we supposed to vote yes or no on something that we do not know anything about?" Those are legitimate questions and I have an answer for them.

I want to remind my constituents, and I am speaking primarily to my constituents now, that this is a momentous and historical occasion. This is the first referendum that we have had in half a century. Let us take it seriously. Let us not ignore the commentary for the next number of weeks and then either simply fail to vote or not bother to vote because the subject is too complex or too boring or we are too tired of it or simply go in there, close our eyes, mark an *x* and hope for the best. That is not the way to deal with the future of our country.

Rather, I ask constituents of Scarborough West and the people of Canada to reflect very carefully on the words of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. Yesterday he said: "Canadians should judge this agreement by what it says, not by what others say it says". That includes us here by the way. He went on to say: "This is not written in Morse code. Canadians owe it to themselves to read it themselves".

I whole-heartedly support the minister's statement. Do we care enough about this country to spend a few minutes to pick up this document and read it? I am not going to say that we will understand it immediately, but do we care enough to investigate is?

What is my role going to be in the next little while? I am going to try my best to give the facts as I see them to my constituents. I want my constituents to know that I am going to be having a meeting on September 24 on this very topic at which I will distribute copies of the documentation and raise some questions and answer some questions if I possibly can. I am not going to be in the voting booth for each and every constituent. They will be there themselves, marking their ballots. I sincerely hope they do it, having apprised themselves of the facts.

That meeting is going to be on Thursday, September 24 at Our Lady of Fatima School library. I will have another one two weeks later on October 1 at St. Agatha separate school at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday. I will continue to have them as long as there is interest by my constituents to come out and talk about this accord. Copies will be made and we will discuss the issues.

What issues? I would like people to ask themselves what is going to happen if the referendum vote is overwhelmingly yes. Is this going to put an end to our constitutional discussions? The answer in my view is no. The Charlottetown accord is not the beginning of the end. Rather it is merely the end of the beginning.

The premier of Quebec has already stated that negotiations will continue. He said this in the National Assembly yesterday. We will continue our negotiations but in an era of solidity, stability. By no means will a yes mean that we are finished with the Constitution for the next generation. Quite the contrary. Negotiations are going to continue.

What is going to happen if the referendum vote is no? I remind Canada that the Prime Minister of this country predicted that the world as we knew it in Canada would come crashing down around us if the Meech Lake accord was rejected. The Meech Lake accord was rejected. The world did not end. The sun rose the next day and life went on. We managed to continue the dialogue.

How about some questions? Did we in this accord achieve a Triple-E Senate? Is the Senate elected? I say only partially because it can be partially appointed. Is it equal? Who knows? Is it effective? Again, partially. What does that mean? What sorts of ramifications will that have in the future. What does aboriginal self-gov-

ernment mean? Who pays for it? How much of this accord will be fleshed out by the courts in interpreting words, further withering the democratic powers of this House of Commons, sadly no longer the highest court of the land by the very abdication of its members to grapple with tough issues? The courts are answerable to no one but themselves.

Finally will the results be binding on anybody, on any level of government? The answer is legally no, morally I hope so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Prince Edward Hastings for eight minutes.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and a privilege to rise today to speak on this topic of the upcoming referendum on the renewal of the Constitution of Canada.

First I would want to thank all those in the House, in the Senate and in the Public Service for the extra time and effort they have taken to work on this proposal over many months. I also want to thank those in my riding of Prince Edward—Hastings for their participation, whether that was through letters or phone calls to the Spicer commission, the Beaudoin–Dobbie commission, the Charest committee or whatever it might be, and the hundreds of people who either phoned me, wrote to me, met me on the street or came out to town hall and public meetings I have held in the riding on this issue over the last number of months.

I can assure them their views were heard and they were passed on by myself to people who were more closely involved in this issue. I also remind Canadians, not only those in Prince Edward—Hastings riding, that we have the privilege in Canada to do that. Many countries in the world today do not have that privilege, that freedom of speech, that freedom of association, and we should all remind ourselves how fortunate we are.

Where are we now? We have a proposal, if it is passed on October 26, that I feel will certainly keep Canada together. If it does not pass, I do not even want to talk about it because I shudder at the fallout that will likely come from that. The important thing is that all of us as Canadians have that choice to make now. We have that opportunity. It is not a perfect proposal as so many of my colleagues here in the House have said. We know that. However, all of us have been involved in enough negotiations, whether they be large or small, throughout our lives that we know at no time can everyone go away from a negotiating table getting exactly what everyone wants. The deal that put Canada in place in the first place was a deal of compromise, and so is this one. The Charlottetown proposal in my view is the best that we could get at the present time.

• (1650)

By passing this we can tell the rest of the world and we can tell Canadians that for now at least we have made up our mind on the future direction of our country. We can get on with doing what we need to do as a country, that is get our economy going again and get people back to work and people earning money. That is important.

As I say, it is not a perfect proposal. If I had written it I would have made the Senate more effective, but it is the best we could get right now. The economic union is not as strong as it could be, but I think we can work on that. The recognition is there that it needs to be improved, and that is a step forward.

Let us look at the positive aspects of it. Of concern to many people in my riding are the words distinct society. I want to remind them that in the Canada clause distinct society is defined to refer only to language, civil law and culture. It is important that definition is there. Francophones are protected with this agreement outside Quebec and anglophones are protected within Quebec. The Senate is elected and equal and it can be made more effective by changes in the rules of the House. The aboriginal people will be given self-government as they should have. Changes to national institutions such as the House, the Senate and the Supreme Court can only be made with the full agreement of all provinces and the Parliament of Canada.

Yes, Mr. Bourassa can say that Quebec has a veto on this type of action, but I remind people that every province has a veto and that is not a special veto given to the province of Quebec.

New provinces can be created by the Parliament of Canada. I have always said that if we are going to redistribute the jurisdiction of forestry, tourism and mining to the provinces nothing special should be done for any particular province. Nothing is done special for any particular province. The opportunities in this propos-

al for one province are there for all provinces, and that is important.

The Canada clause protects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and it keeps it foremost and strong. There is a commitment and it is a very strong one. Canadians are committed to social and ethnic equality. There is a commitment to the equality of female and male persons.

Yes, we could pick holes in this agreement. Let us not get caught up in partisanship, narrow minded bigotry or narrow personal thoughts. We are talking about the future of a country, one that has withstood a lot, one that has been formed from people coming together from all parts of the world, and one that offers so much to so many.

We have in our country of Canada a very precious country and to me it is far too precious to lose. My Canada is the whole of Canada. I urge Canadians to support the Charlottetown proposal for a renewed Canadian Constitution.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have this opportunity however brief to address the historic question before us about the future of our entire country.

The real question before us is whether we are to say yes to a new and stimulating move forward in Canada's journey as a unified nation or whether we are to say no and continue to drift in the agonizing impasse of constitutional conflict and threatened separation.

While it is tempting to many to forestall the heavy burden of facing that question directly and perhaps to seek refuge through preoccupation with the broad range of significant individual factors for which the referendum question will be a single proxy, it remains essential for every Canadian to address the only question that really counts squarely: Do we say yes to the unity of Canada at this time or do we say no?

Therein lies the challenge for every member of Parliament, indeed for every elected representative at every level of government and for every citizen who can be encouraged to join the referendum campaign, to ensure that Canadians are truly inspired with the magnitude of the responsibility and the opportunity now being presented to each one of us. It is a rare chance for every individual of voting age to make a direct and measurable contribution to the future directions of our country.

Over the next several weeks leading up to October 26, every citizen will be able to experience the essence of the political process in a direct and dramatic way, to recognize, to consider and to evaluate all the complex issues involved in Canada's future, and then to exercise all that collective personal knowledge and wisdom in the form of a single judgment and decision to move Canada forward in unity and inspiration or to keep Canada mired in division and discord. To be sure our first job is to inform and educate ourselves and our fellow citizens about all of the issues involved to the greatest extent possible in the time available. That in itself will be no easy task. Even at best, we must accept the reality that very few of us will really be knowledgeable about Canada's constitutional complexities before it is time to make our decision.

However, that should not be cause for frustration or undue concern because the average citizen cannot be expected to gain instant expertise in such affairs. That is why Canadians have yearned for the kind of leadership in this issue in which they can place their trust. Fortunately, and to an extent perhaps never before displayed in Canadian history, we have seen such leadership in this constitutional mission. It has come from every major jurisdiction in every corner of the country and its recommendations are unanimous about the direction in which it points us. That is not to say that Canadians should blindly follow any leadership without due caution, care and consideration, particularly in such a critical direction as we are now heading.

However, it does mean that in the absence of perfect understanding or ultimate knowledge or divine wisdom, which obviously none of us will ever have, there is a compelling basis for trust and and confidence in following the leadership which the first ministers of Canada have demonstrated along with their territorial and aboriginal colleagues in reaching the constitutional consensus that was signed at Charlottetown on August 28.

In the absence of better information or higher knowledge or wiser choice, I believe that the Charlottetown agreement is a foundation for judgment on which any Canadian can rely in making an affirmative referendum

decision. Certainly it is on that basis that I will cast my own vote.

It is especially imperative that we encourage Canadians to come to grips with the very nature of our confederation and with the realization that we continue to build Canada today in the same spirit of collaboration, concession, compromise and consensus as it was founded 125 years ago.

As the Prime Minister said in opening this debate two days ago, Confederation itself was a creative innovation to cope with the major constitutional and economic problems of the day. He went on to quote Sir John A. Macdonald who said at the beginning: "The whole scheme bears upon its face the marks of compromise. Of necessity there was a great deal of mutual concession". Obviously we now see clear evidence of a similar approach which our present leaders have used in reaching a constitutional accord.

Frankly, I would like it even better if the Charlottetown agreement was called just that, the Canada accord. For me, at least, those words more aptly describe the essence of Canadian federalism in the modern day. The concept of accord seems a stronger and more rational expression of the inter-relationship and interdependence which must exist among all participants in a federation such as ours. In truth, that is effectively what has been achieved, a Canada accord which reflects a reasoned and fair reconciliation of all the diverse interests which exist throughout this vast country.

This Canada accord is not a menu of half measures to merely provide each participant with a little bit of something and not much of anything as some critics have claimed, but rather it is an innovative and effective working plan for the continued development of Canada as a unified nation. It has been achieved through long and intensive consultation with Canadians from every walk of life, in every part of our vast land. It expresses the diversity of their hopes and aspirations in a balanced approach that offers the best prospects yet defined of making those hopes and aspirations attainable.

The Canada accord is a statement of vision for our country, a vision that is based on unity and a vision to which we must each address ourselves. It is simply not possible to side-step this ultimate question of vision. That is what the referendum will be all about. Is our vision of Canada based on unity or is it based on division? In the most simple of all terms that is what we shall each be expressing in the voters booths on referendum day: our own vision of Canada, securely unified or dangerously divided. We simply must not deceive ourselves about that question and the responsibility for each one of us to vote yes for the Canada accord and support a solution that will keep our country whole or to realize that in voting no we are accepting the prospects of continued deep division and probably even disintegration within Canada as we know it.

The day of judgment and decision for Canada will come quickly upon us.

• (1700)

The entire thrust and spirit of the referendum campaign will be to ask Canadians if they are prepared to place a priority on the context of the country as a whole and to accept the principles of the Canada accord which have been reached to make unity possible.

As I have said, the challenge before us is not simply to make some selective choice among individual elements of the accord, but rather to lift our sights and our judgments to the future of Canada in its entirety. Those alternatives, yes or no, are competing visions. For the destiny of Canada we must each accept the solemn responsibility to make our choice between them.

For me and my house, and I believe for most citizens in my constituency, we shall choose to stand proudly for a united Canada.

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, after two years of the widest possible consultation in the history of Canada, through the Spicer commission, the Charest committee, the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee of which I was a member, we now have a unanimous agreement by 17 people consisting of the Prime Minister, the 10 premiers, two territorial and four aboriginal leaders.

The Charlottetown agreement goes far beyond the Meech Lake accord which for a time also had unanimous agreement. It goes beyond Meech Lake in its extensive consultation process, through its involvement with literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians and through the participation of our aboriginal peoples.

Further, the Charlottetown agreement goes beyond Meech Lake in that it provides a clear definition of the distinct society clause and its guarantee of protection for our two official language communities both in Quebec and across Canada.

There are billboards across Canada that carry the words "My Canada includes Quebec". I would go further and agree with the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra who earlier in this debate said: "It is not just that my Canada includes Quebec, but for me there is no Canada without Quebec".

I would also add that this agreement with its distinct society clause, its protection of our two linguistic communities, the new division of powers, as well as the limitation of the unilateral use of the federal spending powers, is consistent with the vision for Canada of Macdonald and Cartier.

Both Macdonald and Cartier grasped the fundamental reality and secret of Canada, that of two founding peoples, English and French speaking, working harmoniously together while respecting each other's language, culture, religion, and civil codes.

Not only is this agreement consistent with the 1867 British North America Act, but it is also in harmony with our history and with other acts such as the Quebec Act, 1774, and the Canada Act, 1791.

The agreement goes far beyond Meech Lake in that all 10 provinces and the federal government are now correcting a long-standing historical problem through the recognition of the inherent right to self-government of our aboriginal people.

Additionally the agreement's process and focus is different. Meech Lake attempted to correct a past omission for a province. The Charlottetown agreement corrects that omission and focuses on the Canada of the future.

The details of the agreement are very important. I hope every Canadian will read them, but when they are read I hope every Canadian will seriously consider the months and months of deliberation and discussion, of debate and compromise, and do what the 17 individuals did in Charlottetown on August 28, 1992, and what the Fathers of Confederation did beginning at Charlottetown in 1864 through to 1867. That is to put their own agendas and preferences aside and make them secondary to the national interest and to the needs of a strong united Canada.

I am disappointed that the preamble that was unanimously recommended by all 30 members of the House and Senate on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee was not accepted by the required seven out of 10 premiers. Nevertheless I want to publicly thank the Prime Minister who tried both in late July and again in Charlottetown to gain acceptance of that preamble. I am also disappointed that property rights were not added to the agreement for inclusion in the charter of rights. Who in this House can forget Boris Yeltsin's words to us on June 19 of this year when he said that one of the key reforms to rebuilding Russia and the democratic rights of its people would be to add the right to private property to their new constitution.

I am also disappointed that section 121, the economic union clause, was not significantly modernized and strengthened. I am however pleased that the Prime Minister and the premiers have agreed to revisit that weakness as a top priority item once the agreement has been ratified.

I am sure that all 295 members of this House and all 26 million Canadians would each have written a slightly different version of the agreement and that none would be totally alike, but I whole-heartedly endorse this agreement. It is a result of hard work and of compromise in the best sense of that word, of democratically elected representatives from all levels of government, from all regions and territories, from all political parties and involving our aboriginal people. That is why I will support the agreement.

However, the details of the agreement alone are not what this vote is all about. This vote on October 26 is about Canadians participating in a process to get Canada working again. The question is very sharp and unequivocal, requiring a simple yes or no. The issue is clear: continue or terminate.

I also believe it is not fear-mongering to simply put the stark reality of what a no vote could mean. A no answer could set in motion an irreversible unravelling of our national fabric of health care, education, transportation, social services, justice system, business cohesion, fiscal integrity and national defence. All the essential ingredients of our country would be at risk and could ultimately be compromised.

We owe it to ourselves and future generations to look beyond the details of this agreement and recognize the ultimate outcome of a no answer.

Let me say that I am the son of immigrants who fled the Soviet Union and came to Canada in 1923. My parents taught me to love Canada, to thank God for Canada and to work for the people of this great land, the best in the world. We know that and now the United Nations is saying that as well.

Canadians do not do much flag waving. In fact we complain far too much and we are far too cynical about ourselves and of our great nation. But October 26 gives us a chance to brag a bit, to feel good again and to purge some of the cynicism and some of the poison from our system and say yes to Canada and to say yes to our future. We owe that to ourselves and we owe that to the rest of the world that looks to Canada and to Canadians as a beacon of hope, good will, tolerance and common sense in a world that desperately needs those qualities.

To close, I would like to quote from George Brown who in 1865, during the American Civil War, said: "We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties that have plunged others into all of the horrors of civil war. Have we not then cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles?"

Canadians have found a better way. On October 26 we can vote yes and continue in that tradition of the better way in which we can build one another up as fellow Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, newspapers like *La Presse* in Quebec have already printed surveys which show that half the people who would have voted yes to that agreement would have done so because they were fed up with the constitutional debate. I was particularly shocked to hear, a few weeks ago, people like Bourassa, Mulroney and Clark, the ones who proposed that agreement, say that Canadians were fed up with the constitutional debate and that that could be used as an argument. That strategy has surely worked because nearly half the people who would vote yes would do so not because they believe the agreement is a good one, but rather because they are fed up with the constitutional debate. Constitutional weariness is what I want to talk about today because it is a fact. It is affecting not only those who may find the agreement unsatisfactory, but also those who oppose this particular deal. Constitutional weariness is affecting everybody. One thing is sure: we are suffering from constitutional weariness. But could it have to do with the length of the debate? Could it be due to constant and persistent lying on the part of the leaders who prepared this agreement? Are we going to ask the people of Quebec to vote for this agreement because we feel they have had it up to here with unkept promised? Is that what we have in mind?

• (1710)

Let me tell you straight out what I think. If people are suffering from constitutional weariness—not so much the fact of being fed up with the Constitution or a particular piece of legislation but that of being tired of being taken for a ride and lied to by politicians elected to make decisions—it is because these very politicians, often for the sake of playing for time, talk absolute nonsense, loosing any credibility in the eyes of the people.

They may well end up sickening the people. Then to turn around and ask them to vote for this agreement, just because they have had enough of the lies they have been hearing for the past seven or eight years, up to thirty years in some instances, that is a bit much. I do not fall for it and, come voting day, I am convinced that the people of Quebec will not fall in that trap either.

This reminds me of an issue that has been one hot issue in Quebec for the longest time, and that is public funding. You remember, Mr. Speaker, do you not? You had even spoken in support of it at the time. You may also recall that it was one the main themes of the Mulroney government platform in the last campaign. As a matter of fact, it was used as an umbrella to prevent the scandals they were plagued with from getting out of hand during the campaign.

At the very end of the campaign, three days before polling day, the Prime Minister solemnly promised the people of Quebec, and it made the headlines in *La Presse*, that he would establish democratic public funding the very next day following his re-election. How did he play for time after that? He set up committees and commissions then waited a few months. When complaints about him not keeping his word started flying again, he said: "This is a somewhat complicated issue.

We are going to strike a royal commission of inquiry." The Lortie commission went to great lengths for some three years I guess, to bury the problem. Today the Prime Minister operates under the assumption that the people do not remember. He thinks that the people are so fed up that they will have forgotten. He thinks he can go before the people in the next election and tell them: "No, this is no longer valid". He believes that is the way of keeping his credibility intact. But that is not the way things work in the real world. Next time around the people of Quebec will pay the Prime Minister back for his constant lying. They will give him a ticket, all right, a one-way ticket. That is how you thank people who deceive you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon, member, but I notice that he has referred to lies and lying on four occasions already. I believe it is contrary to parliamentary practice to ascribe such intentions to our colleagues. I would therefore urge him to be more careful from now on.

Mr. Gérin: As I was saying, the people will remember. With regard to the constitutional agreement, this one point in particular.

Mr. Bourassa told us, I do not know how many times, from the beginning that there would never be an equal Senate where Quebec would have the same weight as Prince Edward Island, which is as big as my riding and has almost the same population, a Senate where Quebec would have as much clout as Newfoundland, for example, or any other province. Quebec will never be treated like the rest of the province. He told us that constantly, all the time. He repeated it. Today he accepts it. People are fed up, disgusted, but I do not think that is a reason to vote for the agreement. I do not think that is a reason.

Both the Prime Minister of Canada and the premier of Quebec told us that Quebec's five conditions for repairing the affront of 1982, the five minimum conditions of Meech, would be guaranteed and there would never be less than that. It was a prerequisite, a precondition.

Three years ago, the Prime Minister began the downward slide into accepting anything with the Charest commission. Mr. Bourassa signed this agreement or this offer from English Canada. They have completely broken their promises. Mr. Bourassa said that he would never negotiate again with 10 partners. This time he did not negotiate with 10 but with 16.

Today, with a decision to make for or against the agreement, the same Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Mulroney ask Quebecers to vote for it not because it is good but because they have had enough. So much so that the Conseil du patronat du Québec says today that we will have to vote for it but without enthusiasm. We will have to vote for it because it is the best we can hope for. That does not mean it is good. There will be nothing better. We are not worth much, are we? Then he adds: "Why couldn't we have more? Well, when you have to negotiate with 16 others, it is very hard to come up with a good agreement". It comes down to that. He says: "Well, we will support it".

We have had 30 years of debate on the Canadian Constitution. In the 1980 referendum, Quebecers were told to vote no, to vote against the question put to them and we would have a renewed federalism in which Quebec would have a place of honour. What happened? A year and a half later English Canada, in Quebec's absence, came up with a constitution that forced Quebec to take its punishment. It was an affront, a slap in the face. That was the answer.

We wanted to correct that affront with an agreement. Today we are told: "Well, you will have to take it. It will be enough. It is better than nothing. We cannot offer you more". Do you think Quebecers will accept that just because they are fed up with the constitutional debate? Personally, I think we can do better.

When we are fed up with something and have had it we must consider why. The reason we are disgusted is people have not been able to keep their promises. They say one thing one day and something else the next. They are politicians who cannot be trusted any more. All the polls show that throughout Canada, in Quebec but also across Canada, people have lost confidence in their institutions. Why? For those reasons.

I really hate that so-called agreement. It bothers me. It makes me sick, but I cannot vote for it by saying that will be the end of all that. I cannot sweep it under the rug like that. None of the problems raised by Quebec is solved by that agreement.

The agreement itself contains 79 points still to be discussed. They even wrote that. On the one hand they say: "You must vote for this agreement because you are sick of hearing about it". They say we should vote for the agreement because it is time we went on to other things, but on the other hand, they say there are still 79 items to discuss and finalize. Anyone who thinks the constitutional debate will end on October 26 when people vote in favour of the agreement is greatly mistaken. The leaders on the yes side are making a case based on arguments that are totally misleading. I am shocked and appalled.

• (1720)

The Bloc Quebecois, however, offers a valid alternative, to tell people the truth. Bloc leader Lucien Bouchard gave up ministerial privileges including staff, additional allowances and a limousine. Bloc members also gave up a lot of privileges such as trips abroad. My friends opposite know exactly what I mean. On the other hand they now have a chance to tell people the truth and nothing but.

Today the truth is yes, we are fed up with the constitutional debate; yes, 30 years of this is more than enough; and yes, some people are incapable of making decisions when they are supposed to. There are governments that govern by opinion polls, their only interest being in getting re-elected when election time come up, which applies both to the Mulroney government and the Bourassa government. However, some people realize that and will say no to the agreement because they are sick and tired of this kind of treatment.

We can hardly be expected to applaud in a supine position. Why should we applaud the fact that we have to get down on our knees? I think that is beneath our dignity.

Why should Quebec, which is demanding a number of historic rights, accept this agreement and say yes? Quebec has at least as many rights as the aboriginal people. The point is that Quebec's historic rights are extremely important. We cannot sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. There are a number of issues that are extremely important. If our leaders, our first ministers, are unable to meet their commitments, to keep their promises, to respect Quebec as it is and in such a way that Quebec will feel at home in Canada and will again become a part of the Canadian family, with honour and enthusiasm, to quote the Prime Minister, if they cannot do that then they should get out, and If they do not go willingly there will be an election pretty soon.

Next year there will be a federal election, and there will probably be a number of elections at the provincial level as well. Then we will be able to deal with the real problems, because we are not getting anywhere here in the House.

We are being asked to approve an agreement without any kind of legal text. We are given a document that is not a final text and we are told that the final version will not be ready until Christmas, but just the same we are being asked to approve this one on October 26.

Why the hurry all of a sudden when the Charest committee, the Spicer commission, Castonguay-Dobbie and Beaudoin-Dobbie met for months and this was in addition to the constitutional conferences? All of a sudden we are confronted with a non-definitive draft agreement, no text, and it is all very urgent. As members of this House neither I nor my colleagues have been asked to work on this text. It was drafted without any consultation with Parliament. The best face they can put on this is to say: "Vote for this agreement because it is the best we can do. In any case, you are so fed up you might as well vote in favour of the agreement to get rid of the whole thing".

I am sure Quebecers will pronounce a resounding no to this proposal and this charade.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to be able to speak on this historic occasion. Like many Canadians I have roots in all parts of Canada. When my father emigrated from Russia he landed in Montreal, moved on to Winnipeg, and settled in Edmonton. My mother was born in southern Quebec. I was born in Alberta, my wife was born in British Columbia, my daughters lived in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec. I have aunts, uncles, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews in every part of Canada.

For me, the loss and cutting off of one part of Canada would mean the loss and cutting off of part of my family. I, as a Canadian, will not allow this to happen. That is why I am supporting the accord reached in Charlottetown.

I am one of these people who has had some unique opportunities. I have been a negotiator for unions. I have also been a negotiator for management. I have negotiated on both sides. I have made recommendations to principals to accept the outcomes of negotiations on numerous occasions. Not once were those recommendations based on the fact that I had got everything I wanted, that I had got everything I had asked for, wished for, or dreamed for; or that the deal was perfect or that was going to be the last time there was going to be discussion about it. Contracts, like constitutions, are living. They are not static and they will evolve. However, I made recommendations based on the premise that at this time that was the best deal I could arrive at.

For me, the constitutional accord had a number of bottom lines. It had things which I felt had to be there for me to support it. There were five of them in particular. Some other minor ones, but five in particular. First, there had to be justice for our aboriginal people.

For 200 years we have kept the aboriginal peoples from controlling their own lives and their own destiny. We have stopped them from fulfilling their potential, fulfilling it in their own way and within their own culture and values. This constitutional agreement, through its recognition of the inherent right to self-government, meets my concerns to allow for justice for our first peoples. The fact that the aboriginal peoples will also be guaranteed seats in the Senate strengthens their rights and recognizes their special status in Canada.

The second point that this constitution had to include was what we call a social charter. There had to be some recognition that Canadians had social rights within this country, and this agreement does that. I am most pleased to see that it sets out policy objectives. The first is providing throughout Canada a health care system that is comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible. Right now in British Columbia that is very important because our medical association has gone on record stating that it does not support those five principles of public medicare. They are now enshrined in the Constitution.

• (1730)

It provides for adequate social services and benefits to ensure reasonable access to housing, food and other basic necessities. It provides an objective for quality education, both primary and secondary. For me and people who have been involved in labour, it recognizes the rights of workers to organize and to be collectively represented. It recognizes the need to preserve and sustain the integrity of the environment, not only now but in the future.

It met my concerns around the second point, guarantees for social rights.

My third bottom line was to abolish that abomination of a non-elected Senate. We are in a democratic society in which we are still being governed by people who are appointed in a manner that is reminiscent of colonialism and the landed property rights of the wealthy. There is nothing more insidious than that other place has been over the years. It is an anachronism in a democracy. No other modern democracy would have tolerated it for the length of time that Canadians have.

This agreement finally abolishes the non-elected Senate. It provides us with an elected Senate that equally represents the provinces and has a meaningful role in the government of this country.

My fourth requirement was that this Constitution, and I am sorry that the previous speaker has had to leave, gives Quebec the tools and resources it needs to maintain itself as a distinct society in terms of its language and its culture.

I visited Quebec on many occasions and I love it. I love it because it is French. It is a different culture and a different society. That is what makes it so valuable. It is the one thing that I sometimes cannot understand when I talk to people, particularly people from the Reform Party. They seem not to understand that the very thing that makes Quebec so valuable to Canada is that it is different, that it is distinct, that it does have a different culture and a different language. It is like a part of a family. If everybody in the family was the same, you would not value them. You value them because they are individual, they are different, and they are distinct. That is the value we place on Quebec.

This Constitution gives Quebec those tools.

Fifth, particularly important for me with my concern for social justice and social programs, was that the federal government had to have been left with the power to institute new national programs such as day care. This constitutional agreement makes it clear that it can.

It is still going to take a government that has the will to do it. Simply because it is permitted within a Constitution does not mean that it will automatically be done. It will take a government that has the will.

Yes, there are things that I do not like about this agreement, things that fell short of what I would have liked to see. Quite frankly I am disappointed that the federal government is surrendering so much of its responsibility in the area of social housing. There is a need for social housing programs and policies that are nation-wide and uniform.

I would have liked it if the needs and wishes of the handicapped and the visible minorities were better addressed. I certainly would have liked it if issues around promotion of gender equality were addressed more strongly in the Constitution, and felt that they could have been.

That is always what happens when you go into negotiations, you do not get everything you want. On balance you have to make a decision.

My householder is coming out. It is already being printed. I would like to read what I am saying to my constituents of Surrey North which is, as everybody knows, the fastest growing riding in Canada. It consists now of 55,000 households.

> As I write, a national referendum is being planned on the constitutional proposals agreed to by the first ministers and now being considered by Parliament.
>
> I urge you to take part in the debate accompanying the referendum and to make an informed voting choice.
>
> The constitutional process has been long and arduous but B.C. has made gains through a more equal Senate and a total of seven new House of Commons seats between now and the 1996 census redistribution.
>
> My own choice is to accept the agreement. I have many reservations but the social charter, the recognition of native self-government and increased B.C. power in the House of Commons are clear advances.
>
> We cannot start from scratch yet again and hope to retain one country—
>
> Vaughn Palmer, writing in *The Vancouver Sun* of Aug. 28, said: "This accord represents a defeat for separatism and it will allow our leaders to get on with issues like economic recovery. For those reasons alone, the deal is a good thing and we ought to accept it".

I want to say one other thing. I am not worried about the no forces being led in the province of British Columbia by the Reform Party or by the carpings of people like Gordon Wilson, the provincial leader of the Liberal Party. However, I am very much concerned about the bickering and sniping of the Tory caucus from British Columbia against the premier of B.C.

That is the only way that the referendum will be defeated in British Columbia. I urge them to unequivocally stand up, each and every one of the Tory caucus, and declare that they are fully behind this accord and fully behind the premier of British Columbia so that we may all move forward with this constitutional deal. As Vaughn Palmer says: "For those reasons alone, the deal is a good thing and we ought to accept it".

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker and hon. members, it is a very great privilege for me to stand in the House today and participate in this very important debate.

It seems to me after listening to some of the speeches that surely the truest test of democracy is its ability to withstand dissent. In this Canadian discussion we have certainly had many opposing points of view to bring forward. However, in spite of all that, on August 28 in Charlottetown Canada's first ministers and the territorial and aboriginal leaders finally reached a consensus on a number of constitutional reforms.

The path to this consensus was a long one with many stops for consultation and reflection along the way. However, I suppose that is the way it should be, because nation-building is a never-ending journey.

This journey that Canadians embarked upon to make Canada whole again and to revitalize our federation has been a long and sometimes a difficult one. There have been set-backs; there have even been set-tos. Throughout the journey all of us who had the honour and the privilege of participating in the process were inspired by one single goal, that at the end of the day if we listened to Canadians and heard what they themselves had to tell us then surely the outcome would be a stronger, more united, more modern Canada.

• (1740)

We are close to achieving that objective. On October 26 Canadians will have an opportunity to express their views on the consensus for constitutional accord that was reached and on issues that will change the fundamental laws of our land.

Consensus itself does not reflect any individual idea of perfection. Instead it is an agreement representing the majority view after all sides have been heard and have been listened to and after all issues have been thoroughly discussed. Consensus building is the modern and civilized way to deal with opposing viewpoints.

The other old way involved conflict, anger, bitterness, all those emotions that lead us blindly and ultimately to destruction. Those engaged in building consensus know that their personal opinions, their own dearly held convictions are at risk of being lost in the search for an accord that everyone can accept.

In this discussion there is no question that the me's and I's are irrelevant. What is relevant here is the common good. Certainly the August accord reflects most of the constitutional aspirations that Canadians themselves have articulated over the past number of years and months. Canadians certainly have been articulate in this particular Canada round.

Let me just tell you a little bit about some of the consultations. It began with the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. Some 400,000 Canadians were heard. Then the special joint committee on the amending formula heard testimony from 209 witnesses and received over 500 briefs from 450 groups and individuals.

The results of these initiatives played a very important role in shaping the 28 proposals the federal government put forward last September in *Shaping Canada's Future Together*. This then was referred to the 30–member Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada I had the privilege of co–chairing.

Of course my committee travelled across Canada. We visited small and large communities. We heard from Canadians from all walks of life in all stations. That was part of the fulfilment of our mandate to get advice from people across the country on the government's proposals. Some 3,000 concerned individuals and groups took the time to send written submissions to the committee and another 700 appeared before us as witnesses.

The committee also initiated a series of government–sponsored conferences that involved 1,500 participants including interest groups, academics, civil servants from various levels of government, and perhaps most important but certainly most especially, ordinary Canadians. All of this led to the final unanimous report by the committee that was tabled on February 28.

Then, of course, each of the provinces and territories held constitutional hearings. The aboriginal community itself participated in the discussion and held hearings across the land.

Equipped with the results of these extensive individual consultations and dialogue, federal, provincial and territorial leaders, and for the first time in Canadian history, aboriginal leaders from Canada's four aboriginal associations met as equal partners and looked for a consensus that was already emerging.

Throughout this phase of the Canada round, reality and flexibility were the watchwords that carried the day. We had learned from the Meech Lake process that closing doors does not open minds. At the end of each day after the negotiations, people came out and said what they thought, mentioned where they had made progress, expressed their concern and involved the public in the discussions that were going on.

On July 7 unanimous agreement on the principles of constitutional reform were reached. This opened the doors that allowed Quebec to come to the table for a first ministers' conference.

Finally on August 22, after extensive discussion, the Prime Minister announced the premises and principles of this particular accord had been achieved. The first ministers, the aboriginal leaders, the territorial leaders had reached a fair and workable consensus.

I think it is very important to remember all of these things as we proceed to the debate over the referendum question, the question on the Charlottetown accord.

We must also remember consensus does not respond to any particular interest. Consensus responds to the common interest, and the common interest at hand in this particular case is to unite our diverse federation with

the threads of the agreement that were spun from the consensus at Charlottetown.

It worries me greatly when I hear interest groups making statements that spurn the accord because their particular agendas are not being met. I remind all of you whose interests may not have been specifically addressed that this is not the final constitutional round. I remind you the Constitution is a living tree with roots going deep into our past to find nourishment and growth for the future.

There will be another chance. In the meantime of course we are all protected by the kind of country Canada is, by its social order, by the genesis in the British parliamentary system and the guarantees that are already contained in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. No single interest can prevail in this particular discussion.

As I said before, there will be other times for compelling interests still to be heard and ultimately entrenched in the Constitution if it is proven they are for the greater good of our country and our society.

Let us turn now to what is in the accord. The first thing that strikes me as I read the document is that it is an affirmative document. It is a document that is positive and expresses things that say yes.

It is an affirmative statement about the interdependence of the partners in the Canadian federation. It is an affirmative statement about Quebec's right to remain in Canada while maintaining its language and its custom of civil law, both of which created a distinct, unique culture. I might just say this distinctiveness lends character to all of us as Canadians as well. I do not think any Canadian who thinks about it for very long will agree that Canada would be Canada without Quebec.

The Charlottetown consensus is also an affirmation or statement about the kind of nation we are, a parliamentary democracy wherein people respect and care for each other and where we draw strength from our diversity and from our individuality. It is an affirmative statement about our ability to be flexible about our institutions, open to changes that respond to the imperatives of the times.

It seeks to rebalance the sharing of power, to maintain the integrity of a strong federal government in a federal system. It seeks to empower first peoples by returning to them their right to determine their own affairs. It seeks to address an old and compelling sense of alienation and regional imbalance through changes to the Senate and through entrenched first ministers' conferences where matters of the federation can be addressed in a regular and more productive basis.

These are the issues, the important premises and principles that Canadians must keep in mind as we go through the next weeks of this discussion about the particular question at hand. It is important that we not be side-tracked by single special interests. It is important we set aside our special interests in the pursuit of a common goal.

We also must resist the temptation to get bogged down in wrangling over details or even more interestingly, get caught up in the fascinating but often unproductive exercise of constitutional hair-splitting.

When all is said and done most of us want the same things. We want fairness, equality, freedom, respect, prosperity, and the ability to have a say in the things and decisions that will affect us. Most of us want desperately to keep this country together because these are the things that Canada stands for. These are the things that are reaffirmed in this constitutional accord.

• (1750)

As we have heard before perhaps we do not have perfection here, but if it is not perfection, at least we know it is an honest attempt by honest men and women and by honest people everywhere in Canada to build a better country, one that will last for a millennium, a country for the future.

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to rise to the debate on the referendum and the Constitution of Canada, the renewed Canada's Constitution.

This debate is not about our past; this debate is about our future. It is about reordering our constitutional priorities in a way that will better reflect who and what we are as a nation and what we want to become.

In the process of finding solutions many different options were put forward. The agreement reached between federal, provincial and territorial governments and the representatives of aboriginal Canadians is not the perfect solution to all our problems. Everyone recognizes that fact and it has been stated over and over again in the House.

Many of us on both sides of this House have many questions about different aspects of this new arrangement. For example, there is no national economic union clause. That begs for more discussion.

Of course many would say it is an imperfect Senate because there is a trade-off there. Effectiveness is traded off for equality in the number of seats. Delay in the justiciability of self-government to five years rather than immediacy. Perhaps too great a shift to the provinces and the weakening of the federal government's role and the true meaning of a strong central government.

Some problems of course are referred to with the ambiguity of the words in the question itself which states "on the basis of" and means that the Charlottetown accord will be subject to interpretation by several different governments.

However, I personally believe that the deficiencies of this constitutional package do not outweigh its many positive aspects. For that reason, I intend to encourage the support of this agreement and encourage all Canadians, northerners, aboriginal people, women, minority groups, all Canadians to vote yes on the referendum on October 26.

It seems clear to me and to most other Canadians that after several years of trying and after the failure of the last attempt to reach a constitutional consensus, this proposal is the best we can expect.

I have personally been involved in several rounds of constitutional discussions. I have learned a lot and I pay tribute to those members of Parliaments, the people who provided legal advice from the various departments and from our party's perspective and to the senators who have the accumulative experience to have shared with us. It has been an honour to serve with people like Senator MacEachen and to learn from these people who have been through numerous rounds on the Constitution.

I was on the Charest committee and the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee. I have also had some dealings with the Meech Lake accord and with the last first minister's conference which I feel was a dismal failure, not just a failure for individuals but a failure for this country. It was a failure for First Nations and a failure for northerners.

I always said that I would accept Meech Lake amended and I believe what we have with this particular consensus is Meech plus. I am satisfied the aspirations of the north will be met because with the Northwest Territories we wanted to have the pre-1982 conditions prevail for the creation of new provinces and this deal gives us that.

We have a yes team in the Northwest Territories. I spoke to the Minister for Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development who has worked very hard for the north and the aspirations of northern peoples. He definitely agrees with this consensus that we have reached and would support what was agreed to in Charlottetown.

We also have a premier in the north, Nellie Cournoyea, who worked very hard. We had Rosemary Kuptana from the Northwest Territories who is the president of ITC. We also have Roger Gruben, president of the Inuvialuit Development Regional Corporation, who is also very instrumental. We also have John A. I always call John Amagoalik John A, the other John A, who also played a role in numerous rounds of the Constitution. We have Gary Bohnet who represents the Métis First Nations in the Northwest Territories.

These people have made a significant contribution. We have other people who have contributed from the north who have contributed as well. Because I am a northerner, I have to speak of northerners. These people are Mary Simon from northern Quebec who is adviser to Rosemary Kuptana. We have Francoise Paulet who participated in the AFN's national circle on Constitution.

I want to say that I feel that after numerous rounds on the Constitution we have come to a point, come to a position where we have to say this is good enough. This is as good as it can get.

I am prepared to make that commitment. I am prepared to stand with my party and with my people and say that if we proceed to open up this whole can of worms again we stand to lose everything. I believe we have achieved a lot on the inherent right to self-govern-

ment. We have the four national leaders to thank for that.

We have the Assembly of First Nations Chief, Ovide Mercredi, we have Ron George from the Native Council of Canada. We also have Yvon Dumont from the Métis and we have Rosemary Kuptana from the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada.

Northerners and aboriginal people have made a significant contribution to what will become the renewed Canada. Aboriginal Canadians love this country. They love this land. They use this land. The rivers are not just scenery. The mountains are not just to look at. They are there because the aboriginal people claim title. The reason they claim title and the reason that aboriginal people find it unacceptable to extinguish their rights is that they really believe that if you utilize the land, if you respect it, you cannot be separated from it. That to us is what is Canada.

I am proud today to say: "Canada, you have my support. My people are important to me. This country is important to me. As aboriginal people we are going to contribute. There were many concessions that were made on all sides, but I have to tell you, Canada, you have my yes".

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, it is with honour and with great pleasure that I stand here today to take part in this historic debate on the Charlottetown accord. At the end of the day we will have the vote that will be set down in history.

I would like to take this opportunity to join with my colleagues in the House in congratulating the minister for constitutional affairs, the member for Yellowhead, for his work. It has been a hard road for him as well as for all Canadians, but we now see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I believe that when one looks at the positive side, and there are many positive factors, of the whole constitutional debate that has taken place in recent months, one can only conclude that it has brought us closer together and has made us more aware of one another.

This proposal is a result of numerous forums and public meetings, national and regional consultations with aboriginals, women's groups, with all kinds of organizations and business interests. As the Leader of the Opposition said Tuesday, we have been consulting on the Constitution since 1980.

I can report that many of my constituents took the time to tell me of their feelings about Canada and what follows is a summary of those. We now have completed the consultation process and we are at the pinnacle of our democratic system, the preparation necessary for holding a national referendum.

• (1800)

In April 1991 the Leader of the Opposition proposed the use of a referendum. I am extremely pleased that the federal government took the initiative to utilize this process.

We have been committed to this process every step of the way. The polls indicated that Canadians wanted a referendum and now each and every one of them will have the opportunity to help decide this country's future. October 26, 1992 will give every Canadian an incredible sense of pride to be able to mark their ballot.

The outcome of the October 26 vote will be a yes to Canada, a yes to a stronger and much better Canada.

Canadians are eager to turn the page on the Constitution. They are anxious to deal with another ailment, the economy. We have record unemployment in this country and we are facing many new challenges as we prepare for the 21st century. Now we will have the tools to face these new challenges as the country will function as a unit, as a team.

I realize that time does not permit me to speak on all the points that I wish to, but I would like to address a few issues. I am pleased that our initiative to have a Canada clause has been accepted and that it ensures a commitment by all Canadians to the future of this country. The commitment to linguistic duality also gives the two official linguistic groups an opportunity to flourish and to guarantee under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the protection of individuals' rights.

For all of us, economic union is of the utmost importance. How can we expect to be competitive in the world market when we cannot resolve our country's interprovincial barriers? It is difficult to understand that we can have a free trade agreement with the United States and we can be taking part in negotiations on NAFTA, and yet interprovincial trade has met with numerous obstacles with no agreement in sight. We must become united economically. I strongly believe that protectionism de-

feats to a certain extent the spirit of the Charlottetown agreement.

In 1982 the Liberal Party enshrined in its constitution the inherent right for native self-government. I am very pleased that since then the concept has evolved and many first nation communities are prepared to determine and to control their destiny according to their values and traditions. However, this objective can only be attained if the federal government and the provincial governments supply them with the economic tools favouring a balanced development of the communities.

I do have some reservations about the Senate. I really question the logic behind the allocation of senators. Do we really need a Senate in its proposed form? If we are to have a Senate we must ensure that it is useful, that it has adequate powers to be effective. Moreover, I fail to see how a senator could emulate his duties as a legislator as well as answer his constituents' needs. For example, a senator in my province of Ontario would have well over 1.5 million people to serve. It is not humanly possible to do both jobs adequately. It should be revisited, as it needs much improvement.

For the time being we have come a long way and years down the road we will look back with pride and a sigh of relief at this period in history. Once again I would like to say that I am pleased that on October 26 Canadians will be voting in a national referendum. Canadians will, once and for all, put the record straight by voting to strengthen the bonds that bind our regions together and retain this country called Canada.

This morning I was standing in my office and on the wall I have a framed copy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The quote at the end of the charter summarizes exactly what we are trying to accomplish: "We must now establish the basic principles, the basic values and beliefs which hold us together as Canadians so that beyond our regional loyalties there is a way of life and a system of values which makes us proud of the country that has given us such freedom and such immeasurable joy".

We are the envy of the world and I am proud to be a Canadian.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House in support of this consensus report on the Constitution reached in Charlottetown on August 28, 1992. I am also delighted to be here in the company of members of the House from all sides who are supporting this consensus.

We in Canada are privileged to engage in what is surely one of the most fundamental exercises of democratic tradition, a national referendum on a renewed Constitution, the fundamental document of our democracy.

There are millions of people around the world at this very moment who are not privileged, whose disagreements are settled by bullets instead of by debate, whose freedoms are defined by command instead of by consensus, whose futures depend on the laws of force instead of the force of laws.

As Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs for the past 17 months, I have been honoured to represent Canadians at the most important international organizations in the world, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, *la Francophonie*, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Organization of American States, to name just a few.

[*Translation*]

In each of these organizations, Canada's voice is very special and highly respected because it speaks for tolerance, respect for diversity and human rights, progress, prosperity and above all peace and stability.

[*English*]

Our achievements in these regards are reinforced by our actions, whether in the dangerous battlefield surrounding Sarajevo or in the desolation of Somalia. In Cambodia, in the Middle East, in Central America, Asia and in the South Pacific Canada is a welcome intervener, whether as a peacekeeper or a mediator or as a partner in development through trade or through assistance.

There are very few people, citizens of very few nations of the world, who are accorded the same *passe-partout* that is accorded to Canada and to Canadians. We are blessed with a very special measure of goodwill from virtually all of the peoples of the world. This goodwill does not show up in our national accounts, certainly not directly, but it is a very real part of our national heritage,

a heritage that we have built as Canadians together, one that is shared by all Canadians.

When the nations of the world see Canada, they do not see a collection of provinces. They see one country, Canada; a country where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. When they hear Canadian voices at international meetings they do not question the fact that we speak English or French or a combination. They hear the voice of one country, Canada, and they know the message they are hearing is an important one.

When Canadian teachers or athletes or business people go abroad, people in their host countries do not ask if they are aboriginal or first generation or second generation. They are welcomed as the citizens of one country, Canada.

At the United Nations the face of Canada is a francophone woman from Montreal. Our face in Latin America is a man from McLennan, Alberta, and at NATO it is a native from Ontario who speaks for all Canadians.

• (1810)

The faces of Canada abroad are much the same as the faces in this Chamber and the faces on our streets and neighbourhoods around this great nation.

These people many times over the past several years of gruelling constitutional negotiations and discussions have time and again been asked: What is happening to Canada? Will Canada stay together?

They will now be able to answer those questions with a resounding yes, Canada will stay together. Yes, Canadians have sorted out their differences in the great Canadian democratic tradition. Yes, Canadians have found new ways to live together in our diversity as neighbours and as friends with dignity and with respect for one another.

Yes, we have reformed our institutions to enhance our democratic principles. Yes, we have provided fundamental justice to our first peoples. Yes, we have rebalanced internal roles and responsibilities to ensure continued progress and prosperity. Yes, we have developed new processes that can be a shining light to those peoples throughout the world who seek sometimes at great cost their own democracy.

Yes, the shining torch of our ideals, our values, our principles can be passed to the next generation and to many generations to come. Most of all, yes, we have done this despite disagreement, despite tension, through discussion with sensitivity and a sense of compromise with our only weapons: reason and love of country.

[*Translation*]

It will be a great day for the nations of the world because Canada has always had a reputation as a country that uses democracy to the limit. That it can reach this limit without oppression and bloodshed is a lesson that many other countries will want to learn thoroughly, whatever their own stage of democratic development.

Seeing a modern Canada emerge from this process even stronger and better prepared to face the challenges of the next century, they will be even more inclined to follow us on the paths of peace.

I just said how well disposed other countries in the world are towards Canada. Our great success in resolving our own internal conflicts can only strengthen that good feeling.

[*English*]

Canada and Canadians have never backed down in the face of suffering or adversity, from the Canadian soldiers with roots from all parts of Canada who died in distant places through two world wars, in Korea and in numerous peacekeeping missions, to the proud young men and women who carry the name Canada on their uniforms today to new and dangerous situations.

We have been and will continue to be a force for peace and justice in the world. We are on the verge of achieving inner peace and that will only strengthen our resolve to bring this same gift to the many troubled nations of the world.

Two weeks from today I will have the honour of addressing on behalf of our country the nations of the world at the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly, an association that Canada was very active in founding. Much of my speech will deal with the quest for peace in the world, for the need for democratic development and the protection of basic human rights.

As I deliver those words in New York my thoughts will be with the thousands of Canadians who serve us around the world and those other thousands of Canadians who participated in our discussions at home through commissions and task forces, whose valuable work and insights

ultimately guided the agreement reached in Charlottetown.

They have done a great service not just for Canada but for the world's community of nations. They have wrestled with many of the same problems and shown that there are in fact reasonable and honourable solutions peacefully achieved.

By saying yes to Canada, Canadians will play no small part in establishing a standard for peace and tolerance to be emulated by all the nations of the world.

When I see how other countries are tearing themselves apart through ethnic hatreds, whose roots are lost in the obscure myths of history, I thank God for our country and I thank God for our success in achieving this solution so recently come to that is bringing us even closer together as Canadians. I think as well that were Canada to fail, God help the world.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to say a few words here today on behalf of my riding on an issue which future generations will most likely judge to be of great historical importance.

The agreement reached at the Charlottetown conference is the culmination of five years debate and it needs to be supported as a major step toward the evolution of our Constitution.

Previous speakers have mentioned people in their provinces, the Prime Minister has lauded a number of people who have participated in the debate leading up to the agreement, and members of my party and the New Democratic Party have done likewise, but I do not think anyone has mentioned to this point the contribution made by the host of the Charlottetown conference, Premier Joseph A. Ghiz.

Premier Ghiz over the past five years of constitutional debates, successes and failures, has always had the national good first and foremost in mind. The provincial interest of Prince Edward Island he felt would naturally be taken care of if the national good was taken care of first.

He always believed in a country which included all provinces, which included all people within those provinces. He has made an immeasurable contribution to the success of the Charlottetown agreement and I believe he will be recognized in the future as one of the new fathers of this country.

One of the things which Premier Ghiz agreed to and which still seems to be a centre of debate not only with government members but with members of my own party, was an equal Senate.

Prince Edward Island, regardless of its population and regardless of the fact it has four members of Parliament, is much more than that. There are ridings in this country which are much bigger than Prince Edward Island, there are ridings in this country which have a greater population than Prince Edward Island, but these ridings never were, are not, and never will be provinces.

Prince Edward Island was accepted as a province in 1873 after a number of years of courtship by John A. Macdonald and the other Fathers of Confederation to enter into the Canadian union. Finally they accepted and agreed to become a participant in Confederation and they were accepted as a province by the Fathers and have been a province ever since.

The new concept of the Senate I believe is long overdue. It not only recognizes Prince Edward Island as an equal to our sister provinces, it also will be able to play an effective role because of its legitimacy as an elected body in forming legislation for the eastern region. The Atlantic region and the western region combined will have 80 per cent of the Senate. It says in one of the booklets which were passed out that the Senate could have prevented policies like the National Energy Program and the GST from ever happening. I would think if that is true, and I believe it is true, I believe the reorganization of the Senate is probably three years too late in one regard for Prince Edward Island. If that Senate had been in effect in 1989 the closure of the search and rescue facility in Prince Edward Island and more particularly in St. Eleanor's and Summerside would not have happened. I think the Canadian people recognized that particular move as a very unfair policy of a very vindictive government. I think they would have stopped that particular policy move and Prince Edward Island still would have enjoyed a military base as each of the other provinces do.

• (1820)

As we know, the federal government and the 10 premiers, the two territorial leaders and the leaders of our aboriginal peoples have come together in an historic, classic Canadian compromise. Rejection of this accord would not guarantee that some time down the road we would have a better deal. What it would guarantee, however, are many more years of tortuous constitutional debate. Canadians have been beaten to death by this constitutional debate.

For the past five long years they have undergone such a constitutional bombardment that now throughout the country there is a desperate cry for relief. Accompanying this cry is a growing demand for action on what is considered the real problems of this country. The people of Canada want this forum here, this House of Commons to get down and address the real day-to-day problems of this country, whether it is the 1.6 million people who are on unemployment insurance, the many more who have given up even looking for work and the many who have had to go to relief or welfare. The people of this country, and I think with good reason, want us to get on with the business of this country, governing this country and creating jobs for the Canadian people.

Despite all these problems that we have had, a few short months ago the UN chose Canada as the best place in the world to live. After 125 years we are now at the top of the heap as far as the 160 most developed countries in the world are concerned. I do not think we are prepared as a people to throw this rating down the drain. There are very few Canadians who do not realize what will happen economically if this particular agreement is not supported.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am prepared in my riding of Egmont to form a non-partisan group of political parties, of Royal Canadian Legions, of businessmen, whatever it takes to make sure that the vote in my particular riding is a positive vote for this country.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, the Charlottetown agreement represents the culmination of the most inclusive public political process that this country has ever experienced, a process which is in sharp contrast to the Meech Lake process where we saw a small group of men cook up a deal behind closed doors. The Charlottetown agreement was preceded by the Spicer commission. It had the input of the Allaire report, the Belanger-Campeau report, the Edwards' committee report, the Beaudoin-Dobbie report, provincial reports, public constitutional forum reports which were held across this country and televised and which included the direct active participation of hundreds and hundreds of Canadians. Last but not least, it includes the recorded opinion of my constituents in Northumberland who responded to constitutional meetings and public forums, surveys and submission requests.

As a Liberal member of the House of Commons, I did not have a personal, direct role in the formulation of the Charlottetown agreement, yet I endorse it. I did have an ample opportunity to input to the Liberal Party of Canada constitutional policy process.

I am especially proud of our leader and our constitutional affairs critic for their leadership in moving the proposal in directions which I believe reflect the history, tradition, values and wishes of the majority of Canadians. Of course they were closely and diligently assisted by other members of our caucus.

I was particularly proud when our leader appeared in 1991 before the Belanger-Campeau commission, the only federal politician to speak unequivocally and forcefully in Quebec in support of a strong, central federal government.

What we have before us today and what we are being asked to vote upon by referendum on October 26 is the so-called Charlottetown agreement, a final constitutional agreement. Because it represents the final consensus of the federal government, 10 premiers, leaders of the territories and aboriginal leaders who reflected upon all the earlier mentioned reports, I believe it has validity as a document and must be seriously considered by all Canadians.

Since the end of last week we have had copies of the actual agreement text as agreed to at the meeting in Charlottetown. The fact that we do not have the legal language translation of this is not in my opinion terribly relevant although cast as essential by those who would oppose supporting this agreement, I suspect for other reasons.

The agreement in plain English is before us and is available to anyone in the constituency of Northumberland or Canada who wishes a copy. We do want Canadians to be fully informed on what they are being asked to make a decision on October 26.

Although the Charlottetown agreement represents a broad consensus of opinion it is not perfect, but I believe it is not possible to produce the perfect agreement, the perfect agreement to meet all of my concerns and the concerns of each and every Canadian.

Nonetheless, the agreement encompasses some very important principles and values which will enhance the character and well-being of all in our country. It will allow us to take a fresh breath of Canadian air, clear our minds of constitutional legalities, and have a vision of a new prosperous future in Canada and a perspective of Canada's important and respected place in the international community.

I am particularly pleased that the Charlottetown agreement recognizes the inherent rights of our native peoples to self-government. I am pleased that the agreement recognizes Canada's historical heritage of linguistic duality and that it recognizes Quebec's distinctiveness.

The desire of Canadians to encompass all Canadians' heritages and cultures within our mosiac is important. These positive messages must be conveyed to all citizens.

I am, however, disappointed that we did not achieve the economic union we advocated and that the Senate reform falls far short of the ideal. I do believe that much can be done to correct these inadequacies through House of Commons rules and the amending formula encompassed in the agreement.

Canadians will be urged by me to support the Charlottetown agreement. We are all weary of the constitutional issue, as my leader says: "sick to death". We are not going to get a better alternative. We have a culmination of many ideas, visions in this agreement. We do not now have room for destructive prejudice and historical misunderstandings to undermine our achievements to date.

We must get on in this country to deal at the national level with the issues that are crippling and plaguing our country: joblessness, poverty, economic and regional woes of every sort, environmental issues, equity issues and legal issues.

I will work in my riding of Northumberland to continue the public information process begun several months ago. I am promoting the organization in Northumberland of an official yes committee and will encourage all political parties, all groups and individuals who support a yes vote, to participate.

I will hold more public forums in centres such as Port Hope, Cobourg, Colborne, Campbellford, Brighton, and Trenton, much the same as was done by me previously in Northumberland, to get my constituents' views into the constitution development process.

I am anxious to meet with school groups, clubs, organizations, *ad hoc* groups of constituents at any time between now and October 26 in order to help in building an understanding of the Charlottetown agreement. I am pleased that the Liberal Party request and the wishes of 98 per cent of my constituents for this referendum are being met. Our Northumberland yes committee will endeavour to get a resounding yes to the Charlottetown constitutional agreement and to Canada on October 26.

• (1830)

In closing I would like to remind other Canadians and my constituents of Canada's very special qualities through the words of a constituent, Phetwaney Luangrath, who arrived in Canada from Southeast Asia as a refugee at age 5 and who now, at 19, won a Cobourg Rotary Club essay on the theme of Canada and national pride. After living a year in a refugee camp in Thailand, she writes:

> We had the opportunity to apply to the country in which we wished to live. The countries that one could apply to were the United States, Canada, France and Germany. My family applied to Canada, a place we had heard believed in freedom, dignity, respect, equality and fair treatment and was a country of opportunities. These were all the qualities for which my family was looking.

In conclusion she writes:

> I do not think that a parent can do anything more special for their family than bring them to a country of peace and freedom.

Let us all reflect upon the words of this young Canadian. Let us all with open minds endeavour to understand the choice we are being asked to make on October 26, consider the implications of refusal and make an unequivocal choice for a renewed Canada, a land where we envision future generations of Canadians living in peace and freedom and with an abundance of opportunity and well-being for all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, the question we should be debating today is: Do you agree to give your governments the mandate of negotiating changes to the Canadian Constitution on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992? Yes or no.

We are really dealing with endless negotiations here. Indeed, in this 60-point agreement, Mr. Jean Allaire from the Quebec Liberal Party picked out 60 points requiring negotiation or clarification following the referendum. What we are really asked for is a mandate to negotiate without a deadline.

I guess that when the Minister of National Health and Welfare and member for Roberval says that he does not want to hear about the Constitution after October 26, that is just his way of telling us he plans to resign, probably in hope of being appointed ambassador, something he has been dreaming of for months.

The question is not whether there will be further negotiations but whether we agree to further negotiations on the basis of the preliminary agreement reached on August 28, 1992. To believe that this referendum will close the constitutional debate is pure nonsense. Especially considering that, under the guise of a democratic process we are asked to surrender all our aspirations. We are asked to accept minority status under federal authority. What the proposal really amounts to for the people of Quebec is the slow death so well described by Mrs. Lise Bissonnette, editor of *Le Devoir*.

The Prime Minister still dares to talk about honour and dignity. He still dares holding up the Canadian federalism as an example of tolerance where the French language will be protected till kingdom come. He did not make that statement in English, mind you. Two languages, two messages.

In French, this is called demagogy. Saint-Exupéry said that demagogy sets in when, in the absence of a common denominator, the principle of equality is cause to degenerate and turn into that of identity.

That is why the Prime Minister is spending tens of millions of our tax dollars in publicity to make us believe that we are Canadians and proud of being Canadians, as if the pride of a nation could be bought and sold like a box of soap.

Although the target of repeated brain-washing attempts, the vast majority of the people who live in Quebec have grown to become first and foremost Quebecers. That is the true identity we want to affirm. And millions of dollars in publicity cannot change that.

To get along with the rest of Canada, we are not prepared to lose our identity as has been the case for millions of francophones outside Quebec who were assimilated with no regard for their rights.

Let those who describe Canadian federalism as an example of tolerance tell us why Mr. Ovide Mercredi cannot remember that his ancestors spoke French.

We all know that since Confederation, of which the Prime Minister praises the visionary character and the spirit of tolerance, the rights of francophones have been disregarded. In fact, at one time the will to preserve one's francophone identity was even considered high treason.

Louis Riel would be ashamed to find out that more than a hundred years after he was hanged, a simple statement by the House of Commons praising his patriotism would make us forget the real history of intolerance towards francophones in this country.

We can understand that francophones outside Quebec would want to be protected as the minority group which they have become. They have a right to such protection, but Quebecers do not want to be recognized as a minority in Canada: they want to be recognized as a majority in Quebec. They do not want the provisional safeguards that the rest of Canada would deign grant them. They want, today and forever, be the masters of their own future.

Quebecers are no longer merely trying to survive: they are now asserting their full cultural, economic and social potential.

You all know very well that this basic reality is at the root of the recurring political crisis in Canadian federalism.

For Quebecers to assert their cultural, economic and social potential requires an appropriate political frame-

work, and there will be no constitutional peace as long as the political institutions will not recognize this need.

We all know that the citizens of the rest of Canada want the federal government, of which they form the majority, to have the right and the power to intervene in all aspects of their cultural, economic and social life. But we also know that, to the extent that Quebecers refuse to give to the federal government the tools necessary to shape their future, we will continue to be in a crisis.

We want to put an end to these endless political and constitutional crises. That is why Quebecers have reached a consensus on an approach and on concrete proposals, through the Bélanger–Campeau commission. Among them, those who want to preserve the federal link have made a list of the rights and powers that they want exercised by the National Assembly, and a list of the rights and powers that they want to be exercised by the federal institutions, whereas others have proposed the patriation and devolution of all the rights and powers to the National Assembly, as well as forms of co–operation other than the federal link with the rest of Canada.

The basis for negotiation under the agreement reached on August 28, 1992 does not in any way satisfy the demands of even the federalists in Quebec.

We had reached a large consensus on our future and the decision made by Mr. Bourassa to break this consensus and accept the basis for negotiation proposed by the rest of Canada generates a major crisis in his own party, as well as disapproval among the majority of the population in Quebec. How can he claim that an agreement reached on that basis would put an end to the political crisis and the constitutional debate?

The about–face made by Mr. Bourassa will only increase tensions in Quebec and with the rest of Canada. We must call him to order. Quebecers have the opportunity during this debate to look at various aspects of the negotiation framework proposed in the August 28 agreement.

• (1840)

As financial critic, I am responsible for dealing more specifically with the economic side of these negotiation proposals.

Let us listen to Mr. Bernard Roy, former chief of staff of the Prime Minister and current chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montreal. He tells us: "It is obvious that what they are offering is not what the business community was asking for. Providing for a discussion procedure to give Quebec control over some areas of provincial jurisdiction through a five year agreement is not very efficient. And the proposal to give an equal Senate more powers will make the federal government more difficult to manage and less effective."

He then asks himself: "But if such is the price we have to pay to maintain the federal system and prevent the country from breaking up, are we going to turn our backs on this agreement because it creates some kind of monster?"

I still do not know how Mr. Roy will answer his question. I must thank him for having decided, despite his personal friendship with the Prime Minister of Canada, to make public such a clear assessment of the economic aspects of the August 28 proposals.

I can also understand the premier who decided to sell these proposals despite his friends' assessment and who joined forces so quickly with the head of the Liberal Party of Canada and Leader of the Official Opposition in the upcoming referendum campaign. He has chosen his side; let us choose ours.

With the economic challenge facing Montreal and all other regions of Quebec we must not agree to live with a monster just to save an overbearing federalism. On the contrary we must give ourselves political structures meeting the aspirations of both people and allowing them to finally express, without unnecessary and costly obstacles, the economic, cultural and social leadership they are capable of.

Why accept any longer the horrendous costs and inefficiency associated with having two ministries of Science, Technology, Justice, Immigration, Labour, Manpower, Revenue, Industry and Commerce, Financial Institutions, Health and Welfare, Energy and Resources, Agriculture, Environment, Transport, Recreation, Communications, Social Affairs, Regional Development, International Trade and even External Affairs?

This duplication is exceedingly costly for taxpayers and produces well–known horror stories such as a lack of co–ordination, inconsistency and even outright contradiction between programs run by both levels of government. It has become impossible for the taxpayer to know which level of government is responsible for what and to

make their elected officials accountable for their decisions.

If we want to stop wasting federal public funds we must take away from the federal government the power to collect and spend our taxes as it sees fit in all areas essential to the development of our cultural, economic and social potential.

Preserving the federal power to collect and spend taxes as proposed in the August 28 agreement means not only giving growth hormones to an exceedingly costly bureaucratic monster but also relinquishing to the federal Parliament, where we will always be a minority, the power to use our taxes to manipulate our development as it sees fit.

Canada must not be developed at the expense of Quebec and its people. We must say no to the unacceptable proposals before us.

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): Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, dear fellow citizens who are listening to the debates in this House, I must tell you that it is a great privilege for me to have this opportunity to publicly voice my opinion regarding the Charlottetown agreement.

As we all know this unanimous agreement was reached by the leaders of this country after incredible efforts and long negotiations reflecting a sense of belonging to Canada and most of all in keeping with the democratic principles so essential to the survival of a people.

As the former UN Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, said yesterday, our respect for democracy is an example for the rest of the world to follow.

Indeed this Canada where every one is free to express their opinion without having to retort to violence or being its victim is well worth our making together all possible efforts to preserve it. This is really the *raison d'être* of the present agreement.

Did you ever wonder why so many people want to become Canadians, Mr. Speaker? The answer to this question is obvious. A country is a whole, a family. And as in any family, each member has his or her own peculiarities, expectations, needs and idiosyncrasies. If we thought of splitting up whenever there was a disagreement, where would Canadian families be? For me, this agreement is evidence of the necessary adjustments we have to make to allow for the evolution of our community, and we can do it through dialogue and sometimes compromise.

Perfection does not exist in every day life. It is impossible for everything to be perfect in a country, but there are enough positive things to keep it whole and agree to make the necessary changes as we go along.

For far too long we have been talking about constitutional reform without ever reaching an agreement which would allow us to channel our energy toward other important issues. I think that we have done it this time. Canadians, just like us, want to resolve this issue. Ask manufacturers, workers, seniors, mothers or our young people. We are mature enough to finally decide to stand strong and united in this country which is the envy of the world.

The words diversity, distinct character, dignity, honour, compromise, concession, success, strength, nationalism and patriotism are not incompatible. To the contrary, they are the very essence of the human being, a constructive not destructive human being.

One has to strive for a country of such quality and it is now time for the Canadian people to make their choice known. I therefore commit myself from now on to making sure that my fellow citizens in Québec-Est will be able to make their choice an informed one and to providing them with all necessary information.

I will explain the content of this agreement to them: the will to recognize the inherent right to self-government of the aboriginal peoples, a concept of justice and equity; the Senate reform, a concept of efficiency; all the implications of the Canada clause; the social and economic union; the changes affecting the Supreme Court; the representation in the House of Commons; the First Ministers' Conferences; the amending formula and any other questions. I will inform them.

The cultural wealth of Canada is recognized all over the world. We are lucky enough to have this great territory to share with people who profess different values, have various ways of thinking and speak different languages. That reality must be entrenched once and for all in our Constitution so that we never have to relive the negative experiences of the past.

This being said, I must add that my intention is not to delve into the past; I am eager to go forward and to prepare the future for our senior citizens, for our own generation and for our children and grandchildren. All parents at one time say to a child: "don't get angry that way, try to understand your brothers; go kiss and make up".

This sentence is an exact image of what Canadians are: peaceloving people who care for the quality of life they have acquired over the years in this country which is dear to them.

• (1850)

I want to remind my fellow citizens that the agreement reached in Charlottetown is the necessary tool for this renewal that can no longer wait. I do not want my family to be subjected to a weakening of any kind. This is why in 1984 I decided to run in my riding of Québec–Est. At that time I put all my faith in the Prime Minister. Some were talking about a "risk worth taking". As for me, I preferred to talk about this very determined man with an incredible sense of honor. The years have shown that I only knew part of the strength of that man and I want to pay tribute to him today for all that he has done for us and for our country.

I will end with this motto: *Vox populi, vox dei.*

[*English*]

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, this is an unusual debate in that apart from my friends in the far corner off to the right, there is not a great deal of debate and yet, as every member would recognize on all sides, the issues that we are discussing are of the greatest importance to this country and to its future.

I have not participated in every constitutional debate in this House, most people will be glad to know, but I have participated in a few over a great number of years. Every time one of these debates occurs, it strikes me what an unusual country we have. It was a bit more than 20 years ago when Mr. Bourassa, in his first appearance as the Prime Minister of Quebec, appeared on Quebec television and said: *"Québec, ce n'est pas une province comme les autres."*

After the events of the last few years, as we have debated all these constitutional issues, you could say: *"Canada ce n'est pas un pays comme les autres.* When you recognize the degree to which this country can engage itself and the kinds of discussions that have gone on at every level, from the level of first ministers down to the average citizen, you realize that we are a very strange country indeed. It is not just that we have such an enormous land mass, the largest now in the world and covering so many time zones, so many types of geography and different communities, but it is a bit staggering to realize that for the first almost 100 years of our existence we did not have a flag, a national anthem or even our own Constitution.

We functioned from 1867 to the early 1960s without any of the trappings that most self-respecting nations had for themselves. It was some time in the 1920s that we started to be concerned about such things. It was with the meetings that took place and the Statute of Westminster in the 1930s when we got serious about having our own Constitution and perhaps ultimately having a flag which we got in 1964. We got around to ratifying *O Canada* in 1980. We ultimately, with a great deal of turmoil, brought the Constitution to Canada, retrieving the British North America Act and writing a charter of rights 10 years ago in 1982.

However, as we all recognize, the great element that was missing was, if one can put it this way, the oldest colonized part of the country which was Quebec which, in a formal sense, from the government of that day, did not participate in the constitutional accord. Therefore we spent another decade finally closing the loop.

Nobody should doubt that both in the Meech Accord and in the Charlottetown accord our first item of business was including all the provinces in this agreement.

We were told over the last year that this is a Canada round, and it very much is a Canada round, but it is crucially important that if the Constitution of 1982 is to

be the Constitution of Canada, the province of Quebec be fully a part of that accord.

Second, there was the concern for a whole variety of related matters affecting the functioning of the federal Parliament, the nature of the Senate, institutions related to it, economic and social concerns. A certain measure of progress has been made in finally democratizing the Senate, something that should have been done a very long time ago. How effective it will be remains to be seen.

I want to say that for my mind Canada has again broken new ground among the Commonwealth of nations by recognizing and righting a wrong that took place here half a millennia ago, beginning with 1492.

Finally in 1992 it is recognizing that the aboriginal peoples and all their various communities are equal citizens of this country, even to the point of describing what is being agreed to here as a new third order of government.

There is a great deal of concern around the world about what has happened over the decades and the centuries to aboriginal peoples. Nowhere has this been more poignantly revealed than in the events of Africa and the continuing events that are searing the face of southern Africa.

The recognition of aboriginal peoples as being a third order of government is absolutely crucial to the renewal of Canada and to the example Canada gives to the nations of the world. I have spent a bit of time in constitutional committees. I could spend many hours pointing out in the 60 clauses of the Charlottetown accord the weaknesses, the dangers and where the problems lie. I have to say that if Canadians from coast to coast to coast do not find this an important step forward in the history of our country, then I am a monkey's uncle because I believe that what has been achieved by first ministers, by aboriginal representatives, by a host of officials and experts is an important contribution in the 125th year of this nation's history.

I will be urging every one of my constituents in downtown Toronto and in any part of this country where I speak to say yes on October 26, a date that Canada has with history.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, the last time I participated in a debate dealing with the Constitution of Canada was in 1990 on the Meech Lake accord.

Up to 1987 and leading up to the establishment of Meech Lake, there were legitimate problems in Canada. Among the major problems that we were facing and have been facing was western alienation. The west was feeling that it did not really participate in the life of the nation, that all the big decisions were made in central Canada, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, a feeling that anything that the central government did was always done for the benefit of Quebec.

We had the problem of ignoring the First Nations as part of the Canadian Constitution. We also had the problem of the formal recognition on integration of Quebec into Canada.

The perception that grew about these problems was that they became more aggravated. Economic disparities became greater. Immigration brought people into Canada whose cultural backgrounds were certainly different from Canadians who were here. The injustices to First Nations were totally unacceptable to a vast number of Canadians. Changes were in order. We had to do something about this.

Those changes were not to the basic principles of what built this country. We were not going to change the principle of tolerance. That was not going to change. The ability to respect differences was not going to change. It was not going to touch the principle of accommodation which is the invitation to share the welcoming, to be part of the whole. It was not going to change the principle of fairness, a recognition that human rights as well as collective rights and individuals rights have to be respected and that we have to make sure that the people of this country can share in the production of the wealth of the country. There was also a need to update the social contract. This arrangement would allow the citizens to share more fully in the wealth that they helped to produce. The attempt was made in 1987 with Meech Lake, and it failed. I supported Meech Lake and I have no regrets about having done so. What followed the failure of Meech Lake was a long and elaborate process to come to grips with these problems that we were facing. It was long and protracted, and that is typically Canadian.

• (1900)

It is the way we do things in Canada: millions of hours of meetings, dozens of committees, hundreds of reports, thousands of publications, dozens of forums, and hundreds of debates. Hundreds of thousands of citizens were consulted, hundreds of millions of dollars were spent, I would like to think invested.

Not one bullet was fired. Not one person was killed. Not one life was lost in this emotional, draining and sometimes very boring exercise. That is our nature in Canada. We are looked on as people who would rather talk than fight. We are people who are seen as those who would rather spend hours and hours debating how many angels would dance on the head of a pin than put on the boxing gloves and take on somebody.

We are known as a nation of compromisers. In fact, there is the notion that Canada was built on compromise. There is a lot to be said for that, when you examine the history of the formation of Canada. That is the price we pay to be—

An hon. member: The best.

Mr. Rodriguez: That is the price we pay. We do not mind people making comments about us, about how boring we are, about how we would rather talk than fight, and so on. That is the price we pay and that is a price we are willing pay. It reflects a very unique heritage. It recognizes that we have different groups in this country and that we have to let groups have a chance to say something.

When governments do not listen to what the groups have to say governments find out in a hurry that the groups do not want deals cut behind closed doors. They want a more open process.

Of course there are short cuts. If people do not like the process that we have been following there are short cuts and they can follow those short cuts. Those short cuts are Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Tajikistan, Nagorno–Karabakh, and Georgia. If people want the short cuts they can go for them.

We have chosen our way. We have chosen to respect the principles that built this country which meant that we have to go through this process of consultation. What we have is the consensus report, third revision. Is that not typically Canadian? We are not over it. This is only one of the many steps before we get to the end of the process.

This package represents a compromise. Even the late Senator Eugene Forsey underestimated Canadians' ability to compromise. I want to quote something he said in his presentation at the time of the Meech Lake accord in 1987. He said: "The chances of any amendment being adopted even under the seven province formula are virtually nil. Ontario and Quebec will never accept any reduction in the number of senators from either province nor will the Atlantic provinces any reduction in their quotas. The House of Commons will never accept any change that gives the Senate more real power. The reformers will never accept any change that does not. Under the unanimous consent formula, the chances of change are microscopic".

What we have here is an agreement for change. The late Eugene Forsey underestimated the ability of Canadians to compromise because I believe the document that we have before us and that we are debating is really a compromise.

How does the compromise agreement deal with the problems I have listed? What were they? Do you remember, Madam Speaker, the concern for First Nations to be finally recognized as important and integral to Canada? The First Nations are now going to be placed four square in the Constitution. That is a big step forward. That alone merits very positive support from Canadians.

The concerns of western Canadians have been advanced. I do not think they had been fully met. They may not be satisfied with respect to the Triple-E Senate which was their big push, but I think their concerns have been addressed to some extent and they have been advanced. I would think they would like the proposed agreement rather than the present system.

Quebec is recognized as a distinct society and its ability to be a master in its own universe has been consolidated, advanced and enhanced.

The Constitution is only a framework of how we relate to each other, how we govern ourselves and how we manage our affairs. But a country is more than a framework, just as a human body is more than a skeleton. A country is made up of people, people who have dreams, who have hopes, who have aspirations. They have basic needs: bread and butter, security and shelter.

While we Canadians have been in the back of the airplane discussing constitutional renewal, we have left the airplane in the hands of financial interests both national and international. They have been only too pleased to continue signing real estate deals, signing trade agreements, shuffling paper, putting money into their pockets, building their own and strapping on their own golden parachutes in case the airplane goes down, while large numbers of Canadians have become unemployed and have been thrown on to the welfare rolls of the municipalities and the provinces and on to unemployment insurance.

Those skyrocket and the victims are blamed for having put these funds into deficit. Imagine the unemployment insurance fund for the first six months of this year is already $10 billion in the hole.

While we have been continuing our discussions in the back of the plane we have watched the deindustrialization of our nation. What good is it if we defeat this agreement and continue discussing constitutional change in the hope of getting the perfect constitution and everyone saying: "This is the perfect constitution that I support" and we inherit at the end of it an economic wasteland for a country?

I am not supporting the agreement because it is my ideal. I suppose the only way it would be my ideal is if I had written the bloody thing. I am supporting it because it is the best we are going to get for now. We have established in this agreement what I consider to be the most important elements. With this agreement we can now hold governments accountable for what I consider to be important things to the people of the country. I want to read the things that I consider important: providing throughout Canada a health care system that is comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible; providing adequate social services and benefits to ensure all individuals resident in Canada have reasonable access to housing, food and other basic necessities; providing high quality primary and secondary education to all individuals resident in Canada and ensuring reasonable access to post-secondary education; and protecting the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively.

• (1910)

This commitment is now being made. Look at the fuss we have in Ontario over the labour bill. Now we are establishing a national goal to which all the provinces subscribe.

I also consider protecting, preserving and sustaining the integrity of the environment for present and future generations to be important.

The policy objectives continue, and here is my favourite. Now we have written into the Constitution the objective or the goal of full employment. No longer will a government sitting across the aisle be allowed to use the unemployed in this country as cannon fodder in some war against inflation, recession or whatever else.

Ensuring that all Canadians have a reasonable standard of living and ensuring sustainable and equitable development are also important.

Those are the issues. Once we have disposed of this agreement, those are the issues on which we should concentrate all our efforts, our minds, and our strength. Those things affect Canadians very sensitively, such as the right to a job. We have put those things on hold for the last couple of years. We have left all these things to John Crowe, the international bankers, the domestic bankers, and others like them. They have been only too happy to accommodate us and now we are living with 12 per cent unemployment in this nation. Our people are taxed beyond their limits.

An hon. member: It is nothing to crow about.

Mr. Rodriguez: There is certainly nothing to crow about, absolutely nothing to crow about.

As a social democrat I am supporting the agreement because I believe those things identify clearly the kind of co-operative federalism we have always talked about.

We are putting in place a clear injunction to ourselves as lawmakers that we are indeed our brother's keeper. We do have a responsibility for each other. On that basis I believe this agreement is worthy of support and I intend to work in my riding for the yes position on this agreement.

Hon. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, I am pleased in the final hours of this debate on the national referendum question to join with colleagues

from the three national parties in indicating that I will be supporting the yes vote.

I have been encouraged in the last number of days by the numbers of calls that have come to my constituency office in Waterloo, Ontario. They are from people, many of whom come from a multicultural background in an area that is largely German speaking, a high percentage, wanting to know more about the deal, wanting to know how they can be a part of sending messages of the importance they see in Canada.

I think of this year's largest ever, most vibrant Canada Day celebration. I think of the expressions of affection for Canada that have come largely because we have begun through the process of the Spicer commission, through the hearings of our parliamentary committees and other fora, to focus on what Canada is. We each have our own reasons for voting yes. As I speak in the Chamber tonight. I think of my days in student political life in Canada—

[*Translation*]

I have developed a close friendship with two members of the House of Commons, the members for Saint-Denis and Papineau, that offers me an opportunity to understand the essence and the spirit of the province of Quebec.

[*English*]

I think of my time with CUSO looking at Canada from Africa. I think also of the importance of English and language in that great continent.

[*Translation*]

I think how very important it is for the development of Africa and for numerous young men and women who work there, thanks to CIDA and to other governmental programs, I think about the Canadian contribution to development.

[*English*]

Along with the hon. member for Rosedale, I think of the contribution of the churches, English and French, with their connections in the developing world and in Eastern Europe. I think of Canada's partnership and leadership. I think of the challenges facing our world and I recognize what Canada has done. I feel that the best days are still ahead of us.

The great Canadian, Joseph Howe, used to say: "Brag about your country, boys". We all know we have not been much accustomed to making this sort of speech either here in the House, in committee or in the country. I am looking forward to going across Waterloo region and other parts of the country to encourage Canadians to see ourselves as others see us.

In the last five years, as a member of our Canadian delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations, I have had the opportunity to see how others see us, how they feel about us, our contribution, what they feel about our ability to deal with minorities, our sensitivity to the kinds of world problems that are on the news every few moments.

I want to say a word about Canadians serving abroad. I noticed in today's media that 30,000 Canadians who are imprisoned in provincial and federal penitentiaries will have the vote. Members of our foreign service, members of our military, members of CIDA and development staff who are overseas and are based in Quebec have come to my attention.

[*Translation*]

These bureaucrats are officially domiciled in Quebec. They have lived in Europe and worked for the United Nations for more than two years and they do not have the right to vote.

[*English*]

I asked the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. I asked the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs if they will not review this because there are no prouder Canadians than those who serve overseas for us in our embassies and peacekeeping forces. If they have been at Lahr for a number of years and have suddenly gone into Yugoslavia to be a part of that situation, why should they lose a vote?

We have time to get the apparatus in place. Let there be consultations. There are many in Central America and many in eastern and central Europe who look to Canada and say: "We feel that you can live together". At recent conferences of the United Nations development program, people came again and again and said: "We are glad to hear your three parties have a positive proposal to put forward. We are with you and we want you to succeed".

The external affairs committee visited the former Soviet Union, Russia and Ukraine. We saw what we have to offer. We know the links in Canada, people who have their roots there. We looked at southern Africa and tabled a report in June. We saw what we can do with democratic institutions, respect for minority and the whole infrastructure role.

Let me say we have already looked at the ingredients which are part of the Charlottetown package, the importance of the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society, the aboriginals, the question of an elected and equal Senate and the new division of powers. Let me conclude by reflecting on this to Canadians as we gather to talk about our future. Let us reflect that when the Japanese want to learn about peacekeeping, they come to Canada; when the brave democrats of eastern Europe and Russia want to find out about parliaments, banks, stock markets and legal systems, they come to Canada; when Mikhail Gorbachev was Minister of Agriculture and wanted to improve Soviet farms, he came to Canada; when the Americans want to find out how to make health care more efficient and effective, they come to Canada; when the Namibians want expertise in municipal affairs, they come to Canada and to Kitchener—Waterloo; and, when South Africans, black or white, want to learn about elections that are fair, a new legal system that is just and modern, an economy that works, they come to Canada.

• (1920)

Canada is in the heart of all of us. Each of us has a different perspective of it. We have much and have given much; we have much to receive from the world. All of our futures are best off with a peaceful, just world. Canada has that reputation. The resources of English and French give us a unique position in the family of nations. I, for one, will be working to encourage a very positive yes vote in order that the legislature of Ontario may quickly pass it, along with the other legislatures, and we can move on to the important issue of jobs.

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be able to participate in this historic debate. During my eight years in this House there have been many important issues and bills discussed such as capital punishment and abortion. We voted to have a free trade agreement with the United States, and we voted to go to war last year in the gulf. In my opinion none of these debates or votes was as vital as the issue we have been debating for the last few days, the future of this magnificent country, Canada.

On August 28 the *Consensus Report on the Constitution* was agreed to unanimously by the Prime Minister of Canada, the 10 provincial premiers, the leaders of our two territorial governments and the representatives of four aboriginal associations. The agreement by these 17 leaders culminates the most extensive consultation ever with Canadians. The agreement is not perfect. It does have some flaws. I am concerned, for instance, about the cost of the increased size of the House of Commons. I am not sure if the new Senate will be effective or if it will create legislative gridlock. I believe it is accurate to say that not one of the 17 leaders meeting in Charlottetown was totally satisfied with the agreement. This situation was expected if an agreement was to be achieved. There had to be understanding, compromise and a good spirit of give and take.

Now is the time to turn to the people of Canada. One of the main criticisms of the Meech Lake accord was that it was done by 11 men behind closed doors. This negotiation process, the Canada round, was just the opposite. As I said earlier, during the past two years we have witnessed the most extensive consultation with Canadians in the history of this great country. It is now appropriate and democratic to go back to the people for their say on this historic package of fundamental changes in our parliamentary system. Between now and October 26 Canadians will be asking questions and making comments. The greatest challenge we are faced with is communicating the essence and the highlights of this Charlottetown agreement so that Canadians can make an informed decision when they cast their vote.

I know there is a great deal of cynicism about the process. Some Canadians believe we have spent too much time on this issue. They believe we should be spending more time on economic issues and job creation measures. I agree these economic issues are of vital importance, but solving the constitutional impasse is crucial for resolving economic problems. The two are entwined.

The lack of constitutional agreement has created financial instability. Foreign and Canadian investors have put projects on hold. A positive resolution of the Constitution impasse will open the path and create a climate conducive to addressing the very real and pressing economic and social challenges facing Canada. As

the Prime Minister said on September 8: "This agreement, if endorsed by the Canadian people and enshrined in our Constitution, will mark an accomplishment that has eluded many generations of Canadians and their elected representatives". I think it is useful to highlight some of the fundamental objectives that had to be attained in order to achieve a durable and lasting national reconciliation. For decades the western provinces have felt frustrated with their lack of power and influence on many major decisions made in central Canada. Atlantic Canada has had to deal with many aspects of economic disparity.

As the Prime Minister said, we must find a way to ensure that Quebecers, whose special character so enriches the distinctiveness of our national life, become willing and enthusiastic partners in Canada.

The voices and concerns of the people of the north and our aboriginal peoples had to be addressed in an understanding and compassionate manner. The time has come for Canadians to embrace the inherent right to self-government of aboriginal peoples.

In trying to achieve all of the above objectives, we must not ignore the frustrations and concerns of the people of Ontario, whose great contributions to the well-being of Canada are in my opinion sometimes either misconstrued or not recognized and appreciated.

I believe these fundamental objectives have been met. It is now time for Canadians to reflect on the proposals within the agreement, ask questions and discuss it with friends and neighbours.

I thought Peter Newman made a profound statement in a recent *Maclean's* article when he said:

> The real issue of the October 26 referendum is deciding whether we have a future, not the shape of what that future might be.

A yes vote at least gives Canadians the chance to shape our future as a united country. A no vote does not. We have a great, tolerant, diverse, rich country that we must fight together to preserve. We must continue to be proud of Canada and all we have achieved since our birth as a nation.

Sir John A. Macdonald's words, spoken in 1861, ring equally true today:

> Whatever you do, adhere to the union, we are a great country, and we 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.

I understand the House will rise next week so that we can spend the next five weeks in our ridings talking with our constituents, listening to their views and answering their questions.

I plan to help organize a yes committee in Markham and in Whitchurch-Stouffville. These will be non-partisan committees comprised of concerned residents who will help co-ordinate activities.

Canadians must have the opportunity to arrive at the polls on October 26 in a position to make an informed and bold decision about this constitutional package and the future of Canada.

On October 26 I will be voting yes to a united Canada. I hope that our pride and confidence in the future of this great nation will encourage all Canadians to participate in this historic referendum and give a renewed Canada their enthusiastic stamp of approval.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this important and historic debate. I want to say from the outset that I intend to cast my vote with millions of other Canadians on October 26 for the yes side in this referendum campaign which will begin in a matter of days.

All across the country there are many voices, particularly the voices of the premiers who sat around the negotiating table, the voice of the Prime Minister and the leaders of the opposition parties that encourage us to examine constructively this Charlottetown accord. I hope Canadians will do that. They will find a document which I think reflects Canada, reflects the shared values of a nation that is diverse from sea to sea, that is different from sea to sea, but nevertheless holds in common a set of beliefs about ourselves as a people, how we organize ourselves and those things we believe to be important.

It reflects a spirit of generosity, a spirit of tolerance, a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood that is unique among nations of the world and certainly must be seen to be unique among the nations of the world as we watch with anguish night after night the bombs in Beirut, the bullets in Bosnia and the starvation in Somalia.

• (1930)

We sit in the security and the comfort of our homes watching this horror. Much of the world is unveiling itself to us nightly on our televisions as we sit secure in our homes with the knowledge of the protections afforded to us in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We have to reflect upon these values of being a Canadian. I want to say that something that has bothered me as a member of Parliament for a great many years about this constitutional debate, something that I think has to cease during the course of this referendum campaign, the tendency in this country to be asked to define ourselves and our role in Canada as if we in our respective communities or provinces were mere pieces on a Monopoly board.

If we were to believe those who would seek to divide us, there are no Canadians in this country called Canada. There are only Newfoundlanders, Nova Scotians, Ontarians, the people of British Columbia, Quebecers or Albertans. That is not true. For every voice that would ask us to examine this constitutional accord based on what it did for me in my back yard, I am convinced that there are 100 more in whose breast beats the heart of Canada.

I am a Newfoundlander, but let nobody marginalize me. Let nobody seek to reduce me. Let nobody seek to constrain my vision and my participation in this great experiment on the northern half of the North American continent to Newfoundland and Labrador, as wonderful as that is.

I take pride in all of this country. I have driven through the Rockies and their majesty. I have seen the great individualism of the people of British Columbia, their resilience and energy; people on the prairies; the great entrepreneurship of the great industrial heartland, Ontario; the uniqueness of that distinct society that is the people of Quebec and the rich tapestry of the colour and the energy of the people of Atlantic Canada. Every part of it is part of what I am. I am part of Canada.

I say to my fellow colleagues that if we ask the people of our ridings, the people of our constituencies, the people in the provinces from which we come to measure this accord on the basis of whether or not within our own back yard, whether it is our community, our town or our province, we somehow won a great victory, we came away with a larger share of the national pie than our neighbour, then every one of us is doomed to come to the conclusion that we failed. But if our vision is bigger than our own back yard and if our imagination is broader than the boundaries of something called a province, if we can see, feel and participate in this referendum campaign as Canadians, if we can see beyond our disappointments, whether individual members, government or political parties, and see the opportunity that still resides in this fantastic country, I am convinced Canadians from coast to coast will say yes to the constitutional renewal of Canada.

There is something else I want to say because it has to be said. One of the reasons I am going to vote not with resignation, not with it is the best we can do attitude but with enthusiasm for this accord is that I believe it is important that we recognize the people of Quebec.

There are a few million francophones in a sea of 300 million francophones who need to know that their language and culture is secure and protected and they need to know they can look to the national Parliament, to the national government here in Ottawa and not just to their government in Quebec City to protect that language and culture.

There is provision in the Charlottetown accord so my fellow Canadians, francophones in Quebec, can count on their national government, national institutions, national courts, national Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the good will and generosity of their fellow Canadians to ensure that in a sea of anglophones the Quebec people, their language and their culture are protected. That is the spirit of generosity and tolerance I talked about.

I will not attempt to repeat the analysis done by those who have spoken before me of the individual components of this package. Let me just repeat again that if what we seek in this accord is perfection it will not be found because if perfection had been the measure of success of the British North American Act, the British North American Act of 1867 would have been a failure.

If perfection was the requirement of the Constitution Act, 1982, then the Constitution Act, 1982, would have been a failure. If perfection is what we expected in our families, in our spouses, in our children, in our friends, in our jobs, or in ourselves our lives could be nothing but failure.

If we see as we must this accord, this compromise, this honourable compromise and a spirit of fairness, balance and tolerance, we will see it as the basis upon which to put this debate behind us, to renew this country constitutionally and to help it achieve its full potential as we march as we do toward the year 2000.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate to support the referendum question and the Charlottetown accord of August 28. I do so with enthusiasm and commitment.

It is true, as many other members have said, that this accord is not perfect, but neither was the the British North American Act of 1867. It went to the Supreme Court and the Privy Council thousands of times. I am not overestimating that, thousands of times. That Constitution and the society it founded, the country it founded, lasted for 125 years.

If the people in 1867 had nit-picked at that Constitution like many of our people nit-picked at the Meech accord and at this accord, we would never have had a country. They had the political will to form a country and to adopt a Constitution despite its imperfections.

I say to this House that despite some imperfection in this accord, it represents many substantial gains for many communities in this country. What are they? To begin with, for the first time constitutionally we have recognized the inherent right of the aboriginal peoples to govern themselves. Those are landmark, world precedent, provisions. We should be proud of them.

If it were only for those provisions alone in the accord I would go to the wall in support of that accord because those are so important all by themselves.

For the first time constitutionally we have recognized the minority language communities in our Constitution with a commitment to their vitality and development. I say for the first time we have recognized the official language communities because in the Constitution of 1867 and in the Constitution of 1982 we recognized the right of individuals to go to court in English and French, to have schools in English and French, but we do not refer to the communities, to the collective rights.

This is the first time that we have said we recognize the collective rights of the communities, the francophone communities outside of Quebec, and the anglophone community in Quebec.

• (1940)

I must remind the House that there are now over one million francophones living outside of Quebec in this country. There are more francophones outside Quebec than there were in Quebec in 1867. There are 800,000 or more anglophones living in Quebec, which is more people than many of the provinces.

Again, these provisions represent a substantial gain for those communities.

Third, the Charlottetown accord contains several provisions that recognize the distinct society of Quebec and assure not only its continued existence but its *épanouissement* and development.

This accord, without doubt, contains much more than the Meech accord to protect the unique position of Quebec. I cannot understand why those who supported the Meech accord, like the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean and the other members of the Bloc Quebecois who at that time were in the Conservative Party, would now attack this accord when it contains much more than Meech.

If we put the Meech accord side by side with this you would see that everything that was in Meech is here, plus the guarantee for Quebec to keep 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons—which it historically has always had more or less so this is not something new, but it is now written in the Constitution—plus a guarantee that they will have one-third of the judges in the Supreme Court of Canada, plus a veto with other provinces on changes to national institutions, plus a double majority in the Senate to protect language and culture at the federal level, plus greater clarification and consolidation of provincial powers.

Again there are definite gains, not all that people in Quebec would like but substantial gains to protect the language and culture and the future of Quebec within Confederation.

Fourth, this accord gives more clout to the west and to the Atlantic provinces through a reformed Senate. It is true that it is not a Triple-E Senate, much to the disappointment of many people in the west. I would have supported a Triple-E Senate. However, it is a two and a half E Senate. It is an elected Senate. It is an equal

Senate and it is almost an effective Senate. That remains to be seen.

It is true that the Senate will only have a total veto on matters relating to resources and on matters relating to the French language and culture, but its power to force joint sessions with the House of Commons on other matters will have more significance than many people expect.

Right now the present Senate has full legal powers to veto every bill that comes from this place, but it is rarely done because they are not elected and because they do not have political credibility. They have full legal powers but no political credibility.

Under the Charlottetown accord the new Senate will have less legal power but much greater political power because they are fully elected and there are only six senators from each province. It is my sense that when the 24 senators from the west, with others, turn down a House of Commons bill the government will take that message very seriously and will attempt to work out compromises with the Senate rather than force a vote in a joint session in the House of Commons. I am willing to bet that we will see more compromises worked out behind the scenes than we would otherwise.

Madam Speaker, you are signalling that my time is up. I must say that seven minutes for such an important subject is not enough, but let me conclude.

While this is not a perfect document it is a definite improvement for most Canadians and it does not diminish the rights of anyone. It is time to stop nit-picking. It is time to get on with other economic and social matters. This accord demonstrates that as Canadians living in this great land we have much more that unites us as individuals than that divides us. What is required is vision and political will, and a vote yes on October 26.

[*Translation*]

M. Yvon Côté (Richmond—Wolfe): Madam Speaker, as the member for that wonderful riding of Richmond—Wolfe in the Eastern Townships, I would like to say how much I appreciate the agreement arrived at by the Premiers because it is good for all of Canada, for all the regions of Canada and especially for Quebec. Therefore, I will encourage my constituents to vote yes in favour of that agreement.

I am tempted to list here all the reasons I will do so, but since time is short and we must compromise, I will give my colleague, the member for Verdun, the opportunity to follow up and complete my comments in a few minutes.

However, I will mention one attitude I believe to be unfortunate and harmful in this debate which is about to begin. I am thinking here about that climate of verbal violence, about those insults flying around, particularly in Quebec. I find it inadmissible, when dealing with such a fundamental issue that people, political leaders, representatives of the nation be so disgraceful, trading insults and spouting abuse at each other. I feel this is a very disturbing start to such an important debate.

My second comment is this: I disapprove, of course, of all the critics coming from the opponents to the agreement, those who favour the no. Let me give you an example. They condemn the government and the provincial premiers for not having a legal document to offer. I almost feel like asking them right out if there were legal documents for the 1980 referendum; at least let me remind them of what the situation was. I would say that the text of the question itself left the debate wide open and gave enormous leeway to any government taking office after sovereignty.

It is therefore unacceptable, that we be condemned because the debate is not supported by legal documents. Let me give you another example. Quite often business people, who are experienced and who have everything to lose because they have a fortune and they have investments will not even read a contract and the legal documents because they trust the person they have chosen to represent them, whether a notary or a lawyer. This criticism is therefore unacceptable.

There is also the so-called vagueness of the question. In my opinion the question is a lot more precise since it asks us to approve a project, a contract that is already on the table, which was not always the case in previous consultations as far as I know. This is a lot closer to something that we can evaluate concretely.

Moreover, this proposal can be improved over time. This brings me to make the following statement. We are criticized because the agreement provides for future

consultations which could give rise to disputes, but this is precisely what is good about it. In the present Constitution unanimity is required to be able to make changes with the result that attempts were often made but always in vain because we could never have unanimity. This agreement, however, allows us to improve the content. In a federation, to revise a contract between partners every five or ten years is the least we can do. These criticisms are not justified in my opinion.

• (1950)

Some members of the no side contradict each other. Recently we heard that to say no would not necessarily mean we are saying yes to sovereignty.

But it is rather strange to read this in today's issue of *La Presse* about the leader of the Bloc Quebecois: "The Bloc Quebecois leader said in an interview that sovereignists will not be bound by a Quebec vote in favour of the provisional constitutional accord". Mr. Bouchard goes on to say: "Legally it would be binding", referring to a vote in favour of the agreement.

If 50 per cent of the voters plus one are in favour it is a decision. Politically though it is different. You can see that the no which Mr. Parizeau said was not a yes to sovereignty seems to be interpreted differently in another statement made by the Bloc leader who said: "Should the yes win, we will keep going and consider that sovereignty will come back".

I see that the clock is ticking away and, as in any agreement between partners, I was willing to make a compromise. I wish to inform you that the member for Verdun—Saint-Paul will take over from me. But I urge the people from Quebec to avoid this climate of verbal violence and insults, to remain calm, to be informed, to read and to make the decision that will preserve the dignity and the honour of Quebec, that is to vote yes.

Mr. Gilbert Chartrand (Verdun—Saint-Paul): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be able to say a few words on this agreement, especially in front of this very personal audience.

As you are no doubt aware we have always had a touch of nationalism in Quebec, but as it turns out one cannot be a nationalist any more unless he or she belongs to the category of nationalists who advocate sovereignty.

I know from personal experience what it is to be a nationalist advocating sovereignty. To some extent that is why I sit on the other side of the House now.

Just yesterday the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was saying that he would vote no because he wants a better future for his children, an easier and better life, and he is willing to take the chance.

I agree with that to some extent but my position is just as good. The difference is that, in his mind, his children have a dual nationality. As you know, having married an American, his children will have the choice of settling here or in the U.S. Mine are living here.

They will live here all the time and have to face things as they come. When you go to Quebec you meet sovereignists like the leader of the opposition, Mr. Parizeau, who tells the people that sovereignty has been put aside and so on. I have also had the chance to meet him.

What he is saying is quite simple. He will tell you that the people do not count for much. What is important is to gain power and to do what you want with the people. On the other hand, Mr. Bernard Landry, his right-hand man, is promising jobs for everyone.

Everybody in an independent Quebec will have a job, he said, but what he really wanted was Parizeau's job. So we are faced with a power struggle within the no umbrella group. We in the yes umbrella group are seen as traitors because we want a better future for our children and their children.

Why should we not have the right to a strong Quebec as well as a united Canada? Who is going to deny us that? Really, nobody can deny us that because what people truly want is change. They want to focus on the economy. They need to feel secure. They need to talk about something else.

The agreement is certainly good. You can argue all the legal points. You can show all the advantages. There will always be some people who are for it and others against it. In the end what people want is someone they can trust.

For 11 months I sat on the other side and there is one person I have seen get up and fight for Quebec: the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister always believed that it was possible for Quebecers to have a future within Canada.

The reason I came back is that I trusted one person. The offers we get today are perfectly acceptable. The majority of the people are willing to accept them because they want, on October 27, to be able to work, to be able to move on to something else, to set the Constitution aside, because nobody lives on Constitution.

There are those who say that, on our side, some speak from both sides of their mouths, that the member for Roberval says that he has had enough with the Constitution or that Senator Gérald Beaudoin says that it will go on. Sure enough, Senator Beaudoin will have less work once the constitutional issue is settled. As for the member for Roberval he will resume his activities as minister of National Health and Welfare; that gives him the Opportunity to promote something, to allow people to succeed, to live.

For me, it is rather simple. A yes is a yes to renewal, to progress and to a new life. Personally, what I want is stability; it is political stability that people need. Let them be the judge later on when general elections are called; the choice will be theirs. Right now what we need is for the economy to recover. For that every Canadian should say yes to the agreement.

What also promptèd me to rise tonight is that I saw on television the press conference given by a prominent leader who cannot even make up his own mind. He had to have an 800 line to talk to his followers and get an idea of what he was supposed to do. The Reform Party of Canada said it is against it because people called in at their own expense to voice their opposition to the agreement. The party could not cover people's expenses. People had to call at their expense to give their opinion, to say wether they were for it or against it. It is an extremist like him who will be one of the leaders of the no side. We can imagine the wonderful team they will make, the reformist extremist in the west and the sovereignty extremist in Quebec will take the same side on a question people at large have already a very good understanding of. They know very well that saying yes to the agreement is saying yes to stability and solidarity; they will thus show that they understand we are teaming up together.

There will always be problems between provinces. In Quebec, for once, we gain something definite. People tell us that Mr. Bourassa did not do well in the negotiations. Could anybody tell us what other premier has succeeded in reaching an agreement with all other Canadian premiers? None. No other Quebec premier was able to come to an agreement with his counterparts in the rest of the country. Mr. Bourassa is the first one to do so. He is the first one to present an acceptable offer which he is ready to defend before the people. We must not forget that it is not the big guns of the federal government who will sell the agreement in Quebec. It is Mr. Bourassa who has agreed to present the proposal to the people and defend it.

During this referendum campaign we will stand behind him and provide him with all the information we can get on our side. We are going to build. People on the no side are destructive. They do not realize that, right now, people are not in a destructive mood. The silent majority is listening. It can clearly see direct attacks on issues that are totally irrelevant. They are free to launch personal attacks against the Prime Minister or Mr. Bourassa, but they should not confuse that with the referendum question or the issue of sovereignty or any other issue. There will always be political points to make.

I think this matter is important for the people. As far as I am concerned, I will ask the people in my riding of Verdun—Saint-Paul to vote for the renewal of Canada on October 26, to vote for an economic renewal so that future generations will have a chance to succeed in this world of ours that needs unity. I hope October 27 will be the beginning of a new era.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words tonight, although there will not be many because of the hour, concerning the Charlottetown agreement.

It seems to me that this agreement which was brought together after massive consultation across the country, and with the participation of the 10 premiers and the Prime Minister, represents a very good compromise for our country.

• (2000)

The miracle is that this compromise was reached. It seems to me that during the next several weeks we are going to have a chance to put forth our vision of Canada and Confederation. It represents a compromise in many directions and for that reason many members of the House have many qualms or concerns about individual parts of it.

However, at the end of the day we have to ask ourselves whether we want more consultation. Do we want the kinds of negotiations that we have been going through for the past year to continue? What are the consequences for our great nation? We know that they are very serious.

As I said, it is not a perfect document but it is the kind of compromise which has kept our country together for these many 125 years which we celebrate this year. Most of us believe that a failure in this referendum that will take place on October 26 would have the most serious consequences our nation could ever face.

Therefore I vote for this motion. I work for this Charlottetown consensus document and I hope that other members of the House will do the same.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being eight o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, September 9, 1992, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of government Motion No. 11.

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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 225*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Anawak
Angus
Assad
Attewell
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Beatty
Bellemare
Bernier
Bevilacqua
Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Breaugh
Brightwell
Callbeck
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Catterall
Champagne (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Chartrand
Clancy
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Comuzzi
Copps
Corbett
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
Della Noce
Dick
Dionne
Domm
Duhamel
Edwards
Fee
Ferguson
Finestone
Flis
Fontana
Friesen
Funk
Gagliano
Gibeau
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Gustafson
Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap
Hockin
Hopkins
Hudon
Hunter
James
Johnson
Jordan
Kaplan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Langlois
Larrivée
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
MacLellan
Althouse
Andre
Arseneault
Atkinson
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Barrett
Bélair
Berger
Bertrand
Bird
Blackburn (Brant)
Blaikie
Blondin
Boudria
Boyer
Brewin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Cardiff
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Chrétien
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbeil
Côté
Crawford
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dingwall
Dobbie
Dorin
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Ferland
Fisher
Fontaine
Foster
Fulton
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guilbault
Harb
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hicks
Hogue
Hovdebo
Hughes
Jacques
Jelinek
Joncas
Jourdenais
Karpoff
Kempling
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Landry
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
Layton
Lee
Loiselle
MacAulay
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacLaren
MacWilliam

Maheu
Marchi
Marleau
Masse
McCurdy
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLaughlin
Merrithew
Mitchell
Monteith
Mulroney
Nault
Nystrom
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Plourde
Pronovost
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Riis
Rompkey
Saint-Julien
Schneider
Shields
Simmons
Sobeski
Sparrow
Stevenson
Stupich
Taylor
Thompson
Tobin
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Manley
Marin
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McCreath
McDermid
McGuire
McLean
Mifflin
Mitges
Moore
Murphy
Nunziata
Oberle
Ouellet
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Porter
Proud
Reid
Ricard
Rideout
Rodriguez
Roy-Arcelin
Samson
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Soetens
Speller
Stewart
Tardif
Têtreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)
Vanclief
Vankoughnet
Vien
Volpe
Wappel
Whittaker
Winegard
Worthy
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—233
Valcourt
Van De Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Walker
Weiner
Wilbee
Wood
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Duceppe
Grey (Beaver River)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Cook
Gérin
Kindy
Nowlan
Rocheleau
Venne—12

PAIRED MEMBERS

Lewis
Milliken

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 8.32 o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, September 9, 1992, this House stands adjourned until Monday, September 14, 1992 at eleven o'clock a.m.

The House adjourned at 8.32 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 14, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

JUSTICE

NARCOTICS CONTROL ACT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should share, in a fair and equitable manner, the assets seized from prosecutions proceeded by under the Narcotics Control Act, with all local police forces involved in the investigation and arrest of the offender.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be the sponsor of this particular resolution. As the Order Paper indicates, this resolution was moved on October 7, 1991.

In September 1991 I had the privilege of attending a public meeting in the riding of York South—Weston. The James Street Corridor Community Association sponsored a meeting to discuss the problem of crime and drugs in the community.

One of the issues of major concern to those present was how the proceeds of crime legislation was being dealt with, the fact that police forces, and in particular the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force, were not receiving a share of the proceeds of crime specifically dealing with drug prosecutions. It was felt by that group and representatives of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force that it was unfair of the federal government not to share in the proceeds of crime dealing with prosecutions under the Narcotics Control Act.

• (1110)

To put this matter into perspective, in 1988, $10.6 million was seized as a result of prosecutions under the Narcotics Control Act. That was before Bill C-61 was passed.

If you recall, Madam Speaker, on this side of the House we have been pressing for a number of years for the government to enact legislation which would permit police forces to freeze and seize proceeds of crime.

Finally in 1989 the government passed that legislation, but prior to the passage of that legislation only $10.6 million was seized. In 1989, $38 million was seized so we can see the dramatic jump as a result of this legislation. In 1990 I am advised that $45 million was seized and this year we should be seizing approximately $50 million.

What happens to that money? Up until now that money would be received by the Receiver General for Canada, would go into general revenues and would be lost in the national bank here. The local police forces and municipalities would not share notwithstanding the fact that largely through the efforts of certain police forces across the country huge seizures were made.

In any event, the government admits that even at $50 million it is still far short of what could be seized if the legislation was properly administered.

When the Solicitor General was in Vancouver in August, he released the RCMP's national drug intelligence estimate for 1991. The RCMP estimates that the drug trade in Canada today is worth between $4 billion and $10 billion, and to date we have only been receiving approximately $50 million as a result of the proceeds of crime legislation.

One of the reasons that the amount is so low is that local police forces have been reluctant to prosecute with full vigour. I would like to quote from a document put out by the Solicitor General. It was a backgrounder when the minister made his announcement in August which says:

> Despite successes, the level of seizures and forfeitures pursuant to the legislation has fallen short of expectations. Key among the reasons for the shortfall are: (1) the absence of a coherent adequate resource asset management regime; and (2) a reluctance on the part of provincial and local police to participate in federal enforcement because proceeds investigations can be costly but the police receive no part of the forfeitures resulting largely or partly by their effort.

That is fairly astounding. There is an admission by the minister that local police forces are not pursuing with all the vigour and the resources they can muster the prosecution of certain drug offences because of the fact that they are costly and the federal government was not prepared to share.

The first reason given was the absence of a coherent, adequate resource asset management regime. In other words the local police were concerned, and the example often given was the ski resort that was purchased because of drug dealing. There was no organization that would manage the assets once they were seized prior to the police forces having the opportunity to liquidate.

I have had discussions with the local police in metropolitan Toronto including Chief of Police McCormack and others within my own constituency. They have reiterated time and time again that one of the major reasons why they have not been able to prosecute as vigorously as they might otherwise like was because of the shortage of resources. It costs money to prosecute drug offenders. It costs money to investigate.

Undercover police officers require cash in order to purchase drugs, to further investigations, and in particular in metropolitan Toronto the police force has been the subject of a tax squeeze. The municipal metro government in Toronto has cut back dramatically the resources available to the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force and the public suffers as a result.

The police chief and others have been wanting for a number of years now, at least since 1989, a fair share of the assets that are seized and then sold as a result of their efforts, as a result of expenditures made by them.

I should point out that in metropolitan Toronto, as is the case in all municipalities in Ontario and elsewhere in the country, it is the local taxpayer, the property owner, the tenants who are footing the bill for what ought to be a federal initiative.

Following that meeting in September 1991 I started a national petition drive. I enlisted the support of a number of groups, organizations and police forces across the country and petitions were circulated. I am pleased to see that in August of this year the Solicitor General finally made an announcement, that the federal government, and I am quoting from his press release, "is planning to share assets forfeited as a result of federal prosecutions of drug traffickers".

I am pleased the minister is moving in the right direction but I am not pleased with the rate, with how quickly the minister is proceeding. He is simply planning. Rather than introducing legislation the minister is dragging his feet. Again he says he wants to consult as if there has not been enough consultation.

If I were a cynic I would suggest the minister was trying to score some cheap political points when he was making his speech before the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. He ought to have had a piece of legislation to introduce in the House this week or when Parliament was recalled last week. Instead he says he will continue to consult. He is concerned that local police forces or provincial governments might object. I have not heard of one provincial government that has objected to the federal government sending money to provincial police forces.

Under this proposal by the minister—and it is simply a proposal, there is no legislation—he proposes to set up an asset management office in Ottawa that would be responsible for managing assets that are seized under Bill C-61, the proceeds of crime legislation. The responsibility of that office would be to give pre-seizure advice to control and maintain the seized property, the management of restrained property appraisal, the advancement of moneys to preserve property, the disposal of property and allocation of proceeds, et cetera.

In his backgrounder the minister is suggesting that the sharing should be on a 90 per cent, 50 per cent or 10 per cent basis. In other words, the minister is suggesting that at the end of the fiscal year the government would look at how much money it had seized and would dole out to the participating police forces either 90 per cent, 50 per cent or 10 per cent based on the participation of the local force.

For example, if the RCMP and the metropolitan Toronto police were involved in a joint operation and were able to seize millions of dollars then they would share 50/50. In the event where one police force would

provide an investigative lead to another police force it would receive 10 per cent.

What is of concern is that right off the top the rake for the federal government is 10 per cent. The minister is saying in this backgrounder that the federal government would rake—and that is my word, not the word of the minister—10 per cent off the top to help pay for the costs of running the office, prosecution and drug analysis, and all other similar costs. It seems to me that the minister and the federal government are nickel and diming the situation. The government should not be relying on its share of this money to prosecute drug offenders.

• (1120)

It is clear that there is considerable jurisdictional confusion and there are significant turf battles that take place among the different police forces across the country that are involved in drug enforcement or in investigating crimes under the Narcotics Control Act. It seems to me that what is necessary is a concerted, co-ordinated national effort, and that appears to be lacking.

The provincial government is responsible for the administration of justice, the federal government is responsible for federal criminal law; and local municipalities are responsible for police forces. It seems to me, from my experience as the critic of the Solicitor General for a number of years and as a resident of metropolitan Toronto, that the tax-paying public is being short-changed as a result of this lack of co-ordination. I have been concerned for a number of years that the federal government has not really provided the necessary leadership on crime prevention and, in particular, the investigation and prosecution of drug dealers and those involved in the $4 billion to $10 billion drug trade in Canada.

I am afraid that Canada is a money laundering haven, as one American senator pointed out some time ago. He is quoted in *The Ottawa Citizen* as lumping Canada with Panama, the Bahamas, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Hong Kong "as a major money laundering haven for illegal drug profits". That is the opinion of an American senator, and in fact it is the opinion of a considerable number of people involved in trying to curb the international drug trade.

Our government, the Conservative government, has been slow off the mark. It was only three years ago that it passed the proceeds of crime legislation, and then last year it passed legislation that would facilitate the stopping of money laundering in Canada. In any event, the government has not provided the leadership, and on this particular issue it is moving a little too slowly.

The public is concerned about crime and drugs. In my riding, in metropolitan Toronto, it has to be one of the top issues. Next to the economy, crime is the number two issue. A day does not go by when you do not pick up a newspaper in metropolitan Toronto in which there is a story, or two or three or four, about a very serious crime that took place in metro Toronto. People are afraid, they are afraid to go out at night. This has only happened over the last number of years. Even in quiet neighbourhoods people now lock their doors and bar their windows because they are concerned about what is happening.

For example, on the front page of the *Toronto Star* today there is a story headlined "Family fears killer may win freedom". An individual who was the worst serial killer in Ontario's history is about to be released after killing seven people about 15 years ago. In my riding of York South—Weston two people were murdered last night. The headline in today's *Toronto Star* is "Couple found shot to death in city of York penthouse".

One of the reasons that politicians are being rendered irrelevant is that people watch what is going on here in Parliament and say: "Well, these people are not really talking about issues that affect me on a day-to-day basis. There is far too much discussion about constitutions and free trade agreements".

These issues are important, but also important is the issue of crime and punishment. This government simply has not provided the leadership necessary to help alleviate some of those fears out there, the well-founded fears of people who are concerned about their safety and the safety of their children. People just will not go for a walk any more in metropolitan Toronto without being in the company of others. They will not allow their children to go out alone at night any more. That is with good reason. People are concerned about the Young Offenders Act.

They are concerned about our immigration laws. They are concerned about judges and the courts who appear to have completely lost touch with reality.

We read time and time again that convicted drug traffickers are given suspended sentences. After being convicted of trafficking in narcotics and selling drugs to young children in school yards these individuals are given a pat on the back and a suspended sentence.

The system is failing. The system is in desperate need of repair.

Mr. Mills: It is pretty tough on the police.

Mr. Nunziata: My colleague from Broadview—Greenwood indicates that it is pretty tough on the police. Darn right it is pretty tough on the police. All too often sufficient support is not given to police forces across the country. They are waging the war on the front lines and are not getting support from the politicians. They are not given adequate funding to carry out the responsibilities they have. They are not getting support from the Crown prosecutors or the judges. Something has to be done. We are at the breaking point. Unless something is done very quickly we are going to forever lose the streets to hoodlums and criminals.

The Young Offenders Act is not working. Our immigration laws allow non-citizens to be convicted of serious drug offences or other offences and remain in Canada. Surely it is not too much to expect the federal government, through its immigration laws and the Criminal Code, to immediately deport non-Canadians. We cannot deport someone who is a Canadian citizen, but surely we should be able to deport someone who is not a citizen of Canada—and that can include people who have lived here five, 10 or 15 years—who is convicted of a serious criminal offence, of an indictable offence, especially with relation to drug trafficking. Surely it is not too much to ask that these individuals be deported.

If the purpose of criminal law is to deter criminal behaviour, then if a non-Canadian knew that he or she would be deported if they were dealing in drugs in local school yards, for example, they would think twice before they did so.

The public is fast losing respect for the criminal justice system. Another area of concern for many people is an obscure section of the Criminal Code, section 45. It allows convicted killers to be released from prison after serving only 15 years. Life does not mean life any more. You can go out and kill somebody today in Canada and as long you are good in prison for 15 years you can then apply to be released.

We have the situation now, under this obscure provision of the Criminal Code, in which Colin Thatcher, Clifford Olson, Saul Betesh, Jon Rallo, Helmut Buxbaum and about 500 more convicted killers over the next year or so will be able to use this obscure provision to seek release from prison. Therefore, is it any wonder that—

An hon. member: The Stevenson case.

Mr. Nunziata: And the Stevenson case as well. In that case the convicted killer was murdered himself.

I am pleased to be the sponsor of this motion. I am pleased that the government is moving in that direction, but I would urge the Solicitor General and government members to push the minister to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity so that local police forces can start receiving money as soon as possible to help them combat the problem of crime, and in particular drug crime, in our communities across the country.

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Madam Speaker, I have listened intently to the hon. member for York South—Weston. I must say that I agree with many of the statements he made at the end of his speech. However, his Motion No. M-601 arose from the announcement by the Solicitor General that the federal government is planning to share assets forfeited as a result of federal prosecutions of drug traffickers.

• (1130)

I am reading from the news release from the Solicitor General. He said that consultations have begun with provincial governments and municipal representatives on a detailed proposal for fair sharing of crime assets when local or provincial police have participated in investigations.

What the hon. member says about the judicial system in Canada, that it is not well thought of by Canadians, is absolutely true. Some changes have been made to the Young Offenders Act. I support more changes. I know the hon. member does too. We served on the Standing

Committee on Justice and Solicitor General for seven years together, a committee which I now chair.

However, while all of these things the hon. member says, we need to change may be true, changes are being made. We have made made changes in the Extradition Act to make sure that Canada does not become a safe haven for murderers from other countries. We have made changes since the member for York South—Weston left the justice committee. We have put through Bill C-36, changes to the Parole Act, so that dangerous offenders cannot apply for parole until at least half of their sentence has been served. Presently it is one-third, and for some sorts of temporary absences, one-sixth.

While I agree with all of those things, what has been raised here is the issue of asset sharing with the local police forces involved in the investigation and arrest of offenders when the proceeds of crime provisions of the Narcotics Control Act result in assets being seized. The government has already announced that assets forfeited as a result of federal prosecutions of drug traffickers will be shared.

I do not know if the hon. member is referring to moneys used by local police forces for drug buys. That is something entirely different. If money is used for drug buys by the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force or the Peel Regional Police Force, for example, then this money should be returned after the prosecution is finished so that it can be put to good use again.

We are talking about something different here. I support the principle of sharing the assets put forward in the motion but I have some difficulty with the specifics. The question of asset sharing is definitely not simple. A number of issues need to be addressed to arrive at an equitable sharing regime.

The mere fact that a seizure of assets occurs does not mean that those assets are available for distribution by the government. Naturally, we must wait for the court to order forfeiture, and this requirement creates a number of distinct issues. There are costs involved in every seizure before forfeiture. Not the least of these costs relates to the rights of the accused person or innocent third parties who may be creditors with a valid interest in the seized asset. If we were to seize a golf course or a ski resort someone may hold a mortgage on it. There are innocent third parties who need to be considered.

There are also victims. Victims' rights are often overlooked. We need to look at victims' rights.

The provisions permit the accused to look to the seized or restrained assets to recover a variety of expenses, subject to the approval of the court. There are also significant prosecution costs and in many cases significant management and storage costs. The hon. member mentioned storage costs.

There are also significant questions of accountability and jurisdictional controls to be considered. Drug testing has to be considered, and so do all sorts of things. I believe that the government needs to retain 10 per cent of the share to look after these things. After that, sharing may be fine.

We must not be blinded by the uninformed demand for funds based on a theory that there is an unlimited flow of money from drug investigations. In the first place, I do not believe this is true when we talk about $4 billion to $10 billion. Most of that money may be going offshore, who knows? What we can seize in Canada may be a much smaller amount. I do not believe we are seizing what we should be seizing, however, when he talks about $4 billion to $10 billion, he may be way out of line.

Second, such a claim merely raises expectations and fails to address the real problem. A response to this claim must address each of the questions raised earlier and provide answers that will advance the real goal. The goal is not to provide an alternate source for police funds in times of tight budgets. The goal must be the continued successful attack against profit motive in the drug trade.

You cannot create a band-aid solution calling for the sharing of assets with police if a greater haemorrhage of these assets occurs because the management of the assets between the time of seizure and forfeiture inadvertently allows the assets to be dissipated. This can happen. The assets can be dissipated away and no one gets any good from them. We believe that there might be cases where restraint related costs exceed what the state could reasonably realize under forfeiture.

The simple policy choice that demands the criminal should be separated from his ill-gotten gain, in spite of the cost, may well justify the initial seizure decision, regardless of the cost. This kind of situation must be addressed before we talk about sharing.

Canada's proceeds of crime legislation, enacted in 1989, was intended to counter the growth of the drug trade by removing the profit potential of drug trafficking. The RCMP is the lead agency in Canada with respect to drug offences in general and drug related proceeds of crime offences in particular. We all know that it is working very closely in co-operation with municipal and provincial police forces, however, we all admit that the RCMP is the lead agency.

The Attorney General of Canada takes the lead in prosecuting these offences, especially since the drug trade does not recognize international or interprovincial borders, let alone municipal borders. In spite of this fact, Canada has encouraged provincial and local police agencies to participate in the investigation of drug offences.

It was brought up by the hon. member that possibly some of these municipal forces are not working to their best potential because they are not sharing. I do not believe that. I do not believe that they hold back one iota in their efforts to combat the drug trafficking trade because they are not sharing in the profit.

I have spoken to the chief of police of metropolitan Toronto who believes that if they make a drug buy with marked money, when that money goes through the court and the appeal period is past, the money should be returned. I believe that. We are talking about something different here. We are talking about forfeiture.

The scourge on the streets occasioned by the traffic in drugs has always been a significant motivater for the local police enforcement community to investigate vigorously drug trafficking. The management costs associated with the proceeds provisions have, however, operated against local police utilization of the scheme.

This may require their creation of an effective process to manage seized and restrained assets for the court, while the forfeiture application is pending. Such a process would leave police and more specifically, the RCMP, free to concentrate on their real mission, the attack on crime, while others would supervise private sector management of seized or restrained assets under the full direction and control of the courts.

The hon. member seems to not like this idea, but I feel it is the only way to operate where we have a management group who looks after the control of all this seized material and leaves the police free. I do not believe this is a function of the police to look after these things. The question must be looked at in relation to sharing.

I agree with the principle that where other levels of government support the federal effort in eliminating the drug trade through the enforcement of the proceeds of crime scheme, they deserve to share in the proceeds, but in the net proceeds. I mention that again, the net proceeds.

• (1140)

Hopefully sharing will foster improved co-operation in the law enforcement community and might invite increased participation in the scheme by that community. I believe they are operating to full capacity right now to combat crime. However, this does not mean that some difficult issues do not need to be addressed to arrive at an equitable sharing.

The local law enforcement community's expectations must be tempered with a realistic appreciation that there are significant costs occasioned by every seizure. The most obvious is that innocent owners and third parties must take priority over the expectations of the police.

I notice that you are motioning that my time is up. Do I have consent for one more minute to finish?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Horner: The most obvious of these is that innocent owners and third parties must take priority over the expectations of the police, as I said before. In other words, a dollar seized will never mean that there is a dollar available for sharing. Any proposal to share must permit the government to evaluate and determine the scope of any eventual equitable sharing.

We must always recognize that the various jurisdictions have a valid interest in the budget issues surrounding law enforcement and the question of sharing must recognize this jurisdictional question. It is easy to agree with the principle of equitable sharing but it is more difficult to agree on the modalities by which this should be accomplished. The sharing of proceeds scheme must not become a driving force for a particular investigation.

The hon. member's motion suggests that any sharing should be with the local police force. This creates difficulties since in many cases there is no separate legal entity and the local force is a department of a local

municipality. Therefore, there would be sharing with the local municipality.

Madam Speaker, you are motioning that I should conclude. I also notice that the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River wants to speak. I will conclude by saying that the forfeiture provision is part of the criminal sentence and an efficient way to attack the drug trade. It should not be allowed to become an alternative budgetary device.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the private members' motion of the member for York South—Weston who has been a real contributor in the field of justice and the Solicitor General over the last many years. He recently left the critic's spot for our party and works in another area now. However, his work goes on and this is one example of that member's contribution to the work of this House and in committees in the field of the Solicitor General.

This particular motion addresses the issue of the seizure and sharing of the proceeds of crime, more particularly in the field of drug prosecutions. I want to explore very briefly the role of seizure and sharing in the war on drugs.

The purpose of the forfeiture or seizure of these funds is to take some of the profit out of the drug business *ex post facto*. After the profit is in the bank, after one has bought a plaza, a Cadillac and Rolls Royce, speed boat and condominium with the proceeds of crime, the goal is to remove those assets from the convicted drug trafficker because society does not believe it is fair to permit those assets to remain in the hands of criminals. I believe society has that right.

The second thing is the purpose of the sharing itself after government and courts have seized these assets. I believe it is only fair to share the proceeds of the sale of these assets with the agencies that made them available. Therein lies some of the complexities that have prevented the government from delivering on its promise to execute some kind of sharing among governments. I am a little frustrated with the delay. I can see there is progress but we are not there yet. One thing I wanted to note is that the sharing of these proceeds does not affect the war against drugs.

If the war against drugs is going to be won, it will be won because of the things we do in society, not because we share the net proceeds of a Cadillac. Let us not delude ourselves. This is a part of the program but it is not going to win the war against drugs.

What does the sharing of the proceeds do? It does a couple of things. It injects new money back into the agencies which investigated the crime in the first place. For instance, Royal Canadian Mounted Police funding comes from the taxpayers and if it puts $1 million into a particular investigation, the fact that we seize and make proceeds available later can put back $1 million that was not previously there.

That can also happen on the municipal level where perhaps the money is not as great in some cases. One of the objectives of the current negotiations is to enable some of that money to go back to the municipal level.

A second thing that sharing the proceeds does is it provides a minor incentive to police forces. It is not a big incentive. Policemen across Canada are out there doing their job in any event. The fact that their police force, not themselves personally, but their city or their town has an opportunity to share in the proceeds, is really but a minor incentive to them. It is a tangible recognition of the fruits of their labour if their force can share and if the taxpayer that supports that force can share in those proceeds that are seized.

There are two other problems that sharing will address. It will hopefully remove a couple of problems. One is that the perceived unfairness in not sharing the proceeds may be a disincentive in some police forces. It may discourage certain police forces at certain times at certain places from actively participating in another drug investigation. We are all human and I can understand that.

If there is to be a drug investigation, in many cases it requires co-ordination among police forces. In Ontario and in Quebec three levels of police forces, the federal, provincial and local forces are involved. If there is a perceived unfairness, it may prevent the kind of co-operation we really need among police forces from the beginning right to the end in the planning, the execution, the prosecution and in the seizure.

If we exclude the municipal police forces from that whole process they may not be as active as they should be in drug investigations.

I also want to make a point. My friend from Mississauga West, who spoke very well on this subject, indicated that the lack of sharing was not interfering with the likelihood of police forces participating in investigations. But in the Solicitor General's announcement in the background paper that accompanied it, on page 2 there is a clear reference stating that there is "a reluctance on the part of provincial and local police to participate in federal enforcement because investigations can be costly". That is an impediment and hopefully we are working now to overcome it.

I want to make sure the record is very clear. We have to recognize that there are real costs involved in maintaining the seized assets. If a truck is seized or a piece of real estate, a commercial property, there are costs in maintaining them. The bills have to get paid. The ownership has to be legally altered. Someone has to pay the local taxes. There are costs and we have to realize that. In the end if a bank account with $1 million is seized, we are okay. That we can distribute. But if a truck is seized, it has to be stored and auctioned off.

• (1150)

You have to make a court application, you have to change the ownership and who knows what else you have to do, repair the tire on the front of the truck that received a bullet during the drug investigation, I do not know. We have to recognize those costs. They are really there, and that is why the Solicitor General has talked about taking 10 per cent off the top, to make sure that there are professionals in government who can manage these assets when they are seized and dispose of them.

Near the end here, I again want to reiterate that sharing the proceeds is not going to help us win any war on drugs. It is only a minor dance step here in what is a very significant social challenge. We have to put more effort on education, on enforcement and we may want to alter some of our laws as well.

I want to finish off by saying that I am pleased to see the government has been prepared to address this and to commit itself to sharing. I am disappointed that it has taken at least two years, three years if I am not mistaken, and we are still not there yet. I recognize some of the complexity, but with a dedicated effort I would have thought this business could have been accomplished within a year.

The letters are still out there in all the provincial capitals going back and forth between the bureaucrats. We are not there yet. Hopefully before this Parliament rises for an election, the matter will be history and the public and the local police forces will have the benefit of sharing in the proceeds of crime, an asset brought about by the work of the local police forces.

I want to encourage the provinces to get their act together too, as we try to bring a resolution to this, bring an end to the negotiations and put the meat on the table.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, yes, I have to emphasize the public is very concerned about crime and drugs.

In the 1960s and 1970s, drug trafficking was really not as widespread as it became in the 1980s. The 600 per cent increase in the amount of cocaine seized by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1991 as compared to the 1987 numbers clearly demonstrates the situation.

Other police forces have also recorded major seizures of cocaine and heroine as well as other narcotic drugs, so this increasing demand for drugs has really generated a lucrative commerce. In fact, it is running into the billions and billions of dollars.

Under the provisions of the Narcotic Control Act, the Crown can only seek the forfeiture of money which is directly used to purchase drugs or conveyances used in connection with the offence for which a person was convicted. Unfortunately, those provisions did not allow for the seizure and for the forfeiture of assets obtained through legal dealings with drugs.

Thus, there really was a need for new legislation which could justly and firmly grip the criminals, and strip the criminals of their ill-gotten wealth. The new proceeds of crime legislation as my colleagues have mentioned Bill C-61. It amended the Criminal Code and the Narcotic Control Act as well as the Food and Drugs Act, and was proclaimed in January 1989.

This act does provide the courts with authority to order the forfeiture of proceeds, that is property acquired directly or indirectly from the commission of specific offences, including drug offences.

The thrust of the legislation is to increase the capacity of the state to strip the profits of crime from those people who are engaged in specific criminal activities as well as provide for an effective deterrent to any of those people who might even be contemplating drug trafficking.

The legislative amendments also include the insertion of two offences, that is the proceeds of property obtained through specific offences and laundering of proceeds. Therefore, it is noteworthy that this legislation was the subject of federal–provincial consultation before its enactment and we do have to work with our colleagues and our counterparts in the provinces to make sure we become effective in this particular area.

Forfeiture of proceeds go to the federal government or they go to the provincial governments. Provinces had the option to prosecute cases under the Criminal Code, in which cases proceeds forfeited accrued to the provincial treasury. However, undertakings must be given by provincial attorneys general to protect any assets seized. Provinces in general have been a little bit reluctant to assume these undertakings.

Some police forces have suggested that forfeited proceeds money be returned to the police force to cover investigation costs. I think that is what my colleague is discussing today with his private member's motion.

It is important to note that funding of the police forces is a provincial jurisdiction. The federal government really does not want nor does it wish to interfere in any of the existing funding arrangements between the provinces and their municipalities.

Police departments use money to buy drugs from traffickers in order to obtain evidence for court purposes. Health and Welfare's policy is that this marked "buy money" which has been seized is quickly returned to the appropriate police force. All other money seized and forfeited in accordance with the proceeds of crime provision is deposited into the account of the Receiver General and under the terms of the Financial Administration Act can only be paid out by an act of Parliament.

Similarly, forfeited money in cases where procedures were at the instance or at the initiative of a provincial government goes into the provincial treasury. Fair.

I am really pleased to inform the House that the government is presently reviewing, as my colleague from Mississauga West stated, the process by which proceeds from crime can be shared among the various levels of government that have participated in the investigations and in the prosecutions leading to the forfeiture.

As well, the government is presently considering the creation of a cost recoverable consolidated and fully accountable office in the Department of Supply and Services to manage assets seized, restrained, or forfeited under federal prosecutions and a scheme for the equitable sharing of net forfeitures with the provinces and/or the municipalities that are involved. The Solicitor General and the Department of Justice are presently undergoing consultation with a proposal to oversee that matter.

Others have suggested that proceeds money that is received be used to fund programs dealing with substance abuse. I believe the concerns for drug related education and treatment programs can most effectively be addressed through the Canada Drug Strategy program.

As you know it was last spring in the House that the Minister of National Health and Welfare announced the renewal of the Canadian Drug Strategy program with $270 million over five years. This strategy was developed after considerable consultation with the provincial governments, the police forces, and treatment agencies as well as other interested parties right across the country.

Canada's drug strategy was formulated to address concerns identified during these consultations that we had. The strategy provides for co–ordinated initiatives which deal with supply reduction, and more important, programs which aim at diminishing the demand for drugs.

Funding will be made available to treatment programs for rehabilitation as well as to community groups and government organizations to raise the awareness of the problem of drug abuse. The strategy was renewed with the emphasis on aggressive forfeiture programs in fund-

ing, and it provides funding to assist police right across the country in their efforts to apprehend drug traffickers.

I am pleased to report that the level of asset seizures has indeed increased significantly since 1989 as a result of the proceeds of crime legislation. Assets seized include such items as money, vehicles, houses, and so forth. The amount seized and forfeited increased from $300,000 in 1989 to $1.1 million in 1990, to $2.7 million in 1991.

• (1200)

I know the hon. member who put forth this motion today used the amounts of $38 million in 1990 and $50 million in 1991. Those were gross figures. Indeed, as the member for Mississauga West pointed out, there are third party commitments, there are victims, there are costs related to this specific issue, and indeed the net proceeds that come out of forfeiting the drug money comes down to $2.7 million in 1991.

While I do agree with some of the proposals put forth in my colleague's private member's motion, I must say that this government is acting upon it, and indeed we will be coming forth with a specific new department. I thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to participate.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, as reported (with amendments) by a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Madam Deputy Speaker: There are 72 amendment motions on the Notice Paper for report stage of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71, standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing will be grouped for debate, with a vote on Motion No. 1 applying to Motions Nos. 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 33, 35, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70 and 72, all standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, will not be selected because they are identical to Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 23, 25, 26 and 27, standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, and Motions Nos. 28, 29, 30 and 31, standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, will be grouped for debate but voted upon as follows: An affirmative vote on Motion No. 23 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motions Nos. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31. A negative vote on Motion No. 23 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 25. An affirmative vote on Motion No. 25 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motions Nos. 26 and 27.

A negative vote on Motion No. 25 necessitates the question being put separately on Motions Nos. 26 and 27.

Motion No. 28 will be voted upon separately.

A vote on Motion No. 29 will apply to Motion No. 30.

Motion No. 31 will be voted upon separately.

Motion No. 24, standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, will not be selected as it is identical to Motion No. 23.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 36, standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, and Motion No. 38, standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, will be grouped for the purposes of debate and voted on as follows:

[*English*]

An affirmative vote on Motion No. 36 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motion No. 38. A negative vote on Motion No. 36 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 38.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 37, standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, will not be selected because it is identical to Motion No. 36.

[*English*]

I shall now propose to the House Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71.

Mr. Milliken: In view of the very large number of amendments, I think there might be agreement to treat them as having been put to the House at this time so that Your Honour will not have to read them all. I know they are all very short, but I do not think we need to hear 30 amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the Chair to dispense with the reading of the motions and consider that they have been put to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair is very grateful.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 17.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 19.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 21.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 32.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 34.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Motion No. 39.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Motion No. 41.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 43.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Motion No. 45.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 19.

Motion No. 47.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 20.

Motion No. 49.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 21.

Motion No. 51.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 22.

Motion No. 53.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 23.

Motion No. 55.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 24.

Motion No. 57.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 25.

Motion No. 59.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 26.

Motion No. 61.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 27.

Motion No. 63.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 28.

Motion No. 65.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 29.

Motion No. 67.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 30.

Motion No. 69.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 31.

Motion No. 71.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting the Schedule.

He said: Madam Speaker, there is nothing which characterizes more the approach that this government is taking to children and to the problems of children in poverty than contrasting the government's commitment to spend over $4 billion on helicopters and to put only $400 million into improving the position of children living in poverty.

The approach being taken here in Bill C-80 is to amend the Income Tax Act, to get rid of family allowance, the final ending of what is left of universality in family allowance and to replace it with a system of child benefits which will add nothing, as the government's own officials have indicated, to those who are the poorest of the poor. Those who are living on social assistance will receive not one penny more than they receive at the present time. We know across the country in spite of efforts by some governments to increase social assistance rates, in particular the governments of Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, children in Canada live at about 60 per cent of the poverty line. Children who are unfortunate enough to be born to poor families live at about 60 per cent of the poverty line. We need to ensure that those children have adequate resources, adequate nutrition, adequate money for their schooling, that they can attend school in a way enabling them to obtain a good education and go on to gainful employment, making a contribution to society and maintaining some dignity for themselves.

• (1210)

Instead of taking that approach, this government has taken what is another mean-spirited approach to the problems of children living in poverty. The poorest of the poor will receive not one penny more from this government as a result of the rejigging of child benefits.

The suggestion by the government that more money is going into child benefits is difficult to understand, bearing in mind the comments which have been made both by finance officials and health and welfare officials suggesting that not one penny more will go to the poorest of the poor.

In addition, those families that work but remain poor will receive $500 more each to help maintain themselves. What this means for those children living in poor families that do not work is that they will be less well off than those who live in poor families that work.

Here the government is continuing in its trend to distinguish between the deserving poor and the underserving poor. A poor child living in a family in which one or more parents work but remains poor is deserving of some extra money, whereas children living in families in which the parents do not work is not deserving of extra money. To explain that to poor children would take an enormous amount of clever arguing and I do not think in the end those children would accept it.

Nothing is being done for those at the very poor end, and for those who are a little less poor there is little being done for them. In contrast, because of changes to the child care expense deduction, benefits are being handed over to richer Canadians. Therefore we have a continuation within this legislation of the gap between rich and poor growing year by year.

The government has made a number of arguments to sustain this legislation, all of which were contradicted by all of the witnesses in the legislative committee. The government has said that the system is simpler. It is only simpler because of the reduction from five categories to four categories and the government and government officials have already indicated that the government will calculate the benefits because it will be too complicated for individuals. It is not simpler, although that is one of the claims that the government is making.

The government says it is fairer. It is not fairer when you consider, as I have just mentioned, this categorization of the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. Even if we consider that adding $500 a year to those families that work is a good idea, how can that possibly begin to cover the expenses of looking after children when child care can cost anywhere between $6,000 and

$12,000 a year? Clearly $500 is not going to do anything to help those families.

As I have said, it is not more generous, even though that is one suggestion that the government has made.

If we look at other countries and if we put Canada in the category of countries that concern themselves with their children and with poverty among their children, we see that only the United States has a worse record than Canada of all the developed nations.

If we look at other countries, in particular European countries with a social democratic tradition, we see that not only are child benefits higher than they are in Canada, but also the gap between what a child needs, what a family needs and what a family receives in order to meet the poverty line is smaller in those countries.

As witnesses at the committee indicated, no matter which mechanism for deciding and gauging poverty one follows internationally, Canada shows up very badly in contrast to these other countries.

To suggest, as this government is by proposing legislation like this, that a 20 per cent child poverty level in Canada is acceptable—over one million children living in poverty—is simply not a tenable point when one looks at other countries such as Norway in which the child poverty rate is somewhere around 5 per cent.

If we were committed to our children we would be moving toward providing adequate benefits to them, not the system proposed here which will really make no difference at all to the poorest of the poor.

We cannot just criticize this legislation. We have to propose alternatives. If we look at the cost of poverty in Canada it is a question of whether we can afford not to provide adequate benefits to Canadian children rather than what we can afford to provide.

One estimate suggests that as a result of poverty in Canada—the 1.6 million people unemployed, the over three million on social assistance and the over one million children living in poverty—the total cost to the economy in Canada is over $60 billion. In other words, this country is losing $60 billion in production each year because of these extremely high poverty levels.

Lest we think these proposals are accidental, we know from both Liberal governments with six and five guidelines and this government's obsession with inflation that unemployment has been created in order to respond to the particular economic problem of inflation.

As we know, other countries around the world do not create unemployment in order to reduce inflation. There are other ways to approach that problem and we should be thinking of that rather than putting more people out of work and making more poor as a result of a particular economic agenda.

We must consider that $60 billion of lost GNP. We must consider that it costs the government an estimated $17,500 a year for every person not working in terms of lost taxes and in social payments. We have to consider that and ask: Is it not absurd to continue this loss without providing adequate funding to children and people living in poverty? In this case we are particularly concerned with children.

The cost of having so many children living in poverty is enormous and we must address that in the only way we can, by providing more money to people in poverty situations. In the short term we have to make sure that our children are well fed and can go to school with full stomachs rather than on empty stomachs and not being able to learn. We have to make sure that poor children are given a fair chance.

We find that children unfortunate enough to be born to poor parents will have a lower educational level, will be sicker and more likely to be unemployed.

The solution must be a commitment to full employment, to making employment the number one economic objective of the government. The commitment has to attack the problem from the point of view of ensuring that high quality, good paying jobs are available to Canadians to enable them to work, feed their families and stay out of poverty. That is the solution to the problem, not a proposal of this sort which does nothing to improve the situation of Canada's poor children.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam. Speaker, I join in this debate in support of the motion which has the impact to delete the piece of legislation commonly known as Bill C-80, dealing with the child benefits legislation.

I would like to thank my colleague for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for supporting the same series of amendments. In the ruling of the Speaker, the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing's were accepted.

I want to put this on the record because the Liberal Party is so convinced that this is the wrong approach to social policy that starting in June just about every one asked for an opportunity to participate in this debate and has time after time been told by the government that this debate must be hurried or that this debate must be closed down. When the legislation was first introduced back in February as part of the budget no time was set aside to analyse and to discuss the child benefits package. It was introduced by way of the shortest white paper in the history of the Canadian government. A $2 billion expenditure was explained in 14 short pages with no details, no reference to research and no reference to consultation.

• (1220)

In late June we were offered the opportunity to speak about it in the House and the government immediately moved time allocation. Only seven members had the opportunity to discuss it. It was then brought to committee for two days—one of the most important pieces of legislation in the social policy area—and then three days were set aside in June. When we asked for more time because of the many witnesses who had written us, we were told: "Yes, come back in early July".

Every time there has been a national crisis dealing with the Constitution or the referendum this government has used that opportunity in a very sneaky fashion to try to slip Bill C-80 past Canadians. Here again, in the House, when most of us are concerned about the referendum and the new Constitution—we spent last week debating it—we are brought back here, while the rest of the country is preparing for the debate on the Constitution, to very quickly look after Bill C-80. I hope it is not the intention of the government this afternoon or tomorrow to again move time allocation and remove the opportunity to debate from the many members who have tried again and again to stand up in this House and question the assumptions and the advisability of Bill C-80.

The government has taken a premise that every Canadian would agree with, that children in need are deserving of more help than they are currently getting. One of the reasons they are deserving is because since the mid-1980s this government has taken $3.5 billion out of this system that supports those children. Having taken away $3.5 billion the government has come back with a package in which it has tried to appeal to Canadians so that instead of helping all children it would only help those who are poor.

Many social policy groups are concerned about this legislation. When they first heard about it over the news on budget night they said: "Hurrah, somebody is finally listening to us". By the weekend, when they had an opportunity to look at it in more detail, they found that it was just the opposite of what they were looking for.

When we had hearings, when the government did let us have hearings, the government could only find one witness, a junior academic who obviously had done no research in the area, to support the proposition of this legislation. No matter whether people were flown in from Vancouver, Halifax, or Toronto, or drove across the city here in Ottawa, nobody but nobody, with the exception of this one young academic, was the least bit supportive of the legislation.

Here you are dealing with a group that represents groups across the country who are working with many poor families, many low-income communities, and many regions that are very depressed. It would love to be supportive of anything that puts more money into the child benefits system in this country. The goodwill is naturally there for a government that cares because people want to see something done for children. When this group decides that it has to walk on a $2 billion expenditure because it is not suitable to those they have been advocating it is time for the government to understand that it may be on the wrong track.

It is time for the government to use the opportunity of this debate, not to push through a faulty piece of legislation, but to support this motion which has the intent of deleting the legislation. It is time for the government to go back to the drawing board and to ask the basic questions about day care; to ask the basic question as to why people on social assistance are not getting more help; to ask how working families can get more assistance; to ask what to do about women who, in abusive relationships, depend on the small cheques to have at least some cash of their own. The government should ask itself why it did not deal with these issues? Why has the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who historically has been the biggest advocate of change in the national government in favour of health care, child care and the promotion of social programs, refused to debate? Why has the minister refused to appear in front of the committee? How can we have a sophisticated and responsive social policy system if the minister responsible for it declines to participate? Is it really true

that social policy is now the domain of the Minister of Finance?

I can remember the Ministers of Finance in the 20th century and, notwithstanding the fact that they share the same party as myself, I would not want many of them to be responsible for social policy. That is not their job.

The job of the minister of health is to be an advocate for children. In the course of this debate, in which many members from the Liberal Party will be participating, and pursuant to other motions that are presented to try to improve this piece of legislation we want to impress upon the government the need to not proceed quickly, the need to not wrap up debate in a few days and the need not to push forward simply to have a January 1 deadline met so that cheques can be in the mail for families, so that we do not give the appearance that we are trying to gain the attention of voters with their own money, and so that this House considers very carefully the uses of moneys for children.

Many of these details have been brought up by the various speakers from across the country who have listened to groups in their communities. I wish that the government would take the time, go into deliberations and withdraw this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, having spoken to Bill C-80 several times, I welcome this opportunity today to speak once more—this time at the report stage—to a bill that is so important to Canadian families, especially those on low incomes.

I must admit I am a little surprised at the kind and number of motions tabled by the opposition, which unfortunately do nothing to improve the circumstances of Canadian families with children who need support from the federal government. These motions want to reject an investment of over $2 billion the federal government is prepared to make over the next five years. These motions tell Canadian low-income families they should not accept the $2 billion the government wants to give them.

The government proposes to get rid of a system that provided three ways, each with different criteria, to get money every year from the federal government for children. The government would like to consolidate these into a single option. The opposition motions say: "No, let us keep the complex system with its three different ways for the government to send us money." I am very disappointed to see that the opposition ignores the concerns of Canadian families with children and especially low-income families that would benefit enormously as a result of the proposed amendments in Bill C-80.

The current system provides for family allowance, child credit and a refundable child tax credit. Many groups, parents and people generally across this country have said repeatedly: that this does not make sense. There are three ways to get money from the government, with different criteria for each one. Often people have to wait for up to a year after the child is born, the income tax return is filed, and so forth, to receive the money to which they are entitled.

The government is proposing one monthly cheque, paid in advance. The three existing programs would be consolidated into one, with advance payments made every month. Who would benefit? Mainly Canadian families with children, with an income of less than $40,000.

• (1230)

That is the purpose of Bill C-80, which is an excellent piece of legislation because its goals are, first of all, to help low-income families and also to make things easier for these families and reduce government paperwork. We will have one instead of three, and I think the opposition should be able to understand that. We are simplifying the system and investing $2 billion more. Not $200, not $2 million or even $200 million but $2 billion more, to help low-income families in this country. So as I said before in the House, we have a duty to adopt this bill as soon as possible and ensure the system is ready to go by the beginning of 1993. The opposition ought to co-operate and help expedite this bill, because they are the ones who keep criticizing our tax system for being too complex.

Bill C-80 would simplify our Canadian tax system and ensure that low-income families can have access to these funds more readily and in advance, for the benefit of their children.

My colleagues in the government and the Progressive Conservative Party support this bill unreservedly. They wish the opposition parties would realize the importance of adopting this bill as soon as possible to ensure it will come into force by the beginning of 1993.

In conclusion, as I pointed out before, this is an excellent bill because it is fairer, more equitable and more straightfoward and gives Canadian low-income families an extra $2 billion. I hope my colleagues on the other side of this House will get the message and do what is necessary to have this bill adopted as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill. I want to do so from the context of working for many years with poor families, and particularly with poor children.

I think back to the statement made by the Prime Minister calling universal social programs a sacred trust. Over the last few years we have watched how his government has now systematically eroded all of the sacred trusts.

This bill introduces a number of elements that are steps backward in history. The whole concept is based on the idea of deserving and undeserving poor. It is designing a child support program that deliberately and systematically provides more funds to parents who are working, or to children whose parents are working, to the deserving poor and denies any increase in funds to the very poor, those whose parents have no funds and no income and must rely on public assistance.

People should go back and read the Elizabethan poor law of 1601 because it was based on the very same concept of the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. The deserving poor were those who would go into a workhouse and work in poverty, in deplorable conditions, and they would receive some assistance from the state. Those who would not go into a workhouse to work were considered undeserving poor and would receive no assistance.

That is the same concept that is now being built into this legislation. It says that if parents will take some job below the minimum wage or some job that does not pay them enough to earn a decent living, to meet the needs of their families, they will consider them worthy and provide them with money.

In many ways it is an indirect subsidy to low-wage payers in this country. It allows them to keep their wages low, knowing that they can entice a worker to take the job. The government will give them the money that should have been lawfully theirs for work.

This legislation is deliberately aimed at those who are on income assistance. There will be no increase for them at all, and that represents a large number of children in this country.

Many of us who have worked in public welfare have been worried that frequently income assistance families move from generation to generation to generation. One of the reasons for this is that as the children are growing up they drop out of school. It is very difficult to keep a 15-year old child or 16-year old child of an income assistance family in school because the incomes are so low. The kids do not have adequate funds to participate in social activities at school, to belong to the band or to go on the trips. They do not have money to be able to buy clothes of the calibre of their friends so they seem left out.

They also think that a job paying $4 an hour is a marvellous job. When a mother is looking after two teenage kids and getting $700 or $800 a month on income assistance the kid says: "My gosh, I can go out and earn $4 or $5 an hour and make that tremendous amount of money". They drop out of school to take a temporary, poor paying $4.50 or $5 an hour job. They are doomed always to be marginally employed because they cannot secure good employment with a grade 9 or grade 10 education.

We perpetuate income assistance families from one generation to another generation. Clearly we should be providing more resources to that family, raising the level of income assistance, making sure that programs like this are targeted to them so that the children have enough

money coming into those families to feel they can continue to participate in the school environment, to make sure they have enough food on the table so the children do not go to school hungry so they can learn and to make sure there is enough income in those families that the children know $4.50 an hour is not adequate to support themselves let alone support themselves and a family down the road.

The children of members of this House know that $4.50 an hour does not even take them to a movie these days. They know that to buy a pair of running shoes costs $100. Our families know that. Income assistance families have been so pushed down that even minimal wages under terrible working conditions may appear to be beneficial to them.

Another thing upsets me about this bill. It cannot be seen in isolation. This bill is a part of a companion attack on the poor. This government is the one who curtailed Canada Assistance Plan moneys to three big provinces: Alberta, Ontario and B.C. Those are the provinces in which 50 per cent of all children live. They have said: "We will not only make sure there is no additional money available under this bill for families on income assistance. We will make sure that the provinces are in a financial squeeze where they cannot provide any additional funds because we will stop any transfers under the Canada Assistance Plan to those provinces".

• (1240)

The provinces are in financial difficulty with rising unemployment and rising demands on public assistance because of changes to the unemployment insurance legislation that have curtailed the number of people who qualify for unemployment insurance in this country. They are under pressure because of the reductions in the Established Programs Financing. They are not then in a position to try to assist to the maximum of their will families on income assistance.

We must understand this is part of a social policy package in which the government has said that the poor are undeserving, that the poor are unworthy, that it is going to go back to the concept of the Elizabethan poor law of 1601, and that it is going to make it even more difficult, more punitive, more restrictive to anybody who applies for public assistance. It tries to help the working poor, but it really subsidizes employers so they can get away with paying poor wages.

Canada is a wealthy country. There is no excuse for child poverty in this country. This bill does nothing to alleviate or end child poverty.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate in support of the amendment by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing. I want to begin by congratulating my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, for the diligent and intelligent way in which he articulated the concerns of poor Canadian families in Canada by leading our party's opposition to this legislation.

At first glance this new integrated child benefit legislation seems innocent enough, even positive. It proposes to consolidate the family allowance program, the refundable child tax credit and the non-refundable child tax credit into a single, targeted monthly benefit.

This pamphlet which described the child benefit and which was released with the February budget said: "Low income families with one child will receive a monthly payment of up to $144, significantly more than the monthly payment of $35 they now receive. Approximately two million families with incomes below $50,000 will receive larger monthly payments than they do now".

We are told that the new consolidated child benefit will increase the federal government's commitment to child assistance, which was projected to be $4.5 billion in 1992, by another $400 million and will concentrate more of this assistance to those who need it.

Unfortunately a glance is all the government would like the opposition and other Canadians to have at this legislation before it is made law. This government delayed introduction of Bill C-80 until June. It immediately tried to rush it past second reading into committee where every effort was made to deny experts in the field such as the anti-poverty groups and the social policy research organizations any reasonable chance to study and comment on this legislation.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare, whose name appears on this pamphlet and who is the author of the new child benefit, refused to appear before the committee studying this legislation.

Patrick Johnston, executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development and one of the leading authorities in our income security system in Canada, was given four days in mid-summer to prepare a presentation before the Commons committee. Too bad it was not time enough to study a bill that fundamentally changes the entire edifice of child benefit legislation in Canada since the Second World War; that was all the time he was going to get. Too bad if nearly all of the social action groups in this country panned this legislation as soon as they had a chance to see it and asked for more time to study its implications before it became law. The government was determined to proceed into its agenda regardless of the concerns that these people may have expressed.

Now we are told by the finance minister that this legislation has to be approved as soon as possible because 4,000 bureaucrats have to be hired and trained at Revenue Canada in order to administer this new system.

Why the indecent haste to rush this change through Parliament? Why is the Minister of Finance so insistent that these benefits begin on January 1, 1993?

The answer becomes a little clearer when one notes that the old and new child benefit regimes will overlap during the first six months of next year. During the anticipated period of the next federal election Canadian parents will be receiving double benefits. It is merely a cynical election ploy. It is a way for this government once again to bribe Canadians, this time poor working Canadians, with their own money right before they go to the election polls.

After the election in late 1993 and when Canadians complete their tax forms for 1993, they will find that their child credits and the refundable child tax credits no longer apply. That is okay to the government; by then the election will be over and the child benefit law will have achieved its political objective. It will have temporarily put extra money in the hands of a large number of Canadians and given them the illusion that when it counts this government is concerned about them.

Never mind that over the past five years between 1986 and 1991 this Tory government has taken more than $3.5 billion out of the child benefit system. Never mind that the government has completely reneged on its promises to institute a national child care program. Never mind that the GST has taken millions out of the pockets of poorer Canadians. Never mind that cuts and transfers to the provinces for health care and education have been consistently slashed. Never mind that the poorest members of our society, those on social assistance and living far below the poverty line, will not receive one extra penny from this new system as opposed to the old. This new child care smoke and mirrors bill is designed to make us forget all that.

Canadians will recall the government's tax reform measures before the last election. In 1987 the government announced measures that would lower income tax rates for millions of Canadians right around the time of the 1988 national election. It was only after the election that the government dropped the other foot, the GST, and slashed programs to deal with a burst of inflation and an increase in the government deficit created by its pre-election tax cut goodies. These measures have led directly to the current recession which is impoverishing millions of Canadian families. Now the government is trying to get away with this stunt once again.

I am reminded when I consider this legislation of a colourful local politician in Cape Breton who was campaigning in a closely fought late winter election. Just before the election there was a serious snowstorm which plugged all the driveways in the riding. He was trudging along a long driveway in the wake of this snowstorm to visit a poor but large family of voters. The family welcomed his visit but told him they could not afford to get their driveway ploughed in order to get out to vote.

• (1250)

"No problem," he said, "just leave that to me". Sure enough, before the election a snow-plough came and cleared the road. Naturally the family was very grateful until a few days after the election when they received the bill.

That is what happened before the last election. Tax reform was the snow-plough and the GST, high interest rates and the recession were the bill. That is what the government is trying to do with this child care bill. It offers superficial, short-term help to poor working families in Canada, but it very quickly erodes into insignificance.

Lack of full indexation makes the long term equally bleak. As Dr. Ken Battle of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy told the legislative committee:

> The federal government's proposal to change child benefits is seriously flawed. It does little in the short term and virtually nothing over the long term to make a dent in child poverty. Clearly this is a pre-election reform, since the larger monthly payments will come on stream during the election year. The new child benefit and earned income supplement will be paid monthly and so will look much bigger than the present system since the current refundable child tax credit is paid annually, or for poor families, twice a year. The White Paper proposals are designed to pretend to fight child poverty.

If this government is serious about addressing the growing scourge of child poverty in Canada, which is amply documented in the recent report of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women called *Canada's Children: Investing in our Future*, it would go more slowly and introduce a more comprehensive program to deal with child poverty and the problem of the working poor in this country.

It would implement a child care program that would enable the growing number of single parent families to get out of the welfare trap and be productive members of our society. At the same time, it would begin to properly value the social contribution women make in their child bearing and child rearing roles. It would offer women who choose to stay home to raise their children themselves access to real child benefits to enable them to do so.

This suggestion, which has been made to me by Mrs. Verna MacIntyre of Baddeck, among others, is one of the many suggestions that could be adopted in a comprehensive program to deal with child benefits that may also include the kinds of consolidation measures that are in the child benefit bill.

It is important for the poor to receive the kind of comprehensive treatment of their social situation that is lacking in this legislation. That is why this side of the House recommends the government not proceed with such haste. We recommend the government withdraw this bill to give us more time to study this whole area of social policy and present a program of child benefit legislation that actually addresses this growing problem in Canada.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise to make a few comments with respect to this legislation.

Back in 1944 Parliament unanimously passed the Family Allowance Act. It was the creation of J. S. Woodsworth and the former CCF Party and was adopted by all parties in the House.

At that time it was seen as one of the most progressive pieces of legislation in Canada. It was passed not to help the poor in this country but to recognize the value of children in our society and the importance of parenthood.

Over the years the family allowance has become an institution in this country. Now the government is proposing to remove that act in the guise of helping to eliminate child poverty in this country. We have heard the parliamentary secretary for the government side make comments about how it will help poor people in this country. I find it very odd that having made that statement, the Minister of National Health and Welfare chose not to make any statements in this House regarding this bill. The Minister of National Health and Welfare chose not to answer questions with respect to this bill at committee.

I also find it very strange that virtually all the witnesses who appeared before the committee to review this legislation did not agree with the government. In fact, I believe some 25 witnesses appeared before the committee and almost all condemned this bill and said it was not going to help alleviate child poverty. This bill is not going to help the poor in this country. It is not going to benefit the people the government says will benefit from this legislation.

We have heard this government talk about the need to bring in a universal child care program since it came into power in 1984. It has talked about the need to maintain so-called sacred trusts which include universal programs such as the family allowance. We have seen this government renege on those promises.

In 1989 a resolution was passed by this House to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. It is a very important problem that has to be dealt with. It has been documented many times in many areas that child poverty is a growing problem in this country, as is poverty of all types.

One way to eliminate child poverty is to provide jobs and training. A couple of years ago the government made some changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act which it said was going to help with training. It is true money was put into training. However money was also removed for training those who needed it most. If you are eligible for unemployment insurance in this country then you are eligible for training. If you happen to be one

of the needy people in this country on social assistance, it is very difficult to get training.

Some people following this legislation do not understand it or the moves the government is making to eliminate child poverty. There are two funds under the Unemployment Insurance Act. One growing fund is just for people on unemployment insurance with some exceptions. The other fund is the old Consolidated Revenue Fund which is there to help others.

In my riding there are single mothers looking for training who cannot receive it because they are not on unemployment insurance. Counsellors from the Canada Employment Centre have privately told me they are very frustrated having to tell people they do not have a place for them in training programs, but if they were on unemployment insurance they could find training for them.

I had a situation in my riding where a single mother was taking a two-year nursing program. She received funding for the first year but was cut off in the second year because of cuts in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It is simply unbelievable when the government says it is eliminating poverty. It is a myth and pure fabrication.

One thing this government can do to eliminate poverty and child poverty in this country is to implement a universal child care program. It is certainly very difficult for single parents and even the working poor parents when they do not have access to universal child care.

I know all members in this House can cite examples of people who have been unable to take jobs or have been denied training because they were unable to either afford it or find child care because the institutions were overcrowded. This is the government that promised a universal child care program. Now it is telling us this proposal is going to be a replacement for child care.

• (1300)

The witnesses who appeared before the committee with respect to this legislation were not fooled. Members on this side of the House obviously are not fooled and Canadians are not fooled. This government has ignored the needs of the poor in this country. It is not following its own commitment to eliminate child poverty in this country. It is telling the poor of this country it is going to help them and then it does nothing at all.

I find that very, very tragic and disappointing.

What ever happened to those sacred trusts the Prime Minister promised he was going to maintain? Where did they go? What happened to them? They are being destroyed one by one by the very Prime Minister who said he was going to protect them.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak once again in opposition to this bill. I want to support the amendment put forward by the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

When I talked about this bill last May or June one of the things I did not like about it was the $500 maximum supplement for people in the work force at the lower end of the income spectrum. I thought it was terribly misleading. For someone making only $14,000 or $15,000 a year with one or two children, $500 averaged out over an entire year works out to under $10 a week. That is not a lot of money. That was the part of the legislation I found misleading at the time.

When I went home to my riding over the summer I could not believe the number of women who came to my constituency office and thought I had not spoken out as aggressively as I should have on this bill, and I spoke about four or five times. So I had to go back to the drawing board. I had to go back to my research, my work and my colleagues to get a better grasp of what was really happening here. So often this happens in this place. These bills are a couple of hundred pages long and filled with complicated legal text. Quite frankly, you vote for something and the next thing you know you do not even know what you voted for. We do not ask enough of the right questions on some of these bills.

One of the things that was brought to my attention by some constituents who were obviously very familiar with the legislation was the fact this was really going to affect women who were in abusive relationships. Right now,

the baby bonus cheque is the only source of income for many women. It comes to them directly. It is a feeling of comfort. It is a feeling of security and it is a feeling of ever so modest independence, but it is something that is theirs. It is a national program, it is a national institution and it is something that women in this country have counted on for many years. The fact that we are scrapping the baby bonus system does not appeal to them.

When we get beyond that we also see that really even though this bill is represented as something that is supposedly helping low income families, we see that it is really a shifting of the figures. It is like doing gymnastics with figures. It is saying it is doing that but when you tear away the tinsel that covers up this bill, you get right into the substance and see that it is not really doing that.

A lot of women got into analysing this bill because of previous actions by this government. Actions of social assistance in things related to housing and other regressive measures or cutbacks which have been happening *vis-à-vis* families in this country have regenerated that distrust, that we are going to have to really go through any piece of legislation that this government puts forward.

That is precisely what has happened on this particular piece of legislation. The government's idea of trying to help low-income and disadvantaged families in our country is a good idea and it is a noble idea. When we say we are going to do those things, we really have to do them in substance as well. In this particular case, this bill does not pass that test.

I will continue to speak out against this bill. One of the members on the government side said earlier today that Canadians are going to wonder why the opposition is against helping low-income families in our country. They are going to look at us and ask why Liberals are against helping low-income families. Canadians will not believe that accusation put forward by the government side. If we are here and we are saying that this bill is not fair, it is complex, it is inefficient, we have to have the substantive reasons for backing that up.

We are not alone on this. The Caledon Social Policy Institute has spoken out against this bill in legislative committee. Joan Smallwood, the minister of social services for British Columbia has spoken out against this bill. Citizens for Public Justice in my own city, the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, the Child Poverty Action Group and Trevor Williams from Family Services Canada have all spoken out against the flaws in this bill.

On an important piece of legislation like this when we are talking about families and children, we should not let it go through when it is not living up to what Canadians think it is going to do.

I support the member's motion that we delete the bill completely and that we go back to the drawing board.

• (1310)

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, bill C-80 deserves to be run out of here altogether. It is almost an insult to the poor of this country that we are even debating it. At a time when the poor are facing very rough times, we are here seriously contemplating a bill that does nothing whatsoever to deal with their situation. I do not know what is wrong with a government that would even draft a bill like this.

Philosophically, we can understand that it will have a certain philosophical bent, a certain ideological twist that will want it to do this instead of that. I do not agree with the philosophy in this bill. I have told the government that before and I will keep telling it. That is one issue and we will come back to the issue of the basic ideology, the basic mind set that allows the government to come to this point. Surely part of that mind set can never be to sock it to the poor even more. What kind of a warped mind would have that as part of its philosophy to deliberately, overtly sock it to people who are completely defenceless? That is what this bill does.

It does many more things, most of them very negative and disgusting, to the poverty stricken of this country, many of whom live in my riding of Burin—St. George's, many of whom live in my province of Newfoundland, many of whom live all across this country. Poverty is not a respecter of regions, provinces or communities. We have very poor people in literally every constituency represented in the House here today. I find it curious and I find it mind-boggling that many of the people who sit here representing the poor of this country are so willing to ride roughshod over the poor in ramming this bill through the House.

Let there be no misunderstanding. This bill, this piece of legislation, is a bad bit of business. I said a moment ago that there is no new benefit here for people who are trying to get out of the poverty cycle. There is nothing for them. In addition, this bill is the final nail in the coffin of universality. Before we get too far along in this debate, remember what the Prime Minister was saying about universality not so very long ago. On August 18, 1984 he was fighting an election and was looking for some votes at the time from the poor and the rich. In an effort to reach out to the less well off, here is what the Prime Minister said at that time: "Universal social programs are a sacred trust not to be tampered with".

That quote is from eight years ago. Anybody with an IQ of 18 or more will know that in the eight years since on just about everything that Prime Minister has said he has contradicted himself a few weeks later. It is no accident, that he is here today with a piece of legislation that rides roughshod over his very own commitment of eight years ago. That is no surprise to us. The fact that it is no surprise does not make it any less cowardly or any less disgusting. That quote from 1984 goes back to a time when the Prime Minister was perceived as a man who could be taken at his word. People were still at the point at which they believed what he was saying because they had not tested him. It was before the September election of that year. He was not the Prime Minister then. He was the leader of the party, aspiring to be Prime Minister.

People all over this country engaged in effect in what was an electoral sweep to put this man in office because he had said such brilliant stuff. He said universal social programs were a sacred trust not to be tampered with.

Within the fairly narrow purview of this bill I give many other examples. In the shipbuilding area which affects my riding he had a similar graphic quote about how he was going to have a shipbuilding policy or how he was going to protect our fish from foreign overfishing, et cetera.

These are all examples of a man and a team of people who stuck with him and have to share the shame, because he does not take the blame alone, who were prepared to say anything to get elected. He is not the first to have done that. Many people have been known to say all kinds of weird and wonderful things to get elected.

He has gone further. Having said those things, he has shown no concern and no interest in making himself appear to be consistent with the electorate, and that is his crime. He will not now govern on the basis of the principles on which he was elected. Certainly one of the most sacred principles, as he said at that time, is the universality of social programs.

I am not the first person in this Chamber to make the argument about universality. It is an old argument but do not let the Tories think for one minute we are going to stop making it for that reason. It is not only an old argument. It is still a very sound argument.

It is a principle that has served this country very well, particularly in protecting the poor of whom I spoke earlier, and even the not so poor, because this bill if we look at the fine print is also an attack on the middle class. The only people who will benefit at all from this particular legislation in terms of dollars in their pockets are the very well to do, people who have fairly adequate incomes.

Another aspect of this whole discussion which we need to talk about is what happened to the Prime Minister's fond words about a national child care strategy. There was no talk of that here. Another promise has gone out the window; another need, a real need out there for a proper approach to child care across this country. This umbrella package that it is paraded to be does not mention the issue. It ignores another need of people across this country.

Much has been made in the debate about how much the government is going to be pumping into this new scheme. It throws around figures in the order of $2.1 billion. There is going to be a $2 billion increase over the next five years because of this new legislation it is proposing here today.

Why does the government not tell the whole story instead of just one-half of it, the half that is convenient for it, the half it hopes will make it look good in the eyes of the electorate coming up for the election, $2.1 billion more in the next five years?

Let me give an example. If I have an employee and I am paying him $10,000 and then reduce it to $5,000 and then offer him a $3,000 increase, I look awfully magnanimous to give him the increase, bearing in mind that I took it away from him in the first place. That is what this government has done. The $2.1 billion increase it is talking about has to be weighed against the fact that it took out of this system, this child benefit or this family

allowance as it was called, $3.5 billion over the past five years, almost twice as much as it is now proposing to put back in. Bully for the government.

• (1320)

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C-80 today. In my opinion it is a bill that is going to finally destroy what started out as the baby bonus, which is now known as the family allowance.

My understanding of family allowance or baby bonus, as it was known when it started, was that it was a recognition by the government of those people who decided to have children. It was an assistance and a recognition that it cost money to raise children. The government wanted to take part in that process, wanted to indicate to Canadians that it had family values, that it valued children.

How ironic today that we are now trying to save and preserve our family allowance. It is not any easier today to raise children than it was 20, 30, or 40 years ago. Parents face the same problems that existed then.

Today we received from the Minister of Supply and Services a commemorative coin. I congratulate the minister and his department for striking this coin and for offering it to us as a memento. Part of the inscription states: "Children as our future and as our source of inspiration". It recognizes that children play a very important part in our society. They are our future.

What bothers me is that if we are not going to help them to get a proper education, if we are not going to help them to be properly fed, properly nourished and properly housed, what kind of a message are we sending to them? Are we really recognizing them as part of our society and part of a society that we want to help prosper and grow in this country?

In my riding, as a result of lay-offs and as a result of mine closures, hundreds and hundreds of people have been put out of work. There are hundreds and hundreds of people whose unemployment insurance has run out. For a lot of them the only means of support that they had, along with the welfare system, was the family allowance that they got once a month. It helped to instil a little pride in them so that they could be part of the community, that they might be able to go out with their children and buy them a new pair of shoes. For the most part, that is what the family allowance is all about. It is to assist those families in raising those children.

The charts clearly show that for those families that have no income, no earned income as it is termed, the benefit to them is zero. Yet at the other end of the scale, those people who are earning $120,000 per year will benefit by about $2,000 as a result of loopholes that this government has allowed them. This is absolutely absurd and ridiculous.

There is something wrong with the system. We are not going forward; we are going backward. What this government should be doing is looking at the realities and really concentrating on the poor people in this country.

The way to do that is not by destroying our family allowance system, which is there to help and assist those families with the most need. We look at the figures, we look at the formula, and we are told by this government that this is going to be a very simple formula.

It is going to be a formula designed and proposed by the Minister of Finance, and not even supported by the Minister of National Health and Welfare because he did not even appear before the committee.

I have never yet seen a proposal by the ministry of finance or by this government that was simple. To prove that, in this case they have already said that the general public will not make the calculation. The ministry will make the calculation.

The finance department and the ministry of revenue will make the calculation. Is that simple? If it is that simple why not let the people figure it out themselves? I will tell you why. It is because then the people who do the figuring will see very clearly that they are getting shafted.

This bill must be defeated for the benefit of those people who need it most, those people who earn less than $120,000 a year, who earn less than $70,000 a year. If this bill really did put some extra money into the hands of those who really need it I would support it. It does not do that in my opinion. The calculation is shady and the presentations are shady. I do not trust this government and I do not trust this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I certainly hope that members will come to their senses and see to the defeat of this bill.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-80 today with very mixed feelings indeed.

I was just starting high school when the Hon. Paul Martin, who was then Minister of National Health and Welfare for Canada, introduced and Parliament passed his bill introducing family allowances. I can remember in those days what a great thing that was for mothers and fathers across this country.

My mother was elated to think that she was going to receive something like $8 a month, which was a lot of money in those days, and we certainly used it throughout the school years. It was put to very good use indeed.

Today there is an article in *The Ottawa Citizen* that is very apropos to this debate. It is headlined: "Bill expected to pass this week ends family allowance system". As I read this article over this morning I could not help but think how ironic this situation is.

If the government insists on pushing Bill C-80 through the House this week it will end for this time the system of family allowances that was brought into this House by the Hon. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, back in 1945. Is it not sad to think that this great social legislation which meant so much to all Canadians is going to die on the legislative books of Canada along with its great author, the Hon. Paul Martin.

We cannot help but have this debate today without paying a tribute to him and to those great governments of King and St. Laurent and on to the days of Mr. Trudeau and Lester B. Pearson.

• (1330)

Mr. Martin served in all those governments and was looked upon, to a large degree, as the social conscience of Parliament, and particularly of the Liberal Party, in those days.

It is sad to see the passing of it, but I want to read this article from *The Ottawa Citizen* by Mark Kennedy, which I think is an excellent one. It reads as follows:

> "Universal social programs are a sacred trust, not to be tampered with"—

This is attributed of course to none other than the current Prime Minister, on August 18, 1984.

> This solemn pledge was made repeatedly during a summertime election campaign by a politician who was not yet prime minister.
>
> It's a pledge that will come back to haunt Brian Mulroney.

We all remember very well that famous election campaign of the summer of 1984 and the great promises that were made across this country not only about social packages but about looking after the economy, and managing the finances of the nation in such fantastic ways as they outlined. It has been all downhill after the election of the government of today.

The writer goes on to say:

> That's because MPs begin final debate today on a bill tabled by Mulroney's Tory government. Bill C-80 would kill one of Canada's oldest universal social programs—Family Allowance—and make official what has been apparent for at least three years: universality is no longer a sacred trust.

But we will remember. The writer continues:

> The government is billing it as a way to help children in low-income families. But families living on welfare would not get a penny more under the new legislation, and the so-called "working poor" would only get an extra $42 a month.

Now those are the facts of life about this bill. I compliment the writer on that article.

However, even in the attempt to rewrite the Constitution of Canada there are some things under the social and economic union package in the new Constitution which we must question at this time and determine whether they are really going to happen. Section 4 says that the policy objectives set out in the provision on the social union should include but not be limited to a series of objectives. One of these is "providing adequate social services and benefits to ensure that all individuals resident in Canada have reasonable access to housing, food and other basic necessities".

This very bill today deals with that sort of thing, and the government is doing away with family allowances. It then talks about its child tax credits. You do not get any money back if you do not owe the income tax department. That is a very important factor about the tax system. You have to owe money before you get the deduction on the child tax system. If you do not owe anything you get nothing back.

Another part of the new constitutional proposal under the social and economic union packages is "providing high quality primary and secondary education to all

individuals resident in Canada and ensuring reasonable access to post-secondary education".

This year in my own province of Ontario alone over 95,000 students applied to go to university and only 54,000 of them were accepted because there were no facilities to handle any more. At a time when there is a great urge to go on to university the facilities are not there for our young people.

Family members today are being hurt by this new tax measure being brought in by the government which will do away with family allowances for all time as far as they are concerned. It also affects the transfer payments from the federal government to the provinces which have been reduced considerably and consistently by this government over the last few years. Therefore it affects what the provincial governments can do for their people under social programs under their jurisdiction. It affects what the provincial governments can do in the field of post-secondary education and brings about the very situation of those statistics which I mentioned a moment ago.

Surely it is time in this Parliament for a renewed social conscience and a realization of what is happening out there to families today.

There is another one here that I want to mention. It is under section 5 of the same part on Canada's social and economic union: "Parliament and the Government of Canada are committed to making equalization payments so that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation".

If you are going to provide comparable levels of public services, I suppose that one can be achieved. If you are going to cut back on the funds and provide fewer services, then you are cutting back and providing everybody with fewer services. That is not a good policy. The next issue is that there is no way you can meet the other commitments of comparable levels of taxation because if provinces are going to be cut short on finances by transfer payments from the federal government, they are going to have to make up the differences or the services are not going to be there.

There has been some tremendous legislation that has gone through this Parliament over the years of Canadian history, particularly in the last 50 years, to assist families on low incomes and middle incomes in this country. The bill that is before us today is a backward step and some members say it has to be defeated. Unfortunately, the reality of it is that this government is going to force this bill through in spite of all the complaints it has had about it, in spite of all the representations it has had, in spite of the fact that it cannot find witnesses to come in to even defend the bill before the parliamentary committee. It is going to push it through regardless. That is the history of this government: full speed ahead and damn the torpedoes. That is the way it is going to be with Bill C-80.

I just want to end by saying that I think it is a sad day with the passing of the Hon. Paul Martin, the author of the family allowance system in this country, going back to 1945. It is an even sadder day to think that this government is going to destroy the family allowance system of which he was the author. It is attempting to do it today on the very day that he has passed away.

I want to pay a great tribute to that man who was such a great social conscience to Canada and to extend our appreciation to him for his long public service in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take part in this debate because since it began at 11 o'clock this morning, I have heard all sorts of things and many accusations about our intentions that I wish to correct.

To repeat what the previous speaker said about the Hon. Paul Martin who set up this system, I must say that I also admire the Hon. Paul Martin for what he did, but I am sure that he was open-minded enough to believe that if he had to set up the same system today, it might be somewhat different from the one established in the 1940s. That is the important thing.

• (1340)

What is important in a bill is to keep up with the times. I wonder what twisted thinking would lead one to say in this House that the only way to eliminate poverty is to

pay universal allowances. One of my colleagues from the NDP said that just now.

We have to live in 1992: To eliminate poverty where I live—I am not poor, but I do not boast of being rich either—I do not need the waste of energy and time involved in sending me money which I will have to pay back to the government at the end of the year when I file my income tax return.

What does this bill do? It is quite simple. We are removing three measures, one of which was universal, and replacing them with a single one, at the same time adding $2.1 billion to help those in need.

One of my colleagues from the Liberal Party just said that it was a most unpopular measure and electioneering. The party in power is not so stupid as to use an unpopular measure to win votes. You must be logical. It is a popular measure because we are seeking the same objectives. We want to transfer wealth to those in the greatest need and add $2.1 billion to the pot. That is important.

We are told that it has to do with the fact that women are automatically the victims. The only women who will no longer receive a cheque are those whose family income is over $40,000. Try to tell me that they need such an allowance. Family allowances will not solve family communication problems where the woman does not work and the man makes $70,000 a year and does not give a damn cent to his wife and children. The bill will not solve that problem. It will continue just as it is now and will even be increased.

The GST was just attacked. One would think that this House is in a world apart with no idea of what is going on outside. When we passed the GST—and you will recall, Mr. Speaker, how it was attacked—they said that there would be a frightful storm of protest over it. The first people to contact the office were in fact those with low income, because they wanted to know when they would get their cheque.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the 80 per cent of women who now receive family allowances with tax credits only at the end of the year and another cheque three or four times a year will be very glad to get a cheque every month, in advance. Something else we know about poverty is that those poor people who had to get an advance on the family allowance around the middle of the month because they were in difficulty will no longer have to do so.

I disagree with my colleague that it is an unpopular measure and electioneering. Do not doubt that those who need their cheques support this measure.

But we are said to be attacking the Prime Minister's famous "sacred trust", universal pensions. We have to keep up with the times. When the old age pensions and family allowances were established, not many people had money. Before the advent of computer systems and income tax returns, we had no information on people. I remember the discussion when the time came to pay old age pensions. People had to make a sworn statement that they had no more than a certain income, which was absolutely humiliating. We went back and agreed that pensions would be paid to everybody. Today, if anyone wants to find out how much money I have in my bank account, he can. I thought it was confidential, but anyone can find out.

One of my friends who works at the credit union in Valleyfield told me: "Mr. Hudon, we can find out what your credit margin is and how much money you have". I said: "Really?" She said: "You want me to find out?" I said: "Sure".

Two hours later she called back and said: "Mr. Hudon, your credit is good,"—so far so good—"but you owe $572 on your Mastercard account which is due in two weeks time"—or something like that—"and you will owe a certain amount on your Visa account which is due in three weeks".

Today all this is possible, thanks to modern technology. But at the time the program was introduced, this information was not available, so we had to trust people and either oblige them to make a signed statement or else make the program universal. We opted for universality, but today, we do not need that any more.

Why should I get money for my children if I earn $70,000, $80,000 or $90,000 annually? What for? To get a cheque from the Canadian government every month? I do not think it makes sense. We should update our management methods so we can help the people who really need it.

They say there are complaints. Complaints from whom? Some people in my riding complained, but most of them are people who are disturbed by any kind of change. Of course, the older we get, the more insecure we feel about change.

I am sure, that like the GST, this new measure will be welcomed enthusiastically by those who will benefit. It may not happen today, because a government in power does not get a lot of applause. But a month after this program is implemented, Canadians in need will appreciate the fact that they are getting a single cheque, based on income declared the previous year. It is a measure that makes sense.

We do it for old age security pensions, for the guaranteed income supplement, and it works. People were worried at first. They said: «More changes. What is going to happen?» Take my constituents, for instance.

We members said: "This will be a popular measure. The Government of Canada will be able to deposit old age pension cheques directly in the bank accounts of the elderly". We thought it would be a very popular decision. Well, it took some doing to explain. We told them: "Do not worry, the money will get through to your bank, postal strike or not".

I thought it would be much easier to sell. And in fact, I think most people still do not take advantage of this service. Do you know why? Because they want to receive their cheque personally. I told them: "Why not have it deposited directly at the *Caisse* or the National Bank?" Their answer was: "I want to see my cheque with my own eyes". What can you say?

People must realize that today, with modern technology, the government can administer its social programs far better and is no longer obliged to make them so universal. Programs will be managed more efficiently, so that we will save on administration costs. The first to benefit will be women and children in need.

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, in starting my remarks I would like to respond to some of the comments that the previous speaker from the Conservative caucus made.

He made a reference to old people who are afraid of some of the changes that the government is bringing about. He also implied in his speech that we have to live in modern times and therefore we should be using modern technology.

The government should realize that it is not just senior citizens who are against this change or other changes that the government has brought in. It is not the people who are against technology who are against this legislation. In 1985, one year after the Prime Minister promised universal programs would be a sacred trust, this government started a systematic attack against old age pensions and the family allowance. Every year and in every budget we have seen some change which has destroyed the universal nature of programs in this country. It is not technology that people fear. It is not their age that turns them against some of the legislation the government brings forward. It is the government's own track record.

• (1350)

People in this country are afraid of this government. They are afraid they are going to lose their old age pensions. They are afraid the family allowance system will disappear. These are not false fears. They are based on what the government has been doing over the years. We know the government has partially deindexed pensions. We know the long-term effect of that is to make it less and less possible for those in need to rely on the old age pension. As inflation goes on year after year the relative value of the old age pension will decrease. That is a fact.

A member of the government may get up and say they are false fears or we must use new technology, but he is ignoring the real fact that this government has been attacking universal programs on a regular basis. He infers those of us in this House who oppose government legislation are living in an ivory tower. His own example was the GST. There are people right across this nation who know the GST has been bad for the economy. It has been bad for tourism. It has been bad for small business. It has helped to destroy the faith Canadians used to have in our economy. It does not take polls, but we know the polls tell us people are afraid for their economic future in this land.

This government has been in power for over eight years. It has been the captain of our ship. It has been in charge of the economy, but more Canadians now fear for their jobs than in 1984. More Canadians now are concerned about our social programs. More Canadians now do not believe their children will have the same standard of living they do at the present time. This government, which is now taking us into a referendum on the Constitution, has destroyed the faith Canadians have in our economy. It has destroyed our faith in the government assisting us in terms of old age pensions in the future. It continues to destroy that faith.

An hon. member: Right.

Mr. Murphy: That is one of the reasons selling the referendum will be very difficult for those of us willing to undertake that task. There are a lot of negative feelings in this land that exist as a result of past government actions. I refer to that because I am afraid Bill C–80, which is going to destroy family allowances in this country, is only going to further create a difficult situation for those of us who would support the referendum.

I would suggest to the government this bill should not be going forward at this time. As a measure of good faith, it should not be rushing this bill through Parliament. We have been told it is going to try to get this bill through all stages before we adjourn. What is the rush? The public should have the chance to be really informed about the nature of this bill. We had quick hearings at the clause–by–clause stage. There was a quick debate in the House earlier and now we have been told this bill is going to be guillotined in the final stages. That is not acceptable because the one thing this government needs is the trust of the people of this land. It has not earned that. It does not have that at the present time.

This legislation is not going to give a lot more money to the working poor. It is not going to give any more money to those on welfare, but it is going to take away the universal approach to family allowance. That does not create trust. That does not give Canadians a sense that this government is going to play fair in the future.

The government talks about technology and says it is the reason it makes these changes. That does not make any sense to ordinary Canadians. It tells people the family allowance program is dated and no longer applies because it was brought forward in 1945 but that does not make sense to people.

Canadians know as long as the family allowance is universal, the government is saying it is the responsibility of our nation to help with the finances of bringing up our children. They also know when the family allowance program is no longer universal there will be less and less political support for the family allowance as fewer Canadians receive it.

They know in the long run the family allowance, just like the old age pension, is being threatened by this government. Do not talk about technology. Look at your own government's record. Look at the fears you have created out there. The actual record of the government is creating those fears, not the opposition.

The whole economic program of this government is creating fears. With regard to the free trade agreement, we were promised we would have adjustment programs which never appeared. We were promised more money for those in need which has never appeared. We were promised the GST would not hurt the economy and it did. We know the free trade agreement cost us jobs in this country which the government still denies.

We know jobs are leaving Saskatoon to go to Mexico at this very time because it can get away with cheap labour and environmental standards do not exist. That is the proof Canadians have. Those jobs are disappearing. They are leaving this country and going down to the states. There is no way this government is going to sell this program or free trade until it starts being honest with Canadians.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I have been looking forward to commenting on this legislation for some time. We have listened to some very encouraging commentary earlier today.

One almost gets the impression there is a certain amount of legislated manipulation going on here today. The government wants to slip legislation through quickly while attention is being focused on the referendum campaign.

Here is a program that will dismantle one of the programs that has elevated Canada to the top status in the world in terms of providing for its people. We are all proud of the fact the United Nations has named Canada up there with some of the western European countries

for having some of the most caring and thoughtful social programs anywhere on the planet.

One of those programs is family allowance. It says if you are a citizen of this great country raising children, we place value on those children. We want to help raise those children so they can play their rightful role in society.

All of a sudden this is going to change. The government members are now saying with Bill C-80, if you are poor enough and can convince us your family income is low enough, we will give you some charity. It is back to the old charity routine. Is this the kind of country Canada is becoming? Is this the kind of Canada that is now turning its back on the children of this great nation?

What kind of manipulation is going on? I do not expect there is a single Canadian who woke up this morning and read his or her newspaper who was not shocked at what he or she found.

• (1400)

My friends across the way smile because they know that there is a propaganda machine now cranking out misinformation and manipulating statistics to influence Canadians on buying the North America Mexico-Canada-U.S. free trade agreement. Secret meetings are taking place. Phone calls are being taped. Lists are being kept. The East German secret police threw out their secret lists. The KGB threw out the lists in the old Soviet Union. But now this government is instituting computer lists of all those opposed to NAFTA.

That is what we found out this morning. There is a secret organization at work scheming across the country to manipulate information. They even said in the transcripts: "We are taking Statistics Canada information and manipulating it for our political purpose to brainwash in the most sophisticated propaganda campaign this country has ever seen in order to fool people into supporting NAFTA".

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but it is my obligation to say that it being two o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

1992 TRIATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, after planning for two years, the town of Huntsville in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka hosted the 1992 triathlon world championships this past weekend. Over 1,700 athletes from some 50 countries competed, cheered on by more than 5,000 spectators.

Canada did very well. A Canadian men's élite team placed first, the women's élite team placed second and the junior women's team placed third. We should all be proud of the outstanding performances given by our athletes.

This event was an overwhelming success, thanks to the dedication of 1,500 volunteers. The enthusiasm for the world triathlon was clear last Thursday evening when an estimated 6,000 spectators lined the streets of Huntsville for the parade of athletes.

The organizing committee, the many volunteers who helped ensure a smooth-running event, the spectators who came out to support our athletes and the athletes themselves who gave their best for Canada are to be congratulated for making a world-class event an overwhelming success.

The federal government made a generous grant to this event.

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday a memorial service was held at Concordia University for three professors who were senselessly shot to death on August 24. They were Matthew Douglas, Michael Hogben and Jaan Saber. A fourth professor, Dr. Phoivos Ziogas, is recovering in hospital.

I am sure that all members of the House would want to join me in expressing to the families, friends and colleagues of the deceased our deepest condolences and to Dr. Ziogas, our wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

The university has been overcome by sentiments of grief and horror, confusion, anger and deep concern for the future. Yet at the same time, there has emerged the resolve to protect, improve and develop the university to which these professors had committed so many of their efforts and so much of their lives.

As the rector of Concordia University, Dr. Patrick Kenniff, put it, if a collective effort by all in the university were to produce such a result, there could be no better tribute to these men and the ideals they stood for.

I would add that the university is circulating a petition which calls on Parliament to remove any opportunity for people to acquire hand-guns and to use them against their fellow human beings.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the recent meeting of maritime cabinets in Halifax concluded several agreements eliminating or reducing trade barriers between these provinces.

Agreements were completed in the areas of transportation, community colleges and government procurement. As well, it was determined to move forward in areas of exports and tourism as well as regional agricultural strategy, tax simplification, regional energy projects and employment mobility.

As the federal government observer at these meetings, it was clear to me that the federal government can play a big part in helping to reduce barriers to trade and encourage economic unity in the Atlantic area. Many federal programs are not transferable from province to province and many programs have different criteria in each province.

All federal programs available in the maritimes should come under scrutiny to identify differences that could be eliminated in order to provide uniform rules for the region.

The provinces are going through this process now and the federal government must play its part as well.

IX SUMMER PARALYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, the closing ceremonies of the IX Summer Paralympic Games take place today in Barcelona, Spain.

Over 3,500 athletes and officials from 94 countries were represented at these games which are a remarkable tribute to the power of human spirit in overcoming adversity.

The Paralympic Games, while given only limited media attention, are indeed very entertaining and exciting. Furthermore, the dedication and performances of our athletes provide strong encouragement for the one out of seven Canadians who have some form of disability.

Canada's contingent at the games included a total of 218 athletes and staff. In the over-all standings, Canada finished seventh with 75 medals, 25 of them gold.

I want to congratulate our athletes on their performances in Barcelona. I also want to recognize the work done by the disabled sport associations throughout Canada and especially commend the efforts made by the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled in co-ordinating Canada's participation at these games.

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INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, if Canada is to prosper, provincial economies expand and our standard of living continue to grow, barriers to growth and opportunity must be eliminated.

A step in this direction was taken last week when the maritime premiers met in Halifax. Co-operation agreements were reached that will not only improve service, but could provide some future tax relief as well.

The three governments agreed to create a single harness racing commission, dismantle barriers to government contracts, harmonize business taxes and jointly promote exports and tourism. Could it be that the federal and provincial governments are finally beginning to sing from the same hymn-book?

THE DISABLED

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, aboriginal people with disabilities living on reserves face challenges that few of us can comprehend.

This summer, I visited a number of reserves in northwest Saskatchewan and talked with people who have eye or ear impairments as well as people with physical disabilities who are confined to wheelchairs.

One of those people was Velma Iron of Canoe Lake, Saskatchewan, a strong and articulate spokesperson who wants the off-reserve population to understand the challenges that she faces every day.

Mrs. Iron believes there must be greater attention paid to concerns in four priority areas: health care, education, housing and transportation.

I agree with Mrs. Iron. There must be greater attention paid to the needs of the physically challenged on reserves where access is limited and mobility is restricted.

I urge the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Minister of National Health and Welfare to accept the challenge put by Mrs. Iron and others to become more personally involved, and to take immediate steps to adequately address the concerns that they have raised.

* * *

CANADIAN NATIONAL

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to draw attention to a matter of great concern not only to railway workers in my riding, but to all Canadians living near CN rail lines.

Very disturbing practices are taking place at CN affecting the safety of rail cars. Carmen regularly inspect rail cars and as needed, put bad order cards on those that have maintenance problems. It has been brought to my attention that it is a common practice of management to rip bad order cards off these rail cars so that they are not repaired and so that unsafe cars continue to be used on Canada's railways, risking the safety of Canadians living near the lines.

In addition to tearing cards off these defective rail cars, management has told workers not to enter the bad orders into the computer system, thus ensuring that no record exists of the problem or of the whereabouts of defective cars.

These unsafe practices by management increase the risk of dangerous goods spills, thus endangering the safety not only of rail workers, but of those Canadians who live near CN rail lines.

It is time the government ensured that the safety of Canadians is not threatened by unsafe practices by CN management.

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NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, all Canadians will be asked to pronounce themselves on the constitutional agreement reached in Charlottetown.

This exercise in my view, and in the view of the Liberal Party, will effectively give the Constitution back to the Canadian people.

[*Translation*]

The August 28 constitutional accord is not perfect, but it reflects a broad consensus among Canada's provincial and regional representatives. This accord is the best possible under the present circumstances.

[*English*]

I want to take this opportunity to let my constituents in Carleton—Gloucester know that I will assist them with any concerns that they may have with this package.

[*Translation*]

From now until October 26, I urge all Canadians to set aside their regional interests and to think of our nation's higher interests.

* * *

• (1410)

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, as of January 1, 1993, Canada Post may again raise its basic letter rate by one cent. The price of a stamp will thus rise to 43 cents, but to mail a letter in Canada, it will in fact cost 46 cents, GST included.

The Canada Post increases are a nightmare for the people of remote areas in Abitibi. These constant increases are unfair, because they are not matched by improved services in our regions.

If the Canada Post rate increases serve neither to maintain nor to improve service in a region like ours, I ask the corporation to postpone its decision to raise the cost of postage in Abitibi and in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

125TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, in celebration of Canada's 125th birthday, the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans, Lambton Unit 212 in the riding of York South—Weston, unanimously endorsed the following message which they asked be presented to Parliament. "Happy birthday, Canada, on achieving 125 years of great nationhood on July 1. We, the members of Lambton Unit 212, army, navy and air force veterans in Canada, love you with a passion and do solemnly swear and rededicate ourselves to your service and preservation. God bless Canada. God save the Queen."

I would like to thank the members of Lambton Unit 212 for their patriotic message. This is simply another indication of the affection which the veterans who fought for a free and united Canada have for our country, and how through their selfless contributions they continue to make Canada the finest country in the world.

* * *

INTEREST RATES

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, three years ago the House of Commons consumers affairs committee recommended that the federal government impose a floating cap on credit card rates. The idea was to limit the rate on bank cards to the prime plus 8 per cent. If that floating cap was in effect today the banks would be charging their customers just over 14 per cent on outstanding balances. But today the banks are charging almost 17 per cent, while department stores and others levy an incredible 28 per cent on those unpaid balances. Obviously this is costing Canadian consumers millions of dollars in extra interest. While it may be good for bank profits, it is not good for consumer confidence, consumer spending or the recovery of this fragile economy.

These interest rates cannot be justified except in the name of corporate greed. I call first on the banks to do the honourable thing, drop credit card rates to acceptable levels. If the banks fail to do that, I ask this government one more time to rein the lenders in and impose a floating cap on credit cards. Canadian consumers are being hosed, fleeced and gouged. They now need the protection of their government and they need it immediately.

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of this House to the brave actions of Deborah Scott of Barrie, a mother whose daughter was the victim of a brutal and violent beating and rape this summer by a group of teenagers. She is putting her personal tragedy aside to work for the protection of other Canadians.

Mrs. Scott is collecting signatures on a petition to have the Young Offenders Act changed to reflect the difference between violent and non-violent offenders. Society has the right to be protected against violent offenders of any age, and this begins with amending the laws that keep the names of young violent offenders secret.

My constituents have often stressed the need and their right to have the names of violent offenders released. Mrs. Scott's daughter's attackers have been released into the community on bail and remain unidentified to the public. In the eyes of Mrs. Scott and many of my constituents, this is truly and simply not acceptable. Barrie is not the only community whose safety has been jeopardized in this way.

It is time that the act be changed to protect the victims and to stop making excuses for the offenders.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in the midst of preparing for a referendum vote on October 26, a vote that will respond yes or no to the question: Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada

should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28.

The agreement is not perfect, however. I recognize that the first ministers have developed an agreement that contains considerable promise in terms of maintaining Canada as a single great nation. We on this side of the House have always stressed that constitutional reform must meet certain criteria: It must not make Canada more difficult to govern; it must facilitate adaptation to economic realities; it must not paralyse the role of the national government; and, it must adequately and generously reflect our fundamental values.

We are satisfied that these principles have been reflected in the accord. A Nepean constituent committee has been formed which is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the voters are familiar with all aspects of the consensus document. Hopefully, we in Nepean will respond with a resounding yes to the question and to Canada.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the entire developed world is in a very serious recession. Some call it a depression. This is caused by massive technological and psychological change.

The Government of Canada ought to be congratulated for its ability to handle change as it has handled change with tax reform, trade agreements, recognition of the need for industrial and commercial training and retraining, and programs designed to improve research and development.

We cannot bury our heads in the sand. We must recognize the world is changing, markets are changing, economies are changing and we must change with them. While change causes hardship and unemployment, we must recognize change and learn to cope with it. Our government is doing better in this regard than other governments throughout the world.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, this morning Canadians were shocked and horrified to learn that rather than trying to sell the Mexican–U.S.–Canada trade deal on its merits, the federal government plans to resort to a smear campaign reminiscent of Nixon's dirty tricks campaign.

Those who oppose the deal, in an effort to discredit them, will be called little people, left–wingers, small potatoes, crypto–communists, empty heads, loonies and cons. Anyone who opposes NAFTA will be targeted as the enemy. Big brother will keep computer files on those opposing NAFTA and Statistics Canada information will be altered in Orwellian style to suit the government's propaganda campaign.

How far will this government go in its free trade campaign based on manipulation and misinformation? This government has to learn that opposition is okay in a democratic society and must not only be tolerated, but encouraged.

If the government cannot sell NAFTA on its merits, it should forget it, listen to the people of Canada and scrap it.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the request of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for the establishment of an environmental assessment review panel for a proposed incinerator in my riding of Fraser Valley East. This decision indicates his support for the principle that government rules and regulations must apply to all projects whether large or small.

Earlier this year indian affairs officials approved without public notice a lease between the Sumas Indian Band and Bennett Remediation Services to construct a special waste incinerator on band land in my riding. Adjacent municipalities have by–laws banning incinerators within their boundaries.

This was unacceptable and I made my objections known quite clearly to the minister in late July. Approvals for projects such as this should not be done in a covert manner without considering local laws and the concerns of the public in the area.

On September 1, I publicly requested that the minister establish an environmental assessment review panel under the government's EARP guidelines. On Septem-

ber 11, the minister listened to the concerns that I and the people in Fraser Valley East raised and formally requested a full review. Again, I applaud the minister for his decision.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

The minister is certainly aware of this transcript of an August 26 conference call among 12 senior ministers of the government, including the minister's own deputy chief of staff.

These advisers are co-ordinating a multimillion smear campaign to discredit people who oppose this government's policies and they are using the machinery of government to help thousands of PC Party workers get ready for the next election.

The transcript makes clear that taxpayers' dollars were used to send tens of thousands of propaganda kits, and I quote, "to party supporters, field organizers right across the country, key party associations and campaign chairs". Taxpayers' dollars are also being used to keep lists of names of crypto-communists, people like George Proud, Peter Milliken and Maude Barlow. This tactic smacks of McCarthyism.

I would like to ask why the Prime Minister has authorized the use of taxpayers' money to launch a smear campaign against thousands of legitimate Canadians and to grease the wheels of the Conservative Party effort in such a low-grade way?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think that my hon. friend is way off base when she says the range of things that she has just outlined.

• (1420)

We have simply put forward here a statement of the facts of the NAFTA. That is what is in the documentation my hon. friend refers to. Some of that documentation, she would be surprised to find out I am sure, is agreed upon between the United States and Mexico as being the elements of the agreement so that people can understand the elements and nature of the agreement and how it will affect them as individuals.

Our intent is to get these facts out to Canadians so that we can then have a rational, objective and less emotional debate on the question of the NAFTA than was the case in the 1988 election campaign.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the minister's answer certainly does not dissociate himself personally from the McCarthy-like tactics—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member of course can put questions. Perhaps she would want to put the question directly to the minister.

Ms. Copps: Does the minister deny the statement made by his chief of staff at an organizational meeting for the smear campaign in which he said: "Nevertheless, we are seeing articles and letters starting to come out by what I will call the old, left wing crypto-communist, anti free trade Liberal-NDP con group. They are starting to write letters alleging plots, the dollar and everything else. I see where George Proud of P.E.I. has slashed it, Peter Milliken, and other great minds, Paul Dick, a Humber West Liberal legislative member"—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Copps: The minister and his colleagues may think this is funny but we take this very seriously. I would like to give the minister the opportunity now to stand to dissociate himself from the remarks of his chief of staff and to fire the man.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. friend is quite sensitive to these things and I know the great minds she has spoken of, Mr. Milliken and Mr. Proud, are also sensitive to these matters.

Let me try to put the point in the words of one of the leading commentators on the NAFTA, Mr. Peter Cook. In *The Globe and Mail* this morning he said: "It has also become a fact of life in Canada that when partisans of the left reach for something to bash that something is now free trade". Indeed my friend from Etobicoke North

said some two or three years ago that every sparrow that falls we will blame on the free trade agreement.

In a private conversation among political staffers one expects this type of language because these are political people talking among each other.

I am sure my hon. friend would agree that when Liberal staffers get together they use a few slang words to refer to the likes of myself and my friend from Calgary Centre, which might also offend the ears of my hon. friend.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): I think that the minister's answer is a defence of McCarthy tactics that we thought had gone out in the sixties. I will give him a chance to reply. He claims that it is only a few conversations among some assistants. In fact, we have proof here that it is the policy of the Prime Minister's Office, the office of the Minister for International Trade and the offices of twelve ministers in the Mulroney cabinet to use the agreement to try to promote their own policies and even to silence opponents of the government's policies. Does he support and endorse the use of millions and millions of Canadians' dollars to boost his own party's policies?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has talked about McCarthyist tactics. These are not McCarthyist tactics. They are efforts designed to get the facts of the NAFTA on the table so that Canadians can debate the issue in a rational, unemotional way on the facts that are presented.

I would be very pleased to sit down with my hon. friend and discuss the merits of the agreement.

The conversations referred to in the *Maclean's* article have registered that if there are facts misstated by opposition parties or other opponents to the NAFTA we are not going to smear, using my hon. friend's words. We are going to take those people on and fight this agreement on the basis of the facts. I think Canadians will support this as a very good agreement for them.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, I can well understand why the minister is consulting the gospels. If I were in his situation I would too. He refers to the Gospel of Matthew. I would refer him to the Gospel of Luke: "Every tree that fails to produce good fruit is cut down".

I was interested to learn as one who has occasionally criticized aspects of the North American free trade agreement that I am now presumably "an old, left wing crypto-communist, anti-free trade NDP-Liberal groupie". My wife will be surprised.

More seriously, instead of spending the taxpayers' money on the compilation of computer lists of those who have misgivings about some or all aspects of the North American free trade agreement, why does this government not spend the taxpayers' money, its scarce funds, on adjustment assistance to those who are inevitably adversely affected by freer trade?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, when I hear my hon. friend referring to quotes from the Bible, I am sure he has been waiting a long time to be able to put another quote on the table. Perhaps we might have another book from him and could get some real quotes. I am looking forward to that.

My hon. friend has asked a sensible question unlike the previous three that have been put on the table. My hon. friend asked a question about adjustment. I refer him to what we have done on adjustment following the FTA with the United States. We have increased the amount of funds for training. We have introduced the concept of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board where business and labour working together in partnership advise the government on the uses of these funds.

We were advised by the de Grandpre commission not to introduce an adjustment program that was exclusively related to the free trade agreement, but to increase the adjustment funds to help people in the economy as a whole rather than just as a result of the free trade agreement.

These programs are under review on a continuing basis and there may well be some changes we will have to make in response to changing circumstances in the economy as a whole.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader is quoted as saying: "If we have got to go out in an election we need enemies". I agree with the minister that this government will go out

in an election, but I would have thought the last thing that this government needs is more enemies.

Instead of spending money on costly advertising programs such as the government has launched on the free trade agreement, can the minister say why it is this government has consistently failed to implement the broad range of recommendations of the de Grandpre commission which he so often quotes? For example, why does the government not spend its money on assisting Canadians to develop high value-added industry? Why does it not promote programs that would encourage business to help those adversely affected by freer trade? Where is this government's adjustment assistance?

• (1430)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the essential approach of the prosperity initiative is to bring about a broad range of change within the economy, possibly changes in programs of government but also changes in the way business and labour approach the changing nature of the economy today.

We have had an extensive consultation process under way at the community-based level with 186 communities involved and with some 28 or 30 industry sectors involved. The report on this will be coming forth some time this fall and following that the federal government will be responding.

I would also encourage strongly that provincial governments, municipal governments, business, labour, educators, everybody who will be affected by this action plan proposal, also respond because it will require not just the federal government doing things but the country as a whole responding to the huge change under way in the globalized community we live in.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade.

Today, according to a survey, nearly half of Canadians and more than half of Quebecers are afraid of losing their jobs. People are really scared. This morning, we also heard that the government's strategy for selling the three-way free trade agreement is to discredit its opponents. Why does the government not discuss this agreement and explain its benefits, instead of launching personal attacks? Is the government losing confidence in its own free trade agreement?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend has not read the information that we have been putting out. The information is based entirely on facts.

We are quite prepared and want to debate this matter, the NAFTA, on the basis of facts, on the basis of the composition of the agreement. If my hon. friend wants to do so, I would encourage her to present a motion on the NAFTA and we will have a good debate on that. Parliament will be seized with this later on this year or early next year and at that time we will be setting out in a very clear way what the agreement does provide for Canadians.

It provides in principle access to a market of 85 million people with a growing middle-income group that has been heretofore closed to Canadian manufacturers, Canadian service providers and Canadian investors.

We have an agreement that results in some significant improvements to the existing free trade agreement. We also have an agreement that continues Canada as one of the most favourable places in the world in which people both within Canada as well as international investors can invest.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know, and particularly unemployed Canadians, that the Canada-U.S. trade deal cost this country 360,000 manufacturing jobs and that we continue to have 1.6 million people unemployed in Canada.

Again the government is trying to sell the deal by promises and, further to that, by intimidation. The government, through the article we have read today, says that it is going to use further intimidation tactics by asking multinationals to sell the deal to their employees. Yet these same multinationals are rapidly moving to Mexico and moving their jobs to Mexico. Workers are afraid of losing their jobs. They saw what happened during the Canada-U.S. trade deal. The minister has

done nothing to show that there will be jobs created in Canada but only that there will be more of the same.

When will the government start having a campaign to get Canadians back working and stop a campaign of over $300 million to intimidate the workers of this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, no one is trying to intimidate the workers or anybody else in this country. Let me again remind my hon. friend, when she starts whistling around these large numbers of job loss, of what Peter Cook said this morning: "It has also become a fact of life in Canada that when partisans of the left reach for something to bash that something is now free trade".

When my hon. friend uses the number 300,000 she forgets to mention completely the fact that we have been in a world-wide recession which has affected Canada and that we are in a period of tremendous change internationally which is affecting Canada as well as other countries. In fact 300,000 people in New Jersey lost their jobs. Is she going to blame that on free trade as well?

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister for International Trade that rather than citing a second party on whom the New Democratic people are partisans of, we are partisans of the working people of this country. That is why we are saying that NAFTA is a bad deal for Canada.

It is clear from the information out today by the senior strategists of the minister's department, as well as the Prime Minister's department, that the strategy to sell the trade deal is going to be calling Canadians empty-headed little Canadians, and otherwise simply entering into name calling rather than on the basis of the deal. On top of that, the senior strategists for the minister say that they will be holding back Statistics Canada data in order to wait until it is the right time for public opinion.

Will the minister, on behalf of his government, ensure that all Statistics Canada data is released now untampered with to all parties and to all Canadians?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, it is really astounding to me that my hon. friend could call the release of a secret transcription of a private conversation name calling.

No one was calling names. I am sure that if she were sitting down with Bob White or some other people in the labour movement they might not use the tenderest language in the world on myself or other members of the Conservative Party. I would not call that name calling if that is what they talked about in a private conversation.

My friend talks about the free trade agreement. If she says that the free trade agreement has been such a damaging thing, how is it that the free trade agreement has also allowed Canada greater access to the United States market so that we have been able to increase our exports to the United States market by some billions of dollars? I remind her that every billion dollar of increase in exports represents 15,000 new jobs. The free trade agreement has helped us get through this recession, not hurt us as my hon. friend would say.

The question she has asked was: Are we withholding Statistics Canada information? The simple fact is that Statistics Canada decides when it releases the information and that is not influenced in any way by the Government of Canada.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Minister for International Trade fully understands what is at stake here.

We have a government that is prepared to spend millions of dollars on compiling computerized lists of its so-called enemies. It is prepared to spend millions of dollars to send out kits to its own party field organizers, but it has no money for adjustment programs and it has no money for impact studies to tell Canadians what jobs are going to be lost and what sectors are going to be impacted.

In all seriousness does the minister not see a clear, moral responsibility to say that this kind of smear tactic is wrong, or is the fact of the matter that he will not say it is wrong because it is his tactic they are using, not his advisers', and they are simply doing his dirty work for him?

Mr. Speaker: I have been listening very carefully to these questions and I am asking hon. members to be very careful about making personal imputations that may give us some difficulty.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, any amount of huffing and puffing is not going to change the fact that the NAFTA is going to improve the economy of Canada by giving Canadians access to a market of 85 million people, one of the fastest growing markets in Latin America, a faster growing market than either that of the United States or Canada, a market with a large middle income group that is growing larger every day, and a market that is going to provide jobs to people in Canada.

That is the essence of the messages that we have been getting out on NAFTA. No amount of huffing and puffing by my hon. friend from Winnipeg is going to stop us from getting those messages out.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, let us see if we can come at the minister another way.

In this transcript that was recorded the adviser to the minister and to several other members of the Crown admit that they are spending public money to do focus groups on so-called enemies of NAFTA. They are compiling files on people so that they can use retaliatory tactics. They are particularly targeting people for attack under this program.

• (1440)

I want to ask the minister this question. At a time when the government is supposed to be reaching out—at a time of crucial importance in this nation—to bring people on board to say yes to the renewal of Canada, does he think it is the right tactic to be trying to smear the people that he wants on board to support the yes side in this referendum? Does he not think he is simply destroying the whole fabric of this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, if we are targeting anything, we are targeting inaccurate statements.

If anybody writes a letter or if anybody, such as my hon. friend, makes an inaccurate statement about the NAFTA or the free trade agreement, such as he has done, such as his colleague from Hamilton has done, such as his colleague from Etobicoke has done, such as the Leader of the Opposition has done today, then we are going to answer those inaccurate statements with the facts. The facts are based on a reading of the free trade agreement with the United States. The facts are based on a reading of the NAFTA agreement and based on the facts in those agreements we are going to respond to the statements that are made by my hon. friend.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not understand that the debate today is not about the substance of the trade deal. It is not about whether the deal is great or whether the deal is bad. The debate today is about the process, whether it is appropriate for the taxpayers of Canada to be paying—and I want to quote the minister's own chief of staff—to send out 30,000 kits to party supporters across the country, including kits to the campaign chairs of the Progressive Conservative Party appointed by the Prime Minister, to the field organizers in all 10 provinces, to key riding associations.

The debate is not about the substance of the deal but whether or not it is appropriate for the taxpayers to pay for PC Party propaganda.

Does the minister believe it is appropriate? Did he give his authority for that use of public money? If he did not, will he see that the taxpayers' purse is repaid, because it is not a PC Party piggy bank.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the information that has been sent out is available, and was sent out to many, many people. It was sent out to business leaders, it was sent out to union leaders, it was sent out to academics, it was sent out to—

Mr. Andre: To members of the opposition.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —a range of people.

If my hon. friend would like some information to send out on government policy, he is perfectly free to call my office, get the information and send it out.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the minister is coming close to realizing what the discussion is about here this afternoon.

I ask him the question again. Does the minister think the action of the 10 chiefs of staff, 10 disciples of a tactic of another era, who have not realized that the cold war is over and have declared a war on truth, appropriate? I want to quote directly from the transcript. This was not in the *Maclean's* article; it is on page 17 of the full transcript that will be released today by this party. Does he think it appropriate that it was sent to "field organizers right across the country, as well as our key party associations, as well as our campaign chairs"? They all received the full kit. If the PC Party of Canada received

the full kit, why should taxpayers pay the full cost? Answer that, minister.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend referred to a war on truth. The fact is that this is a war with the truth. It is based on a use of the facts that are in the free trade agreement. My hon. friend has singled out some people who got the kit—

Mr. Speaker: This is an interesting exchange. I do not know whether the country would be better off hearing it or not hearing it but I will let the minister complete his answer if he so wishes.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Let me just remind my hon. friend that some 40,000 or 45,000 of these documents went out to members of the business community across the country, to leaders of business associations as well as small business people.

It is an effort on our part to let people know what is in the agreement so they can respond with a sense of certainty when people such as my hon. friend make the outrageous statements that he has been making today.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister for International Trade.

What we are hearing in Question Period today is a very dark and sinister process that is being unveiled through questioning—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Riis: I want to put a very clear question to my hon. friend, the minister.

The transcript of this meeting says of those that oppose NAFTA, "we are watching all the opposition, opposition members and others across the country and we have them all on computer".

The KGB threw out its lists long ago. The secret police in east Germany threw out its lists. Is this government keeping lists now on computer of all those Canadians that are standing up in opposition to the NAFTA deal?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend makes a statement that is purporting to be fact which is factually wrong, yes, we do keep a record of that and yes, I do respond to it when I can to make sure that Canadians understand what is in the NAFTA and what my hon. friend alleges is in the NAFTA in his effort to twist the truth. Those are the things that we are ensuring.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that hon. members, in pursuing this line of questions, would want to stay within the bounds of propriety in the House.

I have to say to the minister that was a straight accusation and it was inappropriate. I do not want to have to deal with any other statements that are made, or preambles that are made in the next minute or two as being inappropriate.

I would ask the minister to withdraw, and I would ask members who are putting questions to be very careful to stay within the proper bounds.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I thought I was putting that in the subjunctive but if there is any offence, I would be happy to withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. minister.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, let it be clear that the minister has just admitted on the floor of the House of Commons that the government is keeping lists of citizens who are in opposition to the deal.

In this government's effort to misrepresent what is going on, to conduct a campaign of disinformation, what did his chief of staff mean when he said: "We are doing some minor changes to StatsCan information before we decide to send it out to Canadians"?

Can he explain what he meant when his chief of staff says that they are making some changes to StatsCan information as part of their propaganda campaign?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, let me again correct what the hon. member has just said.

We are keeping track of statements that we believe are incorrect and we want to make sure that the correct nature of the statement is on the record.

If my hon. friend or others make statements, maybe it is because they have not read the agreement or are misinterpreting the agreement that their statements are not accurate. We want to make sure that Canadian citizens are given access to the accurate information and not the misstatements.

As to the question my hon. friend has just put to me, I answered his leader by saying that we do not control in any way StatsCanada. StatsCanada has its own information. It has its own basis on the release of that information and that is the basis on which StatsCan operates.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I do hope the minister of trade will later confirm to me that I am on his list, but I would like to go to the Minister of Transport who last Thursday said that destructive competition between our airlines was "a main cause" of the difficulties that our transportation sector is now in.

• (1450)

I would like to ask the minister whether he will adopt the proposal put forward this weekend by the Leader of the Opposition to halt the merger proposed between Air Canada and Canadian Airlines until October 30, assist the airlines during this period with an abatement of transportation taxes and meet with the two carriers and with the competition bureau and seek a return to healthy, stable competition in Canada's skies?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have helped the PW airline to get through the present period by purchasing three aircraft.

We also helped the Canadian aviation industry last year by making changes to the excise fuel tax and modified the depreciation and capital cost allowance. No, we will not listen to Mr. Chrétien, because as this thing is unfolding the rest of the world is not going—

Mr. Speaker: I know that hon. members will, as I asked the other day, want to refer to each other in the appropriate way.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, the government's transportation policy used to be entitled "Freedom to Move", now it would be better known as "Failure to Move".

The government has a choice in this and if the minister will not adopt the rational, cautious approach put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, perhaps he will tell Canadians what his plan is in the face of a privately owned, unregulated monopoly of Canada's air services.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the government's position was clearly explained on several occasions. Recently, two proposals were considered by the airlines. After examining one of the options, PWA preferred to continue discussions with Air Canada, while reserving the right to revert to the other option.

As soon as a deal has been finalized and we have been informed of the deal, two entirely independent agencies will examine the provisions of the deal. The Bureau of Competition Policy will concentrate on maintaining the benefits of competition for Canadians, while the National Transportation Agency will determine whether the proposed deal is in the best interests of Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. I too am somewhat disappointed that he would not follow the suggestion made by our leader as well as my colleague for Ottawa South.

The Minister of Transport will know that when the government introduced its deregulation package, the then Minister of Transport and the present Deputy Prime Minister said: "Canada's transportation system is the physical bond that holds together the diverse regions of this vast country".

I would like to ask the Minister of Transport what specific plan of action do he and the government have to ensure that regions like mine, Atlantic Canada, will remain linked to the rest of the country?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same. No deal has been finalized so far. What we now have in the negotiations taking place between the two airlines is a proposed merger, and Air Canada has announced that if the proposal is accepted, both companies will continue to exist and operate as such.

I repeat that as soon as we have a deal, the National Transportation Agency will examine it and the Bureau of Competition Policy will examine it as well, to ensure that it will be in the best interests of Canadians and that the benefits of competition are maintained.

[*English*]

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. I want to remind the minister that for Canadians in parts of Quebec, Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario and western Canada, air transportation is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity.

On behalf of Canadians in Charlottetown, Sydney, Moncton and other regions of this country, I want to ask the minister what unequivocal guarantee can he give to those Canadians so that they will not have an inferior air service and monopoly prices against them as Canadian consumers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): The best guarantee we can give, Mr. Speaker, is that since deregulation, service has improved across Canada. I repeat that the competition watch-dog will have to examine the deal as soon as it is finalized—if it is finalized—and will comment and make its recommendations at that time.

* * *

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

The European Economic Community recently proposed very restrictive regulations which will effectively curtail all shipments of softwood lumber from Canada to Europe. It will interrupt a $1.4 billion industry if it is not corrected.

I know the minister made some recommendations and proposals to the community. Do we have an update and are we any closer to a solution?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend has pointed out, we are very much aware of the threat of community action on softwood lumber exports.

We made very strong representations to the community and will continue to do so. However, at this stage I do not have anything further to report. It is something we will be following very closely in the days and weeks ahead. There may be a ministerial meeting with the representatives of the community in the next week or so.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister for International Trade, whom I understood a moment ago to have said that his government respects the independence of Statistics Canada and its numbers are its numbers.

I wonder if the minister would explain why it is that on page 4 of the pamphlet the government claims that manufacturing employment is rebounding up to 113,000 from a March low, but if you look at the StatsCan statistics the increase was 43,000.

It would seem to me that the government is following the words of Mr. Ramsey: "We will change it before we release it". What is the minister's answer to that?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is the same as the answer I have given to his House leader and to his leader.

By law, Statistics Canada information is its information. It releases the information and the government has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to be having a great deal of intellectual difficulty today.

Nobody said that StatsCan would release the information. Mr. Ramsey says: "We have got the StatsCanada information. We will do some minor changes in it".

Would the minister consider the difference between 43,000 and 113,000 a minor change? Is that not evidence of manipulation of Statistics Canada by this government to manipulate the people?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I have just stated what the policy of Statistics Canada is, which is the policy by law. That is the policy this government respects.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for agriculture.

The western grain situation has worsened again because of bad weather, yet the government has not responded to farmers' pleas for a new cash advance program.

We now know that the government has millions of dollars of taxpayers' money for a NAFTA propaganda campaign and plenty of time for its staff to work on a political smear campaign, but it has no time at all to answer farmers who have been devastated by this terrible weather.

Will the minister recognize the farm crisis today and announce an interest-free cash advance program for the new crop year?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Finance answered a question about the programs that are in place, which we have initiated together with the farmers and the provincial governments to provide help for farmers. So far there is more than $535 million under crop insurance and maybe $1.35 billion under GRIP programs.

The interest-free program that was in place before is under consideration now, but I think it is too early to make any final answer because we already have put in place programs that will trigger when the parameters are met. We should wait for the assessment that our people are doing in the field now to know what is the real damage. As we have done in the past, obviously the government will look at this closely and make the decision when the time comes.

• (1500)

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): I take it, Mr. Speaker, the farmers will have to wait. They will have to wait more. Clearly the government's priorities are out of whack.

As we now know, a member of the grains minister's own staff is busy working on a NAFTA propaganda campaign. The minister allows time for that political hanky-panky, but there is no time to answer farmers who are in desperate need of an extension to the interest-free cash advance program.

I ask this minister again if he is prepared right now to announce a new interest-free cash advance program for western farmers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, we must at least recognize that if some members of this House and ministers are trying to open the doors to international trade for Canada, they are surely on this side and not on the other, because the opposition tends to say no to free trade, no to NAFTA and no to eliminating interprovincial barriers.

This government has acted dynamically over the years to ensure that not only farmers but all Canadians can be competitive internationally, because there lies the future. That does not seem to be the future as seen through Liberal glasses, but it is obviously how Canadians, Canadian youth, Canadian farmers and Canadian producers see the future.

I told the hon. member that this year we had implemented several programs that will provide about $2 billion for farmers. For two existing programs, that is an awful lot. We will look at the other proposed suggestions with interest when we have the actual damage figures in our hands.

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from the Eastern Caribbean States.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I wish also to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, some information has just been given to me. It pertains to the question that was just put to me by the member from Windsor in relation to unemployment figures.

There was an error in the tabloid. The seasonally unadjusted figures for March were compared with the seasonally adjusted figures for July. I think if one compares the unadjusted employment figures that the actual numbers show an increase of 181,000 from the lows to the period in July.

I think that the figure that is in the tabloid itself is lower than the actual increase in the unadjusted figures.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I have a technical problem. There is no simultaneous translation and the minister's statement could be heard only in English. Could he repeat it so that we can hear the interpretation?

Madam Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member would just be a little patient, we will check to see what happened to the simultaneous translation. The written translation will be available in the next few minutes anyway. Perhaps the hon. member could wait a few minutes.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, if we do not have simultaneous translation, I presume that I could obtain unanimous consent from the House to suspend the proceedings until the system is working again, so that we can start over in both languages.

I do not feel that I am a second-class member and I believe that I have as much right to have the debates interpreted in my language as everyone.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am assured that the simultaneous translation is working very well now. Someone is looking after it.

If we can wait a moment, we must also move on to a special item before proceeding to the Orders of the Day and the Speaker of the House is indicating to me that he would like to occupy the Chair for that. I am sure that the other technical problems can be solved in the meantime.

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WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table a Notice of Ways and Means Motion to amend the Excise Tax Act. I ask that the motion be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I should bring to the attention of the House that there have been some discussions and it would be the disposition of the House, as I hope it would be, to go immediately to tributes to a former colleague.

* * *

THE LATE HON. PAUL MARTIN

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, we were deeply saddened to learn early this morning of the passing of the Hon. Paul Joseph James Martin, surely one of the outstanding people in public life in this country in modern times.

Born in Ottawa on June 23, 1903, the son of Philip Ernest Martin and Lumina Marie Chouinard, he grew up in the Ottawa Valley in very modest circumstances. After an outstanding academic career at the University of Toronto, Osgoode Hall, Harvard, Cambridge and the Geneva School of International Studies, he came to

Windsor, Ontario, to practise law and lecture at Assumption College.

Paul Martin was first elected to the House of Commons in 1935, when he was only 32, for the riding of Essex East which is now the riding of Windsor—St. Clair. The people of Essex East re-elected Paul Martin as their member of Parliament for 33 years without a break. There was an admirable friendship, a special rapport between the people of Essex East and Paul Martin. Factory workers, farmers, people of every origin and walk of life, to all of them he was simply their Paul to whom they could turn with their needs and problems, no matter what else he did as a figure of national and international renown.

Paul Martin first entered the cabinet of Mackenzie King in April 1945. He went on to develop an outstanding record of achievement as a minister in both national and international affairs. His work provided the basis for much of what we consider today to be the fabric of social policy and identity that defines the Canada we are striving to preserve.

As Secretary of State in 1945, he was responsible for the first Canadian Citizenship Act. Before that initiative, the status of Canadian citizen did not exist.

• (1510)

During his years as Minister of National Health and Welfare from 1946 to 1957, in the government of Louis St. Laurent, Paul Martin was responsible for national health legislation which was the forerunner, the basis, of today's medicare system. Even while serving in this capacity he often represented Canada at meetings of NATO and the United Nations. In the 1950s he was responsible for a breakthrough at the United Nations which, for the first time, enabled many of the new countries of the Third World to become members of that organization.

As Secretary of State for External Affairs in the government of Lester Pearson, from 1963 to 1968, he had many achievements, for example, the creation of the peacekeeping force on the island of Cyprus. He played a role in the negotiation of the Columbia River Treaty. But he was especially proud of his role in negotiating the Canada-United States auto pact, the agreement which did so much to build the modern industrial base of my own city and large parts of Canada.

I am sure Paul Martin could have been re-elected for the rest of his days to the House of Commons by the people of Essex East. But in 1968 he left the House and entered the Senate where he served as government leader until 1974 when he went on to represent Canada as our high commissioner to Great Britain until 1979.

Even in his subsequent years of so-called retirement, he remained remarkably active, writing three highly acclaimed books about his life and times, serving as chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University, providing a source of advice and guidance to Liberals and to many in public life generally.

For generations of young people like myself who were interested in achieving a career in public life, especially through the Liberal Party, he served as adviser, mentor and example. He was one of the leading builders of the modern progressive liberalism which marked Canada's post-war years.

Paul Martin looked on public life as a very high and noble calling, in spite of its stresses and difficulties. His life and achievements prove the validity of this approach. He was able to combine to a remarkable degree a life of ideas with a life of electoral and constituency politics. He combined a high degree of empathy for individuals and their concerns with a national and, in fact, an international outlook.

[*Translation*]

He was very proud to be a Franco-Ontarian. He was very proud of his Francophone heritage, but he always fought for a Canada united from sea to sea.

[*English*]

To the end of his days, Paul Martin believed in and fought for a bilingual and multicultural Canada united from sea to sea to sea, with equal opportunities for its people of every origin.

He was disappointed on three occasions in his search for the leadership of the Liberal Party. However, he accepted these decisions with good grace and went on to serve the leaders who were chosen with unswerving loyalty and support.

Paul Martin was a speaker of remarkable skill and power. He had a warm outgoing personality that brought about a very friendly response from people of every walk of life. Especially proud to be a citizen of Windsor, for many years everywhere he went in Canada and abroad as

minister and later as high commissioner, one of the first things he said when he ran into Canadians was: Is there anybody here from Windsor?

Windsor will miss Paul Martin. I will miss him, as will all Canadians who know of his role in building Canada as a modern country.

Along with his public life, his family was very important to him. He was devoted to his wife Nell, to his children and grandchildren. To Nell, to his son, our very distinguished colleague Paul, to his daughter Mary-Ann, to his grandchildren and to his entire family, I express on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of our caucus and on my own behalf our deepest sympathy.

[*Translation*]

I wish to extend our sincere condolences to his family.

[*English*]

Paul Martin's passing is a loss for all of us. However, we can respect his memory and pay tribute to him by the way we strive for a Canada which reflects the values of concern, compassion, generosity and unity, the values for which Paul Martin fought throughout his long and distinguished life.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, very few people leave an indelible mark on this Parliament and on this country. Paul Martin was one who did. I do not know that either one of them would welcome the comparison, but I always thought of him bracketed with the former right hon. member from Prince Albert, Mr. Diefenbaker. They were both very fierce partisans. They were both parliamentarians. They were both champions of people who were in need. They both had a sense of the history and the potential of this country. That is about where the comparisons stopped between Paul Martin and John Diefenbaker.

As I heard the news this morning of his death, it struck me that while he was a fierce partisan for the Liberal Party, he also had a very strong connection with those of us in other parties, particularly with leaders of other parties, perhaps with leaders of other parties who had lost conventions because he knew that experience.

It is not well-known that Mr. Martin's talents as a young man were recognized and encouraged particularly by R.B. Bennett. His relationship with Mr. Diefenbaker is well-known. I had the great, great privilege of knowing him when he was high commissioner for Canada. I can say that he was one of the people whose conduct in public life and in this House was very much a matter of inspiration to me personally.

Everyone has their Paul Martin stories, such as the story, as my friend from Windsor said, about "is anyone here from Windsor". When he was Secretary of State for External Affairs, I am told—I could never keep up with that—he used to take the time in every city he visited to pick up postcards and go back and write notes to people from Windsor saying: "Wish you were here".

There is really only one Paul Martin story and that is a story of a man of uncommon energy, vision and conscience who changed his country profoundly for the better. He embodied Canada's commitment to peace and development abroad and embodied its commitment to a better life at home. In many ways, as my friend from Windsor has just indicated, a country we are fighting now to keep was the country that Paul Martin did so much to define in that extraordinary and long career.

Mr. Martin served on Parliament Hill for 39 years. He held cabinet office longer than any Canadian since Mackenzie King.

[*Translation*]

In his capacity as a minister, first of all as Secretary of State, Mr. Martin tabled and was responsible for the adoption of the first Canadian Citizenship Act. As Minister of National Health and Welfare, he had a profound influence on the development of social programs in Canada and, in his work with the provinces, prepared the advent of universal medicare.

As Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Martin helped develop our country's peacekeeping role. He negotiated an end to the hostilities in Cyprus, sent a peacekeeping force to the island and expanded Canada's peacekeeping role in the Middle East.

[*English*]

Paul Martin knew the difference between convenience and conviction and he always chose the latter. He knew the *status quo* could always be improved and he set out to do it. He knew that the standards of the day were always standards to be made better. He did that more often than almost any other Canadian leader of his or any other generation. He demanded excellence of himself and he acted on it. He had a vision of a better Canada and he worked for decades to bring it to pass. He knew we had a special role in the world and he helped to mould it. He was convinced that to be Canadian meant something special and that we owed it to ourselves to always strive to make it better.

• (1520)

When he introduced the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1946 he said the following:

> One thing from which we in Canada have suffered, to the detriment of this magnificent country, is from a feeling of divisiveness—lack of that conviction that the welfare of all is the goal of their effort. It is not good enough to be a good Ontarian or a good Albertan—Citizenship means more than the right to vote; more than the right to hold property; more than the right to move freely; citizenship is the right to full partnership in the fortunes and in the future of the nation.

He was a man of really remarkable accomplishments: a minister in several portfolios through decades, leader of his government in the Senate and a very active senator, a high commissioner. All of those things together would make you think that he embodied the definition of an insider. In a sense he was but in the real sense he was not. If there was a quality to Paul Martin it was that he never became blinded by the offices he held or the honours that were bestowed upon him. He was always very much an individual who was open to people who sought and sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed, to ordinary people who had needs across the country.

I saw one of the newspaper articles today that said he finished his active political career in the Senate—not by a long shot. I could never understand the holiday schedule of high commissioners and ambassadors for Canada until it suddenly occurred to me when I was briefly Prime Minister and Paul was carrying on one of his endless public occupations as high commissioner that there was some relation between his vacations from London and Canada House and elections or by-elections in Windsor.

I am told on good authority that while he always was an active and a practising Catholic, he went to mass with particular regularity during these vacations, and at home during by-elections and just happened to be seen, usually with one or another Liberal candidate in tow, at the steps of a church or a cathedral in Windsor.

He did not finish his political career in the Senate, he finished it today when finally that great heart failed and Canada lost one of the leaders of our time, one of the people who defined and made valuable the nature of this extraordinary country.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Leader of the New Democratic Party, our caucus and our party I want to say how saddened we were this morning to hear of the passing of Paul Martin Senior.

If one were to go into the libraries of members of Parliament, I suspect that in a prominent place on their shelves would be the two volumes of *A Very Public Life*. Those of us who did not have the good fortune to serve with Mr. Martin had the opportunity to learn about his accomplishments and his dedication and service to Canada.

Previous commentators have mentioned a funny story attached to Paul Martin Senior. Just the other day I was in the hallway with my leader and a friend of my leader who was a Liberal and who was explaining how she first came to be a Liberal. It started when she was 15 years old and she had won an essay contest. Part of the prize was to have lunch with Paul Martin Senior, in the parliamentary dining room. At that time he talked her into becoming a Liberal and she has been a Liberal ever since. I think that story helps us understand how Paul Martin could be re-elected over a 33-year span in his constituency of Essex East. He was an outstanding parliamentarian with a long record of achievements, a dedicated public servant, an outstanding academician and a diplomat for many, many years with outstanding accomplishments.

Many people come and go from this place and I suppose all of us in some way or another—some small, some large—leave a mark. When one looks at the long lists of accomplishments of Paul Martin Senior, one begins to appreciate how much this man did to make Canada a better place.

The fact that we have progressive legislation that distinguishes Canada is in no small part because of the contribution that Paul Martin made in this place and the other place over many years.

We were sad when we heard the news this morning and today our sympathies go out to his son, who shares this place with us, to his wife, his daughter, his family and his friends. Our hearts and our prayers are with them today.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that we have to pay tribute to the Hon. Paul Martin on this day after a very long and distinguished public career in Canada.

He was born in Ottawa in 1903 but at five years of age his parents moved to the Pembroke area where his father worked for years in a local sawmill. As a result, Paul came from very humble beginnings up the Ottawa Valley. He came from a family with a strong faith and a strong caring attitude.

His father was a great source of encouragement to him and his mother was always there to give him some very wise advice. He always told me she played a tremendous role in moulding his life.

He attended schools in the city of Pembroke and then went on to an outstanding academic career. He moved to Windsor where he had a long and distinguished political career, as outlined so well by my colleague from Windsor West.

In 1928—this is a story that is always told with a great deal of humour in the Pembroke area—the Hon. Paul Martin was away at law school, a very bright young law student. The Liberal Party met to choose a candidate for the provincial election of that year and it ended up with no candidate. At the end of the meeting one of the good old-timers got up and nominated someone he considered to be a very bright young man from Pembroke by the name of Paul Martin who was at that moment a student at law school. Everybody agreed Paul should be their candidate.

The next morning they phoned him at university and told him he was the candidate for the provincial election. His father also learned the next morning that his son Paul had been nominated to run against none other than his own employer and that created a little bit of difficulty for a while. The Martin family in its entirety was very proud of and loyal to Paul Martin.

I want to express the condolences of all the people from the Upper Ottawa Valley today, and particularly from Pembroke where he grew up, to his son Paul, his daughter Mary-Ann, and his wife Nell.

Particularly, I want to mention three of his sisters who are still living in Pembroke: Lucille Martin, Anita Martin, and Mrs. Claire Guay. Our hearts go out to them today because they were always there, they were very proud of their brother Paul. They worked hard, particularly Lucille, to give Paul some help in his education.

We need not talk about his great career in the latter days of the League of Nations, his work in the United Nations on behalf of Canada or his work in this Parliament on the social legislation of this nation. He was a strong person, the social conscience of the Liberal Party of Canada.

I want to thank, on behalf of his three sisters who were so proud of him, the people who have risen in this House today and paid such a very fine tribute to him. We will always remember him as a great Canadian. May more Canadians of his calibre come forward to keep this nation together and make it great, as Paul Martin would want it to be.

• (1530)

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I first saw Paul Martin when I was 14 years of age in London, Ontario. My father had taken the family to the London arena to see the Right Hon. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and Paul Martin. The arena was even more filled than for the London circus. We had come to see the Prime Minister, but we had come to hear Paul Martin who time and time again brought that tremendous crowd to its feet.

I had a very personal experience with Mr. Martin. In 1968, when I was a student, I was asked to work full-time during the leadership campaign with Mr. Martin. It took me two seconds to say yes to have the opportunity to work with this lifetime student, this rare politician, one of the few anglophones in Canada who was bilingual at that time, this person who had brought national health insurance to Canada and who, as Secretary of State for External Affairs, had given us measures such as the Columbia River Treaty, the auto pact and the peacekeeping forces in Cyprus. What an honour to have worked with him.

I have two vivid memories of that four months when I worked with him, living with him night and day. The first was that Mr. Martin was incredibly demanding of all those around him, but he was even more demanding of himself. When we could not organize delegates to be with him and talk to him, he organized himself to meet with those delegates on the phone from six in the morning until after midnight every day. I can assure my colleagues that he was no respecter of Canada's time zones. Through his work, his character and his qualities, Mr. Martin inspired tremendous loyalty and friendship from all those who worked with him.

My second vivid memory of that leadership campaign in 1968 deals with Tom Hazlitt, now deceased but then a reporter with the *Toronto Star*. The previous year he had won the award for being the top reporter in Canada. I asked him: "Tom, why did you choose to follow Mr. Martin full-time during this campaign? You had your pick of all the Liberal candidates". He said: "Jim, if Mr. Martin wins, it is the biggest story of this year. If he loses, it is the biggest story of this year".

Mr. Martin did not win that leadership. I remember that we were at the Ottawa civic forum when the results were announced. I was walking with Mr. Martin by the seat of Tom Hazlitt. This seasoned, hardened political reporter was weeping.

Maybe Paul Martin did not win the leadership, but Paul Martin was a real leader. He made a real difference to the lives of all Canadians.

Our sympathies go out to Nell, Mary-Ann, Paul, the grandchildren and the rest of the family.

Hon. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I want to join with those who have spoken words of appreciation on the scope of the life of Paul Martin.

In the midst of the riding of Waterloo, at Wilfrid Laurier University, is the Paul Martin Centre, appropriately, a reminder of Paul Martin's association with Wilfrid Laurier University. He served as chancellor and during that period became very close not only with the administration and faculty, but with the students.

He was one who found time to regularly come down and talk with people about public life and about the life of our nation.

Shortly, we will plan an appropriate Canadian celebration for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Paul Martin was a part of the delegation to the founding of the United Nations. Paul Martin had a dream of Canada's role in the post-Second World War. He was one who committed Canada. That commitment and that leadership has transcended party lines to this day.

I recall, as president of the National Union of Students, Paul Martin's response to the student idealism of the early 1960s. At that time there was a Commonwealth volunteer program. There were other opportunities. It was the Kennedy period. It was the period when there was an opportunity to serve internationally.

I remember when a number of us in student political life came up with the concept which led to CUSO. We were looking for ways and means to have young Canadians serve overseas. We had no budget. We had the support of churches and non-governmental agencies. He was among those around us who persuaded the government that we should use the Canadian forces, the RCAF as it was at that time, to take young people and move them.

We moved together because of that kind of leadership. At the time when I was in Nigeria we grew from seven Canadians to 90 CUSO volunteers. Every time one of those Canadian flights arrived with more young people I thought about that particular contribution.

I join, on behalf of those of us who caught some of his dream and are grateful to him for opening doors, in paying a tribute to him and expressing sympathy from those of us who were a part of that dream to his family.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I occupy the seat that was Paul Martin's, therefore it is appropriate that I should have this opportunity to say these few words. That is not the only reason. I am also one of those whose experience of Paul Martin was chiefly as a resident of Essex county, not as a politician.

He was a man who dominated much of our area, but his was always a friendly, concerned presence. Even though I lived quite some distance from the riding during my childhood and my teenage years, hardly a significant event in my growing up was not responded to by some

kind of indication in the form of a card or a call from his office that Paul Martin took note of that fact.

He was, in our area, known as Oom-Paul. As a New Democrat that had rather negative connotations as we suffered defeat after defeat. To most, and certainly that includes my family, that was a rather pleasant term of respect of the power that he expressed.

I think it is important to understand what the source of that power was at this time when there is so much discrediting of politicians and when politics is falling into disrepute. Paul Martin was what a politician should be, a man brought to office not because of ambition to occupy a space or a place, but to make things better, to change things for the benefit of people.

So he did, and he did with a sense of concern and love for his constituents that they all could recognize. It could be recognized in his unfailing ability to remember the name of virtually every family in Essex county and to indicate in the briefest of discourses that he was aware of the significant things going on with those constituents to whom he spoke.

Those of us in the New Democratic Party might have resented our constant defeats but we must respect his accomplishments in the field of social justice. We may have, in a sense, blamed him for stealing our thunder. But we could not have failed to recognize that he was motivated by what should motivate politicians, and that is the pursuit of justice, especially social justice. For that he will always be remembered, and deservedly so.

• (1540)

Throughout my experience in politics, while occupying Paul Martin's seat I was termed by him "his member of Parliament" and he would say: "and I want to talk to you". When I was his alderman he said with pride, at least to me, that I was his alderman and he wanted to speak to me, and he did. He was always ready to proffer advice that never indicated even to the slightest degree that we might have differed philosophically or in terms of our partisan alliances.

Paul Martin was a great Canadian, but to Windsorites he was Windsor and Essex county. We will miss him dearly. I would like to express my condolences to his family as well.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank hon. members for their comments.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS OF MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, just after Question Period the Minister for International Trade, on a point of order, rose to pretend to be setting some figures right that I had quoted during Question Period. Unfortunately he was as wrong then as the government documentation I quoted from was wrong. In fact, he quoted two sets of unadjusted figures in an attempt to refute statistics which I had cited. He was wrong, dead wrong, as any statistician would know, and in fact I stand on what I understand is an appropriate point of order to point out that not only was his point of order inappropriate, but it was entirely misleading.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have listened to the hon. member very carefully. I guess, come to think of it, that neither point of order should have been allowed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 11 petitions.

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

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

TABLING OF ORDER IN COUNCIL

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, in my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I would like to lay a document before the House.

I am tabling now, in both official languages, the Order in Council dated September 8, 1992, No. PC-1992-2006, which places members of the Canadian forces on active service for the United Nations operation in Somalia.

* * *

PETITIONS

PETRO-CANADA

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I have petitions today with some 700 names concerning the policy of Petro-Canada in cutting back its gas stations across the country. Some 1,000 are to be closed in the next few months.

This petition comes from a group of petitioners in communities in the Algoma district: Desbarats, Bruce Mines, Echo Bay, Hilton Beach and Richards Landing. It contains 700 signatures of people who are calling on the government to encourage a policy where if there is only one service centre in a community, arrangements would be made to maintain that service. It is especially important in remote communities where citizens have to drive some 10 or 20 miles to have service for their vehicles, especially in the cold winter months of the year.

I hope Mr. Hopper and other officials in Petro-Canada will take into account these representations and this petition.

JUSTICE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I also have a petition with some 100 names on it concerning Christine Lamont and David Spencer who were convicted in a court in Brazil and sentenced to 28 years.

The petitioners call upon the government to take action through the Secretary of State to request the Brazilian government to expel Ms. Lamont and Mr. Spencer and return them to Canada. They point out the miscarriage of justice in that case.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I have another petition with some 150 names on it from constituents in Espanola, Little Current, Webbwood, Nairn Centre, Mindemoya and other communities throughout the eastern part of my constituency in the Sudbury district concerning the Rosalynn Dupuis case pointing out the inadequacies of the Young Offenders Act and the need for protection of people and young people.

The petitioners call upon the government to take action in the criminal justice system to protect people and provide a better parole system, a better psychological assessment system and the judicial arrangements and medical, psychiatric and psychological reports for non-partisans with regard to the Young Offenders Act.

I hope the government will take action with regard to these petitions as well.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today. Both of them urge the minister of immigration to issue minister's permits automatically for spouses and dependent children of refugee claimants as soon as they have been granted the right to apply for landing in Canada.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions. The first petition is signed by a large number of residents from my riding of Surrey North and the adjacent ridings of Delta and Vancouver.

It points out that family-class and assisted relatives-immigrants have always been a historical and important part of Canadian immigration. The relatives are able to assist in finding employment, housing and learning Canadian language and culture. It points out the government's current proposals will downplay assisted relatives and family-class immigrants.

The petition is asking that this government set aside its proposals and make sure family-class immigrants are always given first priority in immigration in Canada.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, my second petition deals with the introduction of Bill C-91 and points out that both new and existing drug prices have been raised dramatically since the introduction of Bill C-22. It asks the government to not proceed with Bill C-91 and to roll back the patent protection that was granted under Bill C-22.

NARCOTICS CONTROL ACT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure and honour of presenting two different sets of petitions this afternoon.

The first petition draws our attention to the continued and increasing illegal drug trade that is rampant across our country and specifically in my own city of metropolitan Toronto and specifically the Narcotics Control Act that permits the Government of Canada to seize all assets following a drug seizure.

The petitioners call upon the government to amend the Narcotics Control Act quickly so the cash and assets seized from these drug busts can be split. They should not be exclusively the domain of the Government of Canada, but could be split with the municipalities as well as local police forces and local organizations that are on the leading edge of trying to combat drugs in our communities.

• (1550)

DRUG ADDICTION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): The second petition while related is somewhat different. It still deals with the proliferation of drug abuse in Canadian families and communities, but it also talks about the solution to help, care and renew the lives of individual addicts and families.

The signatures from petitioners in my riding of York West were collected by individuals who were addicts and are now rehabilitating themselves. The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to continue to provide strong financial support to the Caritas project, a community-based volunteer organization which has a proven track record in rehabilitating individuals and families ravaged by the effects of drugs.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition with 62 names from my constituency of Okanagan Centre.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government.

The acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments are to be determined by the majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada together with a majority vote of the majority of the provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

CANADA POST

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

The first comes from the residents of Petit de Grat, Nova Scotia, in my constituency. It concerns the Petit de Grat post office, which was placed under review by Canada Post. The post office was subsequently closed and the postal service turned over to an RPO.

This petition opposes that decision by Canada Post and reminds Parliament this post office serves 449 households and almost two-thirds have signed the petition. The petitioners remind Parliament the residents of Petit de Grat want their rural post office and do not want Canada Post to proceed with this action without their consent.

HOUSING

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): The second petition is also from my constituents and concerns the co-op housing program. It decries the federal decision to end the co-operative housing program and calls on Parliament to urge this government to reinstate the federal co-operative housing program, which has served so many in the Antigonish area from which this petition comes.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): The final petition is on behalf of seniors and others who live below the poverty line. The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to ensure Canadian Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadians.

They remind the House of Commons that hundreds of Canadian citizens live below the poverty line and 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty. The 37-cent increase in Old Age Security pensions in 1992 is inadequate to meet the many needs of Canadian seniors, and it is the desire of all Canadians to provide senior citizens with the necessary support to live their lives as independently as possible.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I have over 10,000 signatures on a petition to present from people who, in memory of Ryan Garrioch, request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated Juvenile Delinquents Act with a lower maximum age of 13 years.

These are but a small number of the signatures so far collected.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, it is my duty and pleasure to present a petition from a number of Canadians who are concerned about Bill C-91, the proposed drug bill, which will move the period which generic drugs are prohibited from entering the market from 10 years to 20 years. The petitioners are concerned such a move will further increase the price of drugs in Canada. They call upon this government not to proceed with this legislation.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of my constituency of Kingston and the Islands.

These residents are opposed to the goods and services tax on women's sanitary products and call for its immediate removal.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 312, 351, 354, 362 and 365.

[*Text*]

Question No. 312—**Mr. MacDougall:**

With respect to the CBC coverage of the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, (a) what were the costs in detail (b) what were the detailed revenue generated from sponsors and advertisers?

Hon. Henry Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications):

Parliament has not, as a matter of custom since the corporation's creation in 1936, required CBC to supply, in answering parliamentary questions, certain details of its internal management and administration. Parliament has had two reasons for following this custom: first, the independence of the CBC as a Crown corporation, established for the purpose of producing and broadcasting, independently of political or commercial interference, programs for a national program service; and second, the competitive nature of many of CBC's activities.

The appropriateness of the CBC providing certain categories of information has been considered on many occasions by various parliamentary committees and when the CBC has suggested that such information should not be made a matter of public record, its views have been accepted by them. The names of employees and their functions in relation to specific programs, their salaries or expenses, the costs of individual programs, or business arrangements are examples of details which it has not been customary to require the CBC to supply. It is open to Parliament and its appropriate committees to discuss the policies it and the CBC have followed in this regard.

Question No. 351—**Mr. Boudria:**

Since November 21, 1988, what is the total amount of funds approved or distributed in grants, loans, contributions and otherwise by the Community Futures Committee of Charlevoix and what are the names of the recipients and the amount involved for each such grant, loan or contribution?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): This information is not held through Employment and Immigration Canada. It belongs to the Business Development Centres. To obtain this type of information, the request will have to be addressed directly to the BDC of Charlevoix.

Question No. 354—**Mr. Shields:**

With respect to neurological diseases, how many people have been diagnosed; what is the annual medical cost for treatment; what is the annual cost of disability pensions paid to them, how is the government involved in its medical research and in the introduction and approval of new drugs for its treatment?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): In so far as the Department of National Health and Welfare is concerned, the administration of health care services is basically a provincial and territorial responsibiilty. The federal government does not gather statistics on the number of patients or the direct costs for patient care.

There exists a number of national voluntary health organizations dealing with neurological diseases that receive funding from Health and Welfare Canada to carry out their national activities. These are: Alzheimer Society of Canada ALS Society of Canada; Canadian Association of Friedreich's Ataxia; Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation; Huntington Society of Canada; Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada; Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada; Parkinson Foundation of Canada; Schizophrenia Society of Canada; Sleep/Wake Disorders of Canada and Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada.

These organizations are providing information, raising funds for research and patient services, and organizing local support groups for patients and caregivers. They also collect statistics on the number of persons affected and the costs involved.

Together, these and other groups dealing with neurological disorders have formed the Canadian Neurological Coalition, which can be reached at: c/o Banting Institute, Suite 126, 100 College Street, Toronto, Ontario. M5G 1L5.

Specific or detailed statistics on the number and amounts of Canada Pension Plan disability benefits being paid out to persons suffering from neurological diseases are not maintained by officials of the department's income security programs branch, which administers the CPP. However, fairly accurate estimates have been calculated from the available data. The results have revealed that approximately 7,600 of the persons receiving a disability benefit have a neurological disease. These persons currently receive disability benefits of approximately $4.9 million each month.

The National Health Research and Development Program of the Department of National Health and Welfare supports public health and health care research relevant to national health issues.

The NHRDP provides support for research related to neurological diseases.

Within the budget allocated to NHRDP, there is no ceiling set for any specific research area or disease.

Research expenditures on neurological diseases depend on the number of meritorious research projects received.

The government is involved in the approval of new drugs for the treatment of neurological diseases when the manufacturer submits a new drug submission.

In addition, the health protection branch, drugs directorate has announced in information letter No. 804 that priority evaluation would be accorded to a new drug submission for a new active substance for a major therapeutic gain. This policy would include breakthrough drugs for neurological diseases.

In so far as the Medical Research Council of Canada is concerned the Medical Research Council is the largest single agency supporting research in the neurological sciences. Fully 85 per cent of all Canadian support is derived from the MRC. In 1990–91, the MRC expended over $26 million, or 16.5 per cent of its grants on neurological science research. This represents the largest single category of expenditure by the council.

Question No. 362—**Mr. Pickard:**

With respect to the lowering of duty free and tax-free limits on postal imports effective July 1, 1992, has the Canada Post Corporation contracted out to consulting firms work such as data processing, and if so, what firms and what is the value of such contracts?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Canada Post Corporation has entered into a contract with Livingston International Inc. to provide services integral to the creation of custom's postal invoices in the customs postal screening centres across Canada. The primary service provided involves the data entry of the importer's name

and address, the exporter's name and address and origin, and the transaction number. Canada Post Corporation is required to provide this service in fulfilling its agreement with Revenue Canada—Customs and Excise. However, details of the contract are considered proprietary information between the corporation and the contractor.

Question No. 365—**Mr. Karygiannis:**

With respect to the Canada 125 compact disc *Listen to the Land/Rassemblez les coeurs*, (a) what was the total cost incurred in the production, packaging and distribution of this disc (b) what is the breakdown of these costs (c) how many copies were produced (d) where were these discs distributed?

Hon. Henry Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications):

The cost of producing, packaging and distributing the recordings related to this project was $38,036.

The breakdown of the costs for was as follows:

Sound recording production	$23,945
Manufacturing	4,183
Distribution	5,689
Administration costs for FMC	4,219

Packaging costs were paid by Canada 125 Corporation.

The number of copies produced was 2,000.

Copies of the recordings were distributed to the following:

All members of Parliament and the Senate	394
Station managers of all CRTC licensed radio and television stations in Canada	951
Factor musicaction Canada (FMC)	150
Canada 125 Corporation	75
Department of Communications Headquarters and Regional offices	100
Launch	200
Miscellaneous requests from media etc.	50

[*English*]

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

* * *

STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Would you be so kind, Madam Speaker, as to call starred Questions Nos. 282 and 375.

Due to the length of the answer to Question No. 282, I ask that it be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

[*Text*]

*Question No. 282—**Mr. Rideout:**

Since April 1, 1990 to the present, with respect to the department of National Defence, for each province (a) what are the capital expenditures authorized or incurred by the department (b) what were the capital budget cuts incurred by the department?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): a. Capital expenditures for the fiscal year 1990–91 totalled $2,764 million and are detailed by province. Capital expenditures for fiscal year 1991–92 are not available as accounting for the fiscal year is not yet complete.

The question cannot be answered because the Department does not assign capital budget by province. Instead, capital projects approved are recorded into the Defence Service Program, which covers 15 years. The total dollar value of projects recorded into the DSP that were postponed or cancelled, because of reduction in projected spending following the budget cuts, totals $2,926 million.

Summary Fact Sheet
Department of National Defence
Estimated Expenditures by Province Fiscal Year 1990–91
(Ranked by Total Spending)

	% of Population	Personnel $M	O & E $M	Capital $M	Grants & Contr. $M	Revenues $M	Total Spending $M	% of Total	% Canada only	% Prov GDP	per capita TOTAL DND $
Ontario	36.6	1,821	1,534	723	171	(151)	4,097	33.4	38.7	1.5	420
Quebec	25.4	773	538	737	107	(18)	2,136	17.4	20.2	1.4	316
Nova Scotia	3.4	793	237	67	14	(23)	1,089	8.9	10.3	6.4	1,217
British Columbia	11.7	545	198	123	52	(20)	898	7.3	8.5	1.1	287
New Brunswick	2.7	233	68	461	12	(14)	760	6.2	7.2	5.8	1,050
Alberta	9.3	476	185	104	40	(53)	751	6.2	7.1	1.1	304

	% of Population	Personnel $M	O & E $M	Capital $M	Grants & Contr. $M	Revenues $M	Total Spending $M	% of Total	% Canada only	% Prov GDP	per capita TOTAL DND $
Manitoba	4.1	254	223	41	18	(21)	514	4.2	4.8	2.1	471
Newfoundland	2.2	120	39	12	9	(31)	149	1.2	1.4	1.7	260
Saskatchewan	3.8	79	24	5	16	(3)	121	1.0	1.1	0.6	121
P.E.I.	0.5	39	7	1	2	(2)	46	0.4	0.4	2.3	356
Yukon & N.W.T.	0.3	16	4	8	1	(1)	28	0.2	0.3	1.0	353
Total in Canada	100.0	5,149	3,057	2,282	442	(337)	10,589	86.4	100.0	1.6	397
Plus											
Outside Canada	N/A	575	465	482	172	(23)	1,672	13.6			
Total DND Spending		5,724	3,522	2,764	614	(360)	12,260	100.0			

* * *

[English]

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I would also ask, Madam Speaker, that the answer to Question No. 375 be made an order for return. If so, this return would be tabled immediately.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 375 be deemed to have been made an order for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 375—**Mr. Saint-Julien:**

Did the government make payments to mining companies under the Canadian Exploration Incentives Program in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991 or 1992, and if so, (*a*) to which companies (*b*) what amount was paid to each company?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, I am requesting leave under Standing Order 52 for the adjournment of the House to deal with the crisis in the airline industry.

It is our view that the proposed merger between Air Canada and Canadian Airlines International which will result in an unregulated, privately owned monopoly in Canada, the possibility of many thousands of jobs lost and the prospect of a need for financial assistance from the Government of Canada in the near future constitute a crisis which is deserving of debate pursuant to the Standing Order.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is no doubt this matter is of importance, but the Speaker and I believe it would not be appropriate to put aside the debate before the House today to have this emergency debate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

NOTICE OF MOTION OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-80

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 78(3), I will be moving that in relation to Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the family allowances act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted for the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day for the consideration of the third reading stage of the bill; and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government orders on the day allotted for the report stage consideration and on the day allotted for the third reading stage consideration of the bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this order and, in turn, every question necessary to dispose of the stage of the

bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The minister is giving notice of this motion?

Mrs. Vézina: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Notice received.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As we resume debate, the hon. member for Kamloops had the floor. I will recognize the hon. member for Mount Royal.

• (1600)

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I just listened to the hon. Minister of State for Employment and Immigration deposit before this House a closure motion as a hanging motion.

I must say I have had a great deal of respect for this minister and her integrity and her interest in the society and for the constituency that she represents. I found her to be among the more sensitive and caring ministers.

I guess she must have swallowed very hard to have to bring that kind of a closure in on a bill of such importance that has such incredible impact on the life and the times of a family, particularly poor families, when she knows there are over a million children living in poverty, when she knows about the number of working poor in this society, when she is aware of the numbers and the increasing numbers on social welfare.

When she learned today of Statistic Canada's figures in Quebec, I imagine it would have been extremely painful and for her I hang her head as well as all the other members across this floor for the insensitivity they bring to the closing of a very important change in the structure and the life of this country.

Is it not ironic that we move the closure for this debate on the very day that one of the most important figures in political life and political history of this country passed away? We paid tribute to the Hon. Paul Martin, who brought a sense of humanity, a sense of concern and a sense of consideration to the well-being of all Canadians, not just the well to do, not just the upper middle class, but to the working class people and the poor of this society. It is too bad the ministers and their friends across this floor did not learn how to write a postcard or ask if you are from Windsor.

There was another man of stature. It is ironic and it is within this past year that he passed away. I am talking about Senator David Croll, the other voice that called for understanding and a sense of commitment on the part of politicians to the needs of a fair and equal society.

It is also quite ironic that it is the week we deposited before this House the Charlottetown conference results in which we called for a social policy of fairness and equity and equality for all people across this land. There is no fairness in this bill; there is no potential for equality in this bill and it is unfortunately a shell game.

I am not going to deal with the facts, the figures and the numbers *per se* because I have outstanding colleagues in this House, including the member from Winnipeg who has guided us and this caucus in a study and evaluation. Some members of the general public have been good enough to appear in the very short period allowed for appearance, including the director of the Council of Social Development, Patrick Johnston, and Ken Battle. Others have pointed out the fallacies and the holes and the errors in the way this bill was cobbled together to look like it was a fair and good proposition to deal with poverty and to have more effective social programs. That I will not talk about.

I will talk about what I consider to be the lack of ethics, the poor timing and the unseemly speed with which this bill is being requested to go through this House. It is not being done in the sense of political expediency so that a cheque will arrive at the doors of constituents, the single parent families, low income families, families on welfare, families earning minimum wage. They are being made to believe that they are getting a gift from this government. It is trickery and it is wrong. It is a sad comment on the ethics of this government.

I was not going to use the expression that the Prime Minister used because it has become almost trite to repeat it. When I heard that closure call, it came back. It is going to come back to haunt this government. It can send out all the documents it wants and try to change people's minds, but there are a few things that are going to remain in the minds of the people of Canada.

When the Prime Minister stood up and talked about the fact that the universality of our social programs was a sacred trust, I assumed that he understood that the people when they put trust in him trusted his word and trusted that process would help that word become a reality.

The process is wrong. The process has been wrong on most major bills that have been brought forth by this government from the time it came into office in 1984. It has not been straight and candid with the people about the clawback that it has done under old age pension.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank Mrs. Denis for what she did on behalf of the elderly.

[*English*]

I will say that the clawback has come into effect, whether it is the capping of CAP, whether it is on the family allowance and its clawback, whether it is on this new social program which over a period of five to 10 years will erode significantly in its worth and its purchasing power.

I remember as well when family allowance came in. Just after I had my children in the early fifties, I can remember receiving that cheque. I thought it was fun. I thought it was nice. My husband said to put it in the bank and give it to the children when they got to university. I was a very fortunate woman. Little did I know how many women did not have access to a single solitary cent they call their own from their husbands or from their partners so that they could buy an ice cream treat for their children or a pair of shoes if they wanted for themselves or for their children because they were in receipt of money that came in their name. That is one of the things that the government has removed.

When there is no state left in a policy or in a program, then it diminishes its value over time. If the government wants to tax it back because at a certain level it considers that it is not necessary to receive it, fine and dandy. Tax it back fully, but let it be universal in its delivery system and tax back.

I will never understand this government's mentality which does not understand that when it removes the universal principle it is no longer a worthy program. As the rich and the richer and those who are getting richer do not feel that they have any ownership, they do not support it. That is a very serious charge.

The irony of Senator Croll and the irony of Paul Martin that these things are happening today is really sad. The rolling together of family allowance, the refundable child tax credit and the non-refundable child tax credit is no great big bonus.

It will come as a pleasant surprise to many people starting January 1, because this government is going to have its way, and it will be foreseen as a big windfall. But wait until the end of 1993 and everyone will realize that this windfall is far from that.

I feel that when things are targeted to the Consumer Price Index, and there is a 3 per cent cap, if you are paying for bread, butter, eggs, milk, shoes or schoolbooks today, next year the same goods are worth 2 to 3 per cent more. Let us say they are not more than 3 per cent more, one still has the same $10 bill for buying. It is not going to buy $10 worth of merchandise. Take that and extend it over five years and 10 years. It is pretty obvious that one is not going to have the same kind of buying power.

• (1610)

The other thing this government has tried to have us forget is the fact that it removed $3.5 billion over the last five years and then put $2.1 billion back in. I think most people came out with a negative value, not a positive value.

For all those reasons, I think that one should support the amendment that has been brought forward. Drop this bill, go back to the table and come up with a design that is going to really help poor children in this country and our future.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-80.

I would like to start out by reviewing a little bit of the background as to why this bill has been brought in. I think it is very important for people to understand, and I

think people do understand, that in the present system there is a terrible amount of confusion.

We have the family allowance which is paid out usually to the mother, often taxed back in the hands of the father, not based on family income. We have the refundable child tax credit which is distributed under different rules and the child credit. We have three different programs being delivered to the Canadian people in support of families with children.

I cannot understand how the system can work, how all these different plans delivered in different ways can have a cohesive objective. Most of the Canadian people feel exactly the same about that. We also have the equivalent to married credits and the child care deduction which support families with children.

Originally, when the Conservative caucus committee on family issues was asked to look at this issue, the thing that most concerned and really upset us was the patent unfairness of the system, particularly in terms of how common-law couples were treated under the tax system and how married couples were treated. That was one of the first things that we were determined to fix up and I am very pleased that the Minister of Finance in other actions that he has taken has now ensured that the tax system will be fair in that regard.

This leads into this program of revising the delivery of the family allowance and family support programs because a key element of this new program is that it will be delivered based on family income and that all families will be treated fairly. I think that is something Canadians will rejoice at and applaud.

The other important thing, as I have said, is the issue of simplification, the delivery of all these different programs and one program with one set of rules. I have a lot of my constituents, and I am sure the same is true for hon. members in the opposition, who want the government to be more efficient and deliver programs in more realistic and understandable ways.

This has been another driving force behind the motives for bringing this legislation in. We have heard a lot in committee about how this program does not deliver more money to people on welfare. It is important to understand that as it is designed, it does not plan to do that.

This is because of the problem that we had and still have in the constitutional negotiations and the overlap of jurisdictions there. In our recommendations to the minister we felt it was much more important to keep clear of areas where we might be accused of intruding once again on provincial jurisdiction at this time. I personally see great opportunities to use the model of the plan that we have here in this bill for future modifications and development, but this is not the time to deal with that. It is, however, important that as we consider the problem that people who are on assistance have as they try to go into the work force, the additional cost of lunches and bus fares and so on, that we signal that we want to help in this transition. I am very pleased that this new benefit does that by adding up to some $500 a year for those families who are in that position of transition between assistance and the work force to help them in an admittedly small but still significant way to make that transition.

I am particularly pleased that although the Minister of Finance when he first agreed to have us look at this project indicated to us that there would be no new money available, in fact when he brought the program forward because of the cuts in spending that our government had made in many other areas he was able to bring some $2.1 billion over five years, or approximately $400 million a year, into the program to support the funding that it requires and to ensure that most people with family incomes of around $66,000 or less will do as well or better under the present system as they did under the old system.

Just to summarize some of the key points of this program, I think it is important that instead of coming, as the present program does, in dribs and drabs and sometimes in big lumps that are difficult to manage, that the program will be delivered in a monthly payment and it will be generally delivered, as is the family allowance system, to mothers. All families with children under the age of 18 will be eligible. We will have a simpler tax form because of the elimination of calculations for the dependent child credit and the refundable child tax credit, and the elimination of taxation and recovery of the family allowance.

This is an issue which has been of some concern to the people in my constituency. They have never quite understood why the government should go to all the trouble of sending money out and then taxing it back, and not always taxing it back from the same person. So that confusion will be eliminated and we will have a much more straightforward system.

We will have higher benefits for children under seven, and benefits for larger families will be maintained. All two million families with incomes below $50,000 will receive larger monthly cheques. Increased benefits for low and modest income families with children, especially low-income working families, will be available. Federal child benefits will increase, as I said, by some $2.1 billion over the next five years.

As far as the operation of the child tax benefit is concerned, there will be two main factors which will determine the amount of monthly child tax benefit payment. The recipient of the child tax benefit will generally be the mother, as I have said. A parent will be eligible for a child tax benefit for all children who are under age 18 and are dependent on the parent. To receive the child tax benefit, a parent must generally reside in Canada and have the required legal status, that is, be a citizen, a landed immigrant or a convention refugee.

As in the case of family allowances, parents need to inform Health and Welfare Canada about a new child in the family, that is, a birth or a change in custody, in order to receive the child tax benefit for that child.

• (1620)

The level of the child tax benefit depends on family net income, which is the sum of net income of the recipient parent and spouse, if any. As I mentioned earlier, this is a very important change and it reflects this government's concern and recognition of the family in all its circumstances.

The annual payment cycle runs from July to June. Each July monthly payments are revised to reflect indexation of benefit levels and the updated information on family net income and earnings obtained from tax returns which have just been filed for the immediately preceding year.

At this point I would like to speak a little about indexation because the previous speaker had a good deal to say about the fact that the program is not fully indexed. If she and other hon. members will recall, this government has made a commitment to review non-fully indexed programs from time to time. If we look at the history of the last few years, the indexation which has actually occurred has kept up very well with inflation as it should in the future with this program.

In closing, I just want to say that I think this is a very positive move the government is making. For the first time in Canadian history, a major social benefit will be delivered through the tax system according to income, universally available to every one, recognizing that not every one will get it in every year. But it will be a program that is universally available. Every one who needs it will get it automatically without application or having to beg for it. This is a very progressive move on the part of our government. I fully support it.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, I find some of the language used by my hon. colleague who preceded me a little bit perplexing. I say perplexing because one of the things that we hear too often is the fact that some of this legislation is designed to help those of us in our society who are greatest in need. The concept of universality that is always there, the accessibility that is always there and as well the concept of helping those in greatest need seems to be repeated over and over again.

The facts do not bear that out. As my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North has pointed out, those who require the assistance the greatest are those who are likely to receive the least. When one takes into consideration the fact that the packages in their combination will not provide for a typical Canadian family the kinds of benefits it currently relies upon—and I did not want to say benefits from but relies upon because of the economic circumstances of the day—then we are faced with the inevitable conclusion that the legislation is inappropriately directed.

One might say perversely so because of one very basic fact. Over the course of the last seven years, the government through its cutbacks of social programs has removed in excess of $3.1 billion from the social assistance programs upon which Canadians had come to rely for basic sustenances. Some of those sustenances we take for granted and we put forward as an indication of the success of the Canadian economy and the energy of the Canadian people in establishing a society that treats all with the opportunities of equality that we claim to be our own.

One cannot withdraw those kinds of funds from the typical packages of family assistance. At a time that seems to be most opportune, I hate to be a little bit sceptical or cynical in my projection, here we are already beginning to enter into an electoral period and we are going to introduce legislation that combines all of these

packages. As government speakers say, it is going to put back some $2.5 billion into the hands of those in need.

Other members have already indicated that still represents a shortfall even if it were true. Those who have studied this legislation well and who have studied it objectively, not coloured by partisanship, the Caledon Social Policy Institute, for example, will show that under the old system, the old system being the current one, those families in greatest need would profit most, if profit is the word to use, today under the current system and in fact, suffer a decline in excess of $500 over the course of the next several years.

One cannot suggest that families needing this assistance most today withdraw many of their funds. For example, with the new system in 1993, while the balance seems to stay the same, over the course of the next seven years there will be a decline from $2,253 to $1,861 as a net benefit to those families greatest in need, families on a typical welfare income.

Those who seem to profit most are those whose income is highest. There is no sense of equality in that kind of a system. It makes no sense at all to reward those who can supply their own sustenance with additional revenues from consolidated general revenues, that is from the Canadian taxpayers.

What is really at stake here is the way the government is presenting this legislation. I am reminded in this of a presentation by the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs who the other day in presenting a position on the Constitution closed by saying: "The question today is"—and I think I am quoting him correctly—"either we let each other down or lift each other up". This legislation does not allow us to help each other up. In fact, it lets us all down. It is the same kind of rhetoric that the government applied in promoting a constitutional package that members like me would vote yes, with the right to reserve a series of observations that leave vacuums that an ordinary Canadian has to consider before voting yes or no to the government initiative.

What are some of those vacuums? At the table on that constitutional package were representatives from various provinces whose interests were the promotion of their provinces. That is fair. At the table were those who were interested in representing the interests of various jurisdictions and the whole Canadian context. That too is fair.

I am reminded in fairness that there are those who would probably have said as they watched the debate, what little they could glimpse of it since it was behind closed doors, that there were 17 such individuals talking about maintaining a semblance of Canada without being concerned about Canadians.

There was a very large group of Canadians that was not at the table saying, as many of the members of those jurisdictions and the premiers of those provinces appeared through the press and the media, with their hand out every single day: "Gimme, gimme, gimme. Let me take something from the system that will be good for my province".

There was a very large group of Canadians that felt ignored by those kinds of representations. I refer specifically to those Canadians of the last generation, a generation who came to this country and saw themselves only as Canadians, not as Ontarians, British Columbians or Newfoundlanders but who have a stake in this package.

I dare say they are going to be very positive in their response. However, their voice is unheard. Not once in this package did we hear of any provincial premier nor, in fact, our own Prime Minister say this country is represented in its demographics by about 40 per cent of people who are neither French nor English in origin.

• (1630)

They see themselves being represented not by the various provincial premiers but by the Government of Canada, a government that is there to ensure that all peoples have equality of opportunity to develop the great potential that God bestowed upon this country.

I am reminded that StatsCanada produced immigration statistics only two weeks ago which indicate that of the total Canadian population, some 12.5 million—I am using round figures—from Confederation to today are either immigrants or direct descendants of immigrants. That is better than half the population of this country and yet, in these debates, we have ignored a basic element of our society: those that do not identify themselves with hyphenation. They do not see themselves as anything but Canadian and want only to have a debate that is centred around how we best relate to each other.

As the minister for intergovernmental affairs said in French:

[*Translation*]

Our success depends on our ability to work together, but we did not have the ability to work together.

[*English*]

The fact is that all Canadians have a stake in that kind of constitutional package because all Canadians need to have a government that would produce legislation that is equitable for all Canadians. This kind of legislation unfortunately reflects the vacuum that the constitutional package would present to Canadians.

I urge not only this minister, but the government, even in accepting a positive response by the Canadian public to infuse again into the discussions on the new Constitution all of those vacuums which we will raise and at the same time to listen very carefully to the concerns of this part of the House on this kind of legislation, legislation that does not do what the government says it intends to do. Perhaps it should at the very least listen to our amendments if it wants some support.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Edmonton East—Westray Mine; the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Perley bridge; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier—Official languages; the hon. member for Surrey North—Tobacco products; the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—Child poverty.

[*English*]

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I have come to the House this afternoon to speak in support of Bill C-80.

I do so with the belief that this is important reform legislation. I would say at the outset I regret to be holding a copy of this bill in my hand and seeing in it yet another statute that is written in algebra. The formulas that are used in this to compute the entitlements and so forth represent the state of legislative draftsmanship that now affects all tax statutes and all legislation emanating from the Department of Finance.

In an age when we are trying to find a plain expression of words to convey the meanings, it is unfortunate that a statute we are going to enact has, as I say, to be written partly in French, partly in English and very much in algebra. This is not to say anything against the mathematicians in our country, but it is an unnecessarily complex formulation of what is intended.

It is good legislation because it does six basic things that are quite important with respect to the families of our country, and their ability to support and raise their children with financial security. The first beginning point for this really is the whole question of whether we can have economic competitiveness and social justice.

All governments at all levels in Canada and elsewhere, are finding their budgets constrained, their deficits still large and the need to be more competitive economically putting a great deal of pressure on social programs that were developed in more prosperous times.

The hallmark of Canada is our commitment to social justice. It is a defining difference from the Americans who I think often tend to see issues as having economic solutions, whereas in our country we see issues very much more in political terms and quite often with political solutions.

This summer the Couchiching conference on public affairs held an excellent conference dealing exactly with this theme about economic competitiveness and social justice, whether it was possible to still have both. This legislation is a fine answer to that question. It is basically saying yes, we can streamline, we can be more efficient with programs and still see at the end of the day the dollars spent are producing better benefits than they did before and more appropriately, they are being aimed at the sectors in our society most needy and most deserving.

I wish to highlight six points that appeal to me in saying that this bill merits the support of the House of Commons. First is the one that I have already mentioned about streamlining. A patchwork of different legislative provisions has developed over the decades in Canada, in the tax act, in the family benefit, and many other provisions. Each in its own time was a breakthrough, an advance, a measure of greater social justice in our country, but cumulatively represent now a real hodge-

podge of arrangements. The administrative costs are too high.

The instances where Canadians fall between the cracks of these programs are too numerous and the loss of money through such a diverse set of programs simply has been too great. That is a reason why combining this child benefit into a single monthly benefit which generally will be paid to all mothers and for which anyone under age 18 in Canada will qualify, is an important step forward in streamlining our commitment in this area.

Second, the increased funding shows that the benefits truly will be widespread. I go back to the comments made by my colleague, the member for Calgary North, who gave a very thoughtful analysis of the detailed way in which this new program will be working.

The additional funding as a result of this, some $2.1 billion over five years of Government of Canada funds, goes for the benefit of children in our country. That is a very significant development. Over 80 per cent of all the families in our country will be affected beneficially by this. In other words, the 20 per cent that are not will be those high income families that do not need to have that kind of benefit from the country.

Mr. Milliken: The rich get the rest.

Mr. Boyer: Altogether, about two-thirds of the families in our country, 2.4 million families, will be receiving higher benefits, notwithstanding the interjections from the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: The lowest paid get zip.

Mr. Boyer: The third point, and this directly answers the outbursts from the member for Kingston and the Islands, is that there is a targeting here of benefits to the advantage of families who are at lower income levels in our society.

Mr. Milliken: That is false.

Mr. Boyer: If the member is going to sit in his seat and say that what I am saying is false, I would like him to—

Mr. Milliken: If it is false, it is false.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is presuming to read my mind. This was not at all what I was about to say.

• (1640)

What I was about to say is that whenever comments in the House disturb someone who has been recognized by the Chair it is the Chair's duty to ask the hon. member who is speaking when not having the floor to please allow his or her colleague to complete his or her speech and then I will be happy to recognize the hon. member when his turn comes. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. Boyer: Madam Speaker, it is very clear that the member for Kingston and the Islands, very good lawyer that he is, is better at reading law than algebra. I have looked at this bill and what I see in it is that on average, families with incomes below $50,000 will receive an additional $250 a year in benefits. I also see that all families with incomes below $50,000 have either increased benefits or the same level of benefits. I also see in that bill that 80 per cent of the increase in child benefits will go to families with incomes below $40,000.

Those are three of the points that I see when I read Bill C-80, are three of the reasons why I am going to support it and three of the reasons why, what I was just saying before the member for Kingston and the Islands got into an exercised state, I support what I was saying.

The fourth of the six reasons is that I see this bill is much more responsive to people who truly need it. The monthly payments in advance will eliminate a lot of the current delays in delivery that people are experiencing. I must say that it has always bothered me in the eight years I have been a member of Parliament to see people from low-income families going to the tax discounters, the people who will discount cheques they get in advance, living off of this kind of system and causing the low-income people in our country to be strung out unnecessarily. This is an important reform at the street level where it affects people.

The monthly payments can also respond quickly to changes in family status, as the member for Calgary North very clearly demonstrated, and is also going to be a further measure of fairness. All these changes, whether through death or divorce or remarriage or custody

change and so forth, require timely response and this bill provides that.

Fifth, there is something innovative in this legislation and that is the way of providing a measure of wealth for working families in Canada. Certainly in Etobicoke—Lakeshore many people are working and supporting their families by going out every day to their jobs and finding that the low income they are able to earn is almost exceeded by people who are drawing welfare benefits. This has created great consternation in the community. Here we have a measure where the earned income supplement of up to $500 provides extra help to low-income working families. In the past, this has been a group that certainly has fallen in between the cracks of the present system.

The sixth reason why I am supporting this bill has to do again with the simplicity and fairness of the processing. These monthly payments will be tax free, therefore there will not have to be any recording of this in the tax returns of these recipients. The tax return is therefore shorter and simpler because of the elimination of the existing calculations for example for family allowances and the child credit and the refundable child tax credit. All of that is going to be much simpler.

In a word, this is a formula for having better value for dollar spent by the Government of Canada. Above all, it ensures social justice and real concern for the future generations of Canada that they can be well maintained in financial security within their own homes and families.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I would have resisted the urge to participate in this debate but for the misleading effect of the hon. member's speech. I want to correct the impression immediately that this benefits the poorest in our country. It does not. The hon. member has clearly been bamboozled by the government's own publications on this issue.

If he had read any of the testimony that was given by the less biased witnesses that appeared before the parliamentary committee, which got such a short time to study this bill and got to hear so few of the people that might have made useful submissions to it, he would be aware that what he has said was false.

I maintain what I said from my seat. I will say it now. The statement is inaccurate and false because the people who are not working in this country, who have the lowest incomes, and situations in which child poverty is most severe get absolutely no increase in benefits under this bill.

The section he read, that people earning less than $50,000 will get an increase in benefits, is accurate if you are working and earning the money. However, if you are not working and are relying on social assistance or some other means of support to maintain yourself and your children you get absolutely zero under this system.

The hon. member should go to the minister and tell him to correct this little pamphlet he put out which is so false and misleading because it leaves out that very important fact which is vital to any understanding of this bill.

This government has put more people on the welfare rolls than any other government in years and years. Therefore, it has a direct responsibility for those people and it has done absolutely nothing for them in the course of this bill.

An hon. member: They are covered by other programs.

Mr. Milliken: There are no other programs with any increase which are being brought in to assist child poverty. This is the child benefit package that the government has said is to alleviate child poverty in this country and it is sorely lacking for the most needy children in Canada. It is a serious omission and the hon. member should be ashamed that he had the nerve to stand in this House and tell me that what I was saying was false when he said it was benefiting the most needy. They are left out. They are omitted from this whole program.

The most wealthy people in Canada derive the greatest benefit from this program.

Ms. Greene: Not from this program.

Mr. Milliken: Yes, they do from this program. Yes, they do because it is a package. This is a child benefit package. Under the arrangements the child care expense deduction is increased by $1,000 so that in a family in which both spouses are working and earning in excess of $60,000 a year the child care expense deduction is increased by $1,000 for those people. It is an additional benefit for the most wealthy.

This is part of the child benefit package that the Minister of Finance trumpeted about so much in his budget. That is what is being foisted on the Canadian public, and we are being told that this is fair. This is the kind of nonsense that is being spouted by the government members because they are bamboozled, completely bamboozled by the rubbish the government publishes in its white papers. It is inaccurate, it is misleading and it is false. For once, the government should come clean with Canadians and put all the facts on the table instead of selected bits, as it has tried to do throughout its efforts on this bill.

This bill is nothing but an effort to buy Canadians off in the forthcoming election. We now know why this bill is being rushed through this House of Commons. In June this was introduced in great haste. It was rammed through the committee.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was a member of the committee. He tried to have other Canadians who wanted to be heard appear before the committee. However the Tory majority in that group shut the committee down in an awful rush. They did not want to sit all summer listening to groups rail against this legislation, to social groups that know something about child poverty in this country and who might have made some useful contribution to it. This was cut and dried.

The reason it was cut and dried is because this bill is going to have cheques going out starting in January, and guess when the next election is likely to be? With a referendum campaign on we know it is not likely to be this fall but—

Mr. Boyer: There are cheques going out now.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says that cheques are going out now. However, he knows that these cheques are going to be larger because they will combine some of the previous tax breaks with the previous payments. By lumping the two together the amount of the cheques will go up although the actual cost to the treasury of Canada will not.

What it is doing is piling money into Canadians' hands in order to convince them that what it has done is beneficial. Canadians in most cases will not be any better off, except for the most wealthy and some of the middle-income workers who I agree will get increased benefits. A large number will be no better off yet they will think they will be because the cheques will be larger than what they have been receiving hitherto.

That is what is going on in this bill. It is an attempt to buy off Canadians with their own money just before an election campaign. If this government had introduced this bill at the beginning of its term, one might have sympathized with it a little bit because we would understand that it is not really interested in helping with child poverty. However, to introduce it near the end of its term and announce that it is going to solve the problem in Canada and then bamboozle people with this kind of cheque writing exercise amounts to a complete fraud on the people of Canada.

• (1650)

This government knows that it could have done something to help the most poorly paid but, as stated in the testimony before the committee, the government failed to go to the provinces and negotiate any arrangements with them to ensure that any benefits paid to those on welfare would not be counted as benefits received by those persons and result in a reduction of their welfare cheques.

Again, the minister failed to do this. The government says: "We did not have time". Guess why. It wanted to rush this through in time to have those cheques go out in January 1993, just in time for the election campaign.

Finally, the manifest unfairness of this arrangement must be apparent even to the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. As he has finally realized, this bill does nothing, absolutely nothing, for the persons not who are earning the lowest but who are receiving the lowest amounts of money in this country.

Those are the people whose children are poorest. Those are the people who need this kind of assistance most, and they benefit in no way whatever from this bill. Even the hon. member for Don Valley North who was yelling from her seat a few minutes ago and heckling me—I am not a cry-baby, I am not objecting to this—knows that what I am saying is correct.

Those people get nothing under this bill. She should not be supporting this bill. She has some social conscience. She should be opposing this and saying: "This is not good enough". Canadians expect better from their government. Canadians expect fairness from their government. This is not fair.

It is taking away a benefit they now have and giving nothing of substance in return. This benefit should be improved for the poorest, not for the most wealthy. She says that the point I made about the deduction for the child care expenses is not in this bill.

I do not care whether it is in this bill or not. It is part of the budget package introduced by the Minister of Finance at the same time. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre knows that. The hon. member knows it, too. She should admit that it is part of the package. It is unfair. It should have been better. The whole package should have been better.

To give these kinds of benefits to the most wealthy and give nothing to the very poorest is—

Mr. Boyer: Nonsense, it is not.

Mr. Milliken: Nonsense, nothing. It is absolutely right. The most wealthy are doing the best and the poorest are getting zero. Those are the facts in this case.

The hon. member says it is not. I do not know what I need to do to convince him, but I wish he would read the transcript of the committee's proceedings. There are volumes of material from the committee before which members of the public appeared and gave their views and expressed their reservations about this bill.

I personally attended a convention, a meeting of economists at Queen's University in Kingston. It was a post-budget commentary and all the papers that were delivered there spoke of this. They spoke of how it failed to benefit the lowest paid in our society. It gave them zero and the greatest benefit was for the most wealthy.

One of the participants at the conference, himself a university professor, said that under this legislation the only thing that made sense for him was to send his wife to work. He was working and she was not, but if she worked and added her income to his they would get an extra $1,000 deduction. They could do better than the best could do under the payment system that is going out to the people between $25,000 and $50,000. That is the fact. That is what he said.

Mr. Boyer: I would like to see that.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says that he would like to see it. I wish he had come to the meeting. I would have been delighted to have him hear all this, but that is what is going on in this country.

This government is setting out to line the pockets of its friends at the expense of the very poorest. That is what is going on.

I say that this bill is bad, and I will be pleased to rise with my colleagues to vote against it.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to correct some of the misleading remarks that have been placed before this House of Commons by the opposition.

In order to malign this bill they are including the child expense deduction, which is not part of this bill. This bill is $2.1 billion. Eighty per cent of Canadian families gain from it and those with a high income do not benefit from this particular bill at all.

If you added the child care expense deduction, did a computer model and looked at what happened to Canadian families the fact of the matter is that with the child care expense deduction people in the $120,000 income range would be getting very little benefit on average because it is such a small amount of money.

The whole amount that is being added in a future bill for the child care expense deduction is $140 million. The child benefit is $2.1 billion. No, there is nothing in this bill for welfare but the minister is reviewing national standards for welfare with the ministers across the country.

One of the recommendations of the poverty committee was that there should be national standards for welfare. I think that is where we need to help welfare recipients. This child benefit should be discretionary income for all Canadian families, including welfare recipients, so that children have the opportunity to participate in some of the many things in society that enrich their lives. It should be for educational expenses and recreational expenses. This money should not be spent on food or basic necessities in this country. We must all work to get welfare reform in order to address that very serious problem.

There is no doubt that one of the big problems with poverty in this country is that for many families it is not worth while for them to work. In fact, they are worse off if they go out to work. That is why we recommended an earned income credit, which this puts in place through

the child benefit system. That will help make it more worth while for families to go out to work.

There is still a long way to go. We need to ensure that they do not lose any of the supplementary benefits that are currently provided under welfare. We need to ensure that all families who go out to work are better off working. In the long term, in order to escape poverty in any meaningful way, that is the most obvious way and the best, and I am sure all welfare recipients agree. Certainly in my experience welfare families have the same values that all Canadians have. They want to have good jobs and they want to have the opportunities to work and so on that other Canadian families enjoy. One way is to make it worth while for them to go out to work and to help them with these supplementary benefits.

This benefit is carefully targeted toward the low-income working poor. It starts at a fairly low level of income and builds to a maximum around $6,000. It stays in place until after the poverty line for a family and then it drops off. In my experience, and I have certainly informed my constituents very much about this benefit, there is overwhelming support in this country for a program of child benefits that focuses on those who need the money most.

I come from a relatively high-income riding. I have not had a single complaint from my high-income families about this child benefit. Overwhelmingly across Canada families want their money to go where it is going to help the most. Other important areas have to be addressed with respect to poverty. Clearly, the welfare area is one of the most pressing, and so is child support. Child support should be like paying taxes, and that is really important in helping people work. If a family knows they can get child support, which is usually deductible from welfare, that is a greater incentive for them to go out and work as well.

As well, I would like to see an effort made in that area. For example, one proposal I have heard is a child support insurance scheme. We know we have tried various measures in Ontario, B.C. and in other parts of the country to improve the child support system but a lot of work has to be done there. We need a national child support system.

This is major progress. It is a good bill. It is not perfect. It can be improved. I would like to see it added onto in later years. It is certainly a very good start which Canadian families will welcome.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. 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 of the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1700)

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved:

Motion No. 23.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 25.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by deleting lines 21 to 30 at page 10.

Motion No. 26.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by deleting line 26 at page 10 and substituting the following therefor:

"income for the year ex-".

Motion No. 27.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by deleting line 30 at page 10 and substituting the following therefor:

"year exceeds $51,000 and".

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre) moved:

Motion No. 28.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out lines 32 and 33 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"A/B".

Motion No. 29.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out line 23 at page 14 and substituting the following therefor:

"end of the twenty-third month following the par-".

Motion No. 30.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out line 48 at page 14 and substituting the following therefor:

"end of the twenty-third month following the par-".

Motion No. 31.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out line 19 at page 16 and substituting the following therefor:

"the amount that would otherwise be".

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, we have been discussing today the merits and demerits of the government's child benefits package.

It is worth while just stepping back a little to see the government's commitment over time, at least rhetorical commitment over time, to the plight of children and to resolving that plight because this amendment basically is to strike out the new child benefits package.

We all remember the Prime Minister's commitment to social programs as a sacred trust, committing himself to ensuring the continuation of those social programs that Canadians have held so dear for so long. He mentioned that in 1984 before the election. Canadians remember that very well and are more than cognizant of how that sacred trust has been broken by the Prime Minister.

We also remember the resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 put forward by the former leader of the New Democratic Party and how that resolution was unanimously supported in this House. It was supported by every member on the government side and every member on the opposition side. It committed this House to eliminating child poverty by the year 2000.

We will also remember the Prime Minister's signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child just last year, committing the Government of Canada and indeed Canada as a country at the international level to working toward protecting children, improving children's position, and improving the opportunities that children have to education, to health care, to social services, to a future.

On a number of occasions this government has made sweeping commitments to eliminating child poverty, sweeping commitments to addressing the concerns of the over one million children living in poverty in Canada.

Yet recently the Minister of National Health and Welfare, whose responsibility it is to administer, to propose social programs in Canada, has announced that the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000 is an unrealizeable dream. In other words, the government has gone back on all the commitments it made to Canada's children, to Canada's families.

The reality of the matter is, as we all know, that over one million children are living in poverty in Canada. Over 1.6 million people are unemployed in Canada. Over three million people are living on social assistance in Canada. That is the reality of Canada. That is the reality of this government's economic and social programs, and these realities are getting worse. The problem is getting worse, not better.

The Minister for National Health and Welfare, by saying that the elimination of child poverty is an unrealizeable dream, has made it quite clear this government is not concerned, nor prepared to deal with child poverty in a meaningful way. This bill confirms the fact the government has reneged on those promises made earlier to Canadians and their children.

The elimination of child poverty is not an unrealistic dream. Other countries have done a much better job than Canada has done in dealing with this issue. Only the United States has done a worse job. Other countries can do it, other countries have the political will to deal effectively with the problem of child poverty. It is unfortunate that the Government of Canada does not.

Whatever money might be going into the child benefits package that we have here—and it is a very small amount, $400 million for each year over a five-year period—for over one million children living in poverty, it is not very much money. In contrast to that, billions of dollars have been taken out of social programs since the beginning of this government's term. Taking out billions and putting back a few million, although they seem like

large sums of money, is not helping but rather hurting Canadian children.

It is not that difficult to see the results and to see how we might turn this whole situation around. If we were going to deal effectively with the problems of child poverty, if we really cared as a country about children, we would ensure that adequate family benefits were available, not a bill like this which will give not one penny more to those people who are the poorest of Canadians, those living on social assistance. If you happen to be a child born to a family on social assistance, you will be no better off as a result of these changes.

We need an adequate level of family benefits to ensure that Canadian children are not hungry, that Canadian children have their basic necessities met. We need a national child care program, another promise on which this government has reneged, to ensure that Canadian parents can work, to ensure that their children are well looked after while they are out earning a living. The $500 suggested here for those who work, added to the benefits for those who work over those who do not work, is not going to go any distance at all in dealing with child care, costs which could amount to $6,000 or even $12,000 a year.

We have to have in this country a commitment to full employment, as all the witnesses at the legislative committee on Bill C–80 suggested. That is the only solution that is going to solve this problem. This government has talked very much about full employment and even the constitutional document talks about full employment and yet at the same time this government has created unemployment in order to attack inflation. That is not full employment strategies; that is the old way of dealing with inflation, cranking up unemployment.

We also need to ensure that we have fair taxation in Canada so we can pay for the programs we need. As we all know, there are many wealthy Canadians and profitable corporations paying little or no taxes and we need to address that.

Instead of making a full–blown commitment to dealing with child poverty, this government has introduced a bill which will finally end universality and which will give not one penny more to the poorest of Canadians.

Perhaps the most telling point about this bill is that while it is clearly a bill about social policy, about what we are going to do to sustain our children and to provide children with their basic needs, it is not being presented as a social policy bill but as a finance bill. In other words, it is quite clear that social policy is being run out of the finance department in Canada and not out of the department which is responsible for social policy, the Department of National Health and Welfare.

In addition to that, we are seeing this bill forced through this House. We saw today that the government is prepared to go to any lengths to make sure that this bill is through this House very quickly. We had through the summer inadequate time for witnesses to present their findings on the legislation. Some witnesses could not appear because they did not have time to prepare their presentations. The government side still forced the committee along.

Why is it so urgent to pass this bill which will not give one penny more to those Canadians who need it most? In the next year we are expecting an election, which could come quite soon, and in the month of January through to the rest of 1993, the benefits available to Canadian families will be slightly larger than they are now. This is nothing more than a cynical ploy leading up to the election to persuade Canadians that they are getting more when once the election is over they will begin to see their benefits erode as the impact of the deindexation will take place.

• (1710)

In closing, and dealing with this aspect of the amendments suggesting that the whole child benefit package should be dispensed with, it is worth pointing out that all of the witnesses working with children and all of the academics working in social policy areas who appeared before the legislative committee advised the government to withdraw this bill and start again.

Not one change has been made. Not one change of approach, change of attitude or change of heart is indicated on the government side in spite of the fact that

all those working and knowledgeable experts in the field have advised the government that this is the wrong way to go.

If this government did care about children it would have listened to those witnesses and it would have changed its mind.

Throughout the period during which this House has discussed child poverty, we have had witnesses come to committees and one in particular asked a question which was unsettling to everyone and it is a terrible indictment on this country and on this government. The question I have in mind is that one of the witnesses at the subcommittee on poverty asked why this government hates children. Why indeed?

Mr. Walker: Madam Speaker, at this point in the debate we move away from the general criticism of what is wrong with this bill. We do hope that the House accepts our motions presented earlier in the day, that is to say, to delete this bill from the legislative agenda.

I somehow doubt whether the government is willing to face the truth of the weaknesses within this bill and it will carry on in a slavish fashion to support the wrong piece of legislation and the wrong approach to dealing with child poverty.

The four motions I am presenting to the House right now, along with my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso are motions in which we have tried to deal with some of the fundamental flaws in this bad piece of legislation. In particular, in Motion No. 28 we ask that the government, in clause 12, strike out lines 32 and 33 at page 12 and substitute a different formula.

This may sound very dry, very boring and very esoteric, but the heart of what the government is doing and what it is doing wrong is found in this particular clause; namely, that it is setting in the famous 3 per cent solution every year for the recalculation on July 1, which accepts that the first 3 per cent of inflation does not apply to any change in benefits or in thresholds.

The government has a short memory. In dealing with another important client group, the opposite end of the age structure but not the opposite end of the need structure, seniors, several years ago a woman from Montreal travelled to Ottawa to tell the Prime Minister personally: "Goodbye, Charlie Brown". I am sure if the kids across Canada could get themselves equally well organized and if they understood the stealth with which they are being dealt, they would come to Ottawa to say to the Prime Minister: "Goodbye, Charlie Brown".

I was struck by the contrast today, and I must be very direct with this, that in this party and in the whole House we are thinking about the contributions of Paul Martin to the social policy fabric of this country and how over the last 47 years the framework which he developed as minister has done a service to many Canadian families, albeit small, but nevertheless a service to so many. As we can say honestly, every Canadian family since 1945 to the current year has benefited in some way from the benefits struck in that original deal of family allowances.

Also, ironically from the same city with the same commitment, a few months ago we were saddened by the passing of Senator David Croll who also committed his life to social policy and justice.

I wonder how they would have participated in the House of Commons and in the Senate and in a debate as fundamental to the structure of government and the structure of a society as this.

In this government the only contribution made by a representative of the minister of health, the minister of the government in this debate, has been time allocation. If we stop and think about it, the only time a minister of the Crown has participated in the debate was to announce that the debate is about to end.

Compare that with the lives we have honoured in the last few months in this House for what they saw as the role of government. In those two patterns we saw the differences in the approach and why Canadians do not trust the government. In this package are the elements of the good things that we need to do on behalf of the children.

In Motion No. 28 we asked that the House remove the 3 per cent solution and recognize the slow but steady erosion and value of benefits. Although this year we are very close to the 3 per cent limit in inflation, historically speaking a 3 per cent insert in the legislation compounded would cause over a 30 per cent decline in true benefits for families in the next decade. That is an enormous amount in terms of real dollars. Any economist will tell you that is a slow, steady and sure way to erode the buying power of families dealing with children.

That is one of the anomalies. Starting on January 1 next year there will be what looks like a new benefit. On July 1 it will be reduced downward before Canadians get used to it. This is one of the interesting ways the government steals from people while appearing to be giving to them. I do not think it is a misuse of language. In the social policy community and in reports done annually by Carleton University, a group of academics has made a good contribution to this debate. It talks about social policy by stealth, by the fact that a little is taken away each time.

It was interesting to hear government members defend this piece of legislation. They have not read it very carefully but they are trying to defend it. They are not recognizing the fact that $3.5 billion has already been taken out of the system. That is a phenomenal amount of money which groups, individuals and provinces are trying to replace. It is in that context that we cannot be generous in our response to this legislation because it does not acknowledge the money that has already been taken out of the system.

Motion No. 29, dealing with clause 12, as well as Motion No. 30, dealing with the same clause, extend the period in which individuals can inform the government of changes in their status, either by death or separation. It is a small point but one in which we wish the government should be more flexible in its review of the legislation. Many times people's circumstances can be very traumatic and they do not get around to making changes until later than we think they should. On the other hand, there is no doubt that once a deadline has passed, you get into a legal system and you are too late and it causes complications. Why not extend the period for 23 months? It will capture those people who for whatever personal reasons were not able to get things together at first and at the same time not cause tremendous wrangles.

Motion No. 31 deals with what I think is one of the most controversial and dangerous areas of this legislation and one which we have asked the government privately and publicly to address. As has been debated several times by all parties in the House, this legislation does not deal directly with those people on social assistance and it does not deal with federal-provincial relations in the field of social policy.

When the amounts start being delivered on a monthly basis, there will be a great deal of concern among a lot of the advocacy groups that this money will be taken into account by provinces and municipalities. Instead of moving closer to national standards, which the member quite properly referred to in a recommendation coming out of the subcommittee on poverty, we run the risk of moving away because we have not given ourselves an institutional framework for guaranteeing that there will be no cutbacks. The amendment in Motion No. 31 proposes to protect families so that the same level exists. There is more than one province in this country, I believe there are at least two, which have different mixes outside of the family allowance package right now. These provinces will be asked to guarantee that there will be no change in the status of the amount of money that people receive by the federal government because of provincial arrangements.

• (1720)

We have been assured by ministers that this has been opened up for discussion. On the other hand, there has been no written correspondence, nothing that has been presented to the House, nothing that has been tabled. I think for those who know the social assistance system, particularly where the media is not watching and the politicians are not watching, there is a tendency to say to people on social assistance: "Look at the whole package that you are getting and there are no guarantees for it, so this is the way we do it in this town. If you do not like it, move on". That has certainly been the case in western Canada on more than one occasion.

I would like to present to the House that it would be a much more positive approach if we had as part of this legislation a guaranteed federal-provincial arrangement whereby the government's guaranteed present and future levels of financing of families will not be changed by this way of doing things. Given that the government has not yet done it, it is one more reason for Bill C-80 to be withdrawn from the House at this time.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to reiterate what my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North Centre has brought to the attention of this House and the importance of being open as a government to constructive and well-thought-out amendments. The amendments are not capricious. They are there to enable a better set of legislative rules and laws so that the people who will be affected particularly

as found under Motion No. 28 will not be as disenfranchised as is presently perceived by the government.

I do not know where this whole idea—I call it the deindexation bug—has snuck into the mentality that we have seen in all the legislation that has come down since 1985. It strikes me that in the 1984 Speech from the Throne not only were universal social programs a sacred trust, but the whole question of social justice was at play at that time.

I recall thinking that if the government is going to bring in social justice and if it will maintain and improve the way of life, so be it. The people's voice has spoken and we will see how this government which had a bad reputation—Conservative times are bad times, et cetera—may well be put to rest and we will see a new approach with a new thrust. Certainly little did we expect what we have before us.

That deindexation bug which has been implanted is hidden. It is in a sense, sneaky. I do not like to use words like that. It is very much behind the scenes. It really shows the base of conservatism in a way which I do not know it is what they really would have preferred. It does not show the caring and compassionate society that they would like.

Yes, the first blush may well show that, but in reality it may not take people much more than eight or nine months to recognize that they have been duped once again.

Starting in January at the government's will, people are going to receive monthly cheques, those on welfare and at the low income level. This monthly cheque is going to be a wrap up inclusive of the family allowance that they used to receive, the child tax credit and the refundable child tax credit. A very amazing surprise is going to come in the month of November. Many of these families expect a refundable child tax credit to come back in and they will buy the winter clothes, the needed boots and shoes.

Now that it is all rolled into one, little do they realize that they are not going to get that. It is going to be a very rude awakening, but what I think may be the nefarious planning behind this whole bill will by then be history. It has become a political act and that is playing with the saddest cases in our society.

The reality is that you are reducing, you are draining. It is social diminution of programs by stealth in a sense and it is reduction through the back door. It reminds me somewhat of the GST discussions and arguments that we had that it was not open and above board.

I guess the GST was not open and above board. The fight over the free trade agreement was not open and above board. Now this change to family policy and to social policy, and the changes that are inherent in here because of the deindexation bug has become rather a sick picture in the whole structure.

I just would like to quote what Ken Battle had to say. He is the former director of the National Council of Welfare. He said that the new benefit will be eroded by inflation, but only after the next election is over.

He said: "Welfare and working poor families will go deeper and deeper below the poverty line under the child benefit. The system will leak steadily. Partial deindexation is a fiscally powerful and politically invisible mechanism that allows the government to siphon money from social programs. The child benefit proposals are designed to pretend to fight child poverty".

I wonder, if each and every one of the members of the government recognized and did the figure crunching, in the light of the new harmony that is supposed to reign with the new Constitution, if they would not like to reconsider and go back and consult with their constituents while they are talking about this new Constitution and see if they would not like to realign so that, as I believe the hon. member for Don Valley North acknowledged, we are not dealing with people who are on welfare, the poorest in society. The government intends to do that at another time.

If we are not going to do that now as we are dealing with family allowance, child tax credit and the whole thing, why not do a whole social policy re-evaluation and put it into place at the same time rather than allowing first of all the government to be seen as being cynical and, second, being a disservice to the one million poor children who are out there?

I think that would be a fair assessment, so I would really like to go back to that motion. I hope the government side will agree to vote on the first motion that we debated earlier, that is to put the bill to sleep, to

bed, to rest for a little bit and revise and review the undertaking.

With respect to Motion No. 28, which is the deindexation of anything over 3 per cent, just think about it. Your rent is going to go up, your food is going to go up and you are not going to get any money.

Mr. Boyer: What if inflation goes down?

Mrs. Finestone: If inflation goes down, yes. What happens if inflation does not go down?

Mr. Boyer: We are holding inflation down.

Mrs. Finestone: You are holding inflation down, but it can still go up to 3 per cent and you do not get any money, I would just like to remind my friend from Etobicoke over there.

For Motions Nos. 28, 29, 30 and particularly Motion No. 31, I found my colleague's research into the interprovincial disparities, the municipal disparities between the cities across this country, a very interesting and a very disturbing observation.

Think about what the government did with capping CAP with respect to education and social services in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. We know for certain that the economic situation in Toronto and in southern Ontario has become dramatic. Because you thought you had rich cats and were going to tame them, you put a cap on CAP. You put the 3 per cent in there and now you have people who are suffering for no reason of their own.

• (1730)

Poverty is poverty wherever you live in this country and hunger is hunger. I think there ought to be some very serious rethinking about the discrepancies that are going to be found between people who are moving to look for work, who are trying to improve their skills and trying to get out of the poverty gap so that they can have a decent life. Do you think people like to live this way? They do not but they need a helping hand and this is no way to help them.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have another opportunity to talk about this particular bill.

First of all, the issue of the inflation protection clause is something that we considered at the poverty committee as well and our recommendation was that the benefits should be indexed to the growth in family incomes.

If you look at it historically, inflation protection in Canada has meant the child benefits themselves have not grown with family incomes. The proportion that families receive in benefits from the federal government has dropped as a percentage of family income.

The reason the department of course has deindexed not only this but the other parts of the tax system as well is in order to give it discretion so that the minister at budget time can in fact allocate funds where he thinks they will have the greatest benefit.

In the case of poor children, since 1985 the government has increased the refundable child tax credit four times and introduced a supplement of $213 for children under seven where child care expenses are not claimed. In fact, poor children are better off as a result of our policies.

It is wrong to say that $3.5 million has been taken out of the child benefits system. That is an artificial calculation which ignores the benefits that have been put into the system and the benefits that have been put into the system have in fact been put in for low income children.

As I stated earlier, the benefits that we are getting through this bill will be directed at the working poor. In fact, the minister is speaking and is having discussions. Indeed, if you look at the recent constitutional negotiations, there seemed to be a consensus of all the ministers in this country that something has to be done to ensure that the poorest of the poor in this country have some kind of standard, a standard that meets the basic needs.

I happen to have a copy of *Maclean's* here. It gives the example of a woman with two children who gets $486 a month in Nova Scotia from the municipal welfare assistance program. I think that is outrageous in a country as wealthy as this. We have to look specifically across the country and establish national standards.

Clearly it is not as expensive to live in Nova Scotia as it is in Toronto, so you need a system that has sliding scales that base it on the actual costs in a particular community and what in fact is reasonable. I think that is definitely something that has to be a priority.

No society in this competitive global world that is emerging and that is in existence can afford to be directing its resources toward the rich, subsidizing the rich and increasing taxes so that the marginal rate of taxation for work rises higher and higher.

In order to be competitive we have to spend our money better and we have to spend it on those people that need it the most. We are talking about a society in which there is rapid change going on, in which people are going to have to be retrained, in which it is unacceptable to have a 30 per cent drop-out rate.

If you look at those kinds of statistics, it is the poor in this country that are not achieving, that are not participating in this society. We as a society have to direct greater resources toward these people and soon, really soon.

This is why we have the child development initiative which is targeted again toward the very needy and toward the high risk children in our society. I think these are very progressive programs.

I was shocked when I chaired that poverty committee to find the low level of contribution from the opposition. Some of the social agencies that I spoke to were equally amazed at the shallow, shallow reports that were presented, the lack of seriousness with which the opposition addressed this issue. I am not a very partisan person. I have been in politics since 1972 and I was willing to consider anything. But the number of concrete proposals that the opposition brought forward were insignificant.

We had good attendance while we had witnesses, but notice at the beginning of the report I put in the attendance. Once we started to get into the issues and examined them in any kind of detail, opposition members ran for shelter. They ran back to their parties where they could sit on the fence and criticize, instead of helping the children in this country.

I say shame on you. Shame that you have not come up with any concrete and acceptable proposals. Shame that you are relying on old programs that have not been effective, a family allowance that has given amounts of money to high income people and done nothing to address the real problems in our society. Shame.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise again to speak on this bill. I would first of all like to congratulate the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing for his hard work and effort along with other members in the House on this legislation and the proposed changes.

I find it somewhat amazing that the member for Don Valley North, who has been quite involved in this campaign, says that the opposition parties of this House have offered nothing, and the fact that it is her government that is offering so much to the children of this country.

We have a million poor children in this country. We had something like 25 witnesses before the committee. Almost every one condemned this legislation, said it was regressive, said it was not going to help poverty in this country. Yet the member can stand there and say that her government is going to rid us of poverty.

People in this House have been bragging about how Canada has been named the number one nation in the world, and of course a lot of that is due to our social programs, our social legislation, but this government is systematically removing those programs one by one.

In the city of Moose Jaw we have a food bank, along with a lot of other cities across this country, and every day there are people going to that food bank and a lot of them are children. A high percentage of people using the food banks in Moose Jaw and other areas are children. It is heart-rending to see these things happening, to see families being forced to go to a food bank.

In a country where minimum wages are so low, in a country where the working poor are struggling to survive with many of them living below the poverty line, this government is taking a piecemeal approach to this whole area of social legislation. Other comments made in this House would suggest that we should be looking at our social programs in a broad fashion. It makes a lot of sense, and is, in fact, what we should be doing.

For example, the federal minimum wage is $4.85, or in that vicinity. Someone working at that wage level, if he or she has any size of family at all, is going to be living well below the poverty line. The first thing this government could do is pass legislation so that people living below the poverty line do not pay income tax. Why is it that people living below the poverty line in this country are paying income tax? It is incredible.

They are contributing money to this government that they do not have, in situations where they cannot afford to live themselves. Yet government members can stand in this House and say how much they are doing for the poor in this country. We in this House who live so well, who have incomes that are way above the average, with perks and so on, can stand here and say how much we are doing for the poor.

There is no doubt that social problems in this country are growing and they are not being resolved. Until we take an approach that is going to look at all aspects of social legislation, we are not going to solve the problems.

• (1740)

I have to make a couple of comments because there is some hypocrisy in this debate today. The government is saying that it cannot deal with the economy until this constitutional referendum is dealt with. "Forget it. The economy is important but we cannot deal with it. We have to deal with this referendum".

We can keep the House working for a few extra days and ram through this bill which received a few days of hearings during the summer. It is going to receive a couple of days of debate with closure, yet we cannot deal with the economy. There is something hypocritical about that. Anybody watching this debate will notice the hypocrisy.

This week we are dealing with this bill and then we will deal with the drug patent legislation which will further hurt people in poverty. We are going to increase the period of time of patents from 10 years to 20 years, eliminating the ability for generic drug companies to produce drugs. That is going to hurt people on fixed incomes, seniors and others.

As I have heard often from seniors in my riding, drugs are too expensive. The House is sitting for a few extra days to deal with two pieces of legislation that are going to adversely affect poor people and those on fixed incomes. At a time when the Prime Minister says that we do not have time to deal with the economy but we can take money away from the poor people is nothing less than hypocritical. I find it quite unsettling.

The other comment I want to make on this legislation has been made before but is worth repeating. We have heard the comment about the working poor: "We are helping the working poor". In fact benefits are being given to the working poor as opposed to Canadians commonly called "those most in need", the ones that are not even working.

There are many Canadians who are not working, not by choice but because they are victims of circumstance. We are discriminating against Canadians who are most in need. We are doing it with this bill and we have done it with changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act. That is hypocritical. To encourage this division between people living in poverty is divisive to this country.

In Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, which is typical, we have working poor and people that are most in need. It is not because they do not want to work. Of course there will always be those who will take advantage of the system. Most want to work, get an education and get on with their lives. I see them in my office. Other members see people in their offices all the time who are struggling to get ahead and who simply do not have any options and what little opportunity they do have the government seems to be consistently taking away from them.

It is all very well for the member for Don Valley North and others to stand up and make glowing comments. It is the same as when the government passed the unanimous motion on eliminating poverty by the year 2000. It passed that motion and then completely ignored it. The comments about sacred trusts and helping the poor and that the only thing wrong with this country is the need for jobs, jobs, jobs and the Tory government will correct it are hypocrisy. This piece of legislation shows that hypocrisy and shows this government for what it is.

In closing, I just want to say that I wish the government would take a look at the social legislation and the social problems that exist in this country and do it in an all-encompassing fashion. When the government makes that commitment then we will be getting somewhere. We will be moving to assist people in this country who are less fortunate than ourselves and deserve more than what they are getting.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise again this afternoon to debate this second group of amendments to Bill C-80.

Where this morning I argued with other colleagues that this bill should be withdrawn and that the government set its mind to a comprehensive and thorough

approach to improving the child benefit system rather than simply rearranging certain aspects of that system to make them look more attractive around election time, this afternoon I would like to concentrate my remarks on a specific motion in this group. It is Motion No. 28 which was introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, and which I was pleased to second.

Motion No. 28 would amend clause 12 of the bill to replace the partial indexing of benefits under the legislation with full indexing for these benefits. It would do this by removing the minus 1.03 which follows the indexing formula.

Under the present legislation the benefits would be indexed using the ratio of the Consumer Price Index for the two preceding years. The ratio of the CPI would then be subtracted by the number 1.03 which has the effect of reducing the real value of the benefits or the income stream for these benefits over time to those targeted recipients of the child benefit.

I would like to explain a little bit about the CPI because this lack of full indexing of these benefits is one of the most sinister aspects of this legislation. It will erode these benefits over time. It also reflects a pattern which has been employed by this government in dealing with social programs in other areas in the past.

Therefore I would like to focus on this particular aspect of the deindexing that the government is using for this child benefit and which it has used in other places. To explain, the Consumer Price Index attempts to measure the amount of inflation that takes place in Canada or in different parts of Canada. It does this by taking a basket of goods which reflects the consumer pattern of most Canadians and includes such items as food, housing, clothing, transportation, health and personal care, recreation, reading and education, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, and attempts, on a month to month basis, to estimate the prices of these goods and how these prices evolve over time.

The Consumer Price Index is a very central number which we use to measure inflation and the indexing which appears in pensions and in various other income streams. Over time it is used to attempt to correct for the decline in the real value of income which takes place as a consequence of inflation.

• (1750)

Indexing is very central when it is applied to social benefits in order to maintain the real value of these benefits over time. It has come to be applied in taxes. It has come to be applied in pensions, family allowances and various forms of income which are made available through the government.

This government has been adding a little negative factor to indexation on this legislation and other forms of legislation and programs which involve distributing income or benefits to various Canadians. This little negative factor has been this government's way of allowing what it is nominally making available to those people to whom it makes payments, to erode.

It began this practice very early in its mandate with old age pensions until the government was embarrassed and forced to back-pedal in shame after Madam Denis from Montreal confronted a red-faced Prime Minister on the steps of Parliament Hill. She essentially pointed out to him exactly what his government was doing and how this government was secretly and sneakily taking away the real value of their pensions. It forced the Prime Minister to turn and back-pedal and restore the real value of those pensions.

Since then the government has continued this practice and has been determined to apply it in other contexts. It has placed a cap on certain payments under the Canada Assistance Plan, partially deindexed family allowance payments and applied other clawback features.

Now the government is applying this negative factor to full indexation of child benefits destined to the poorest and most defenceless of our society.

It is doing this to guarantee those benefits will go down over time. If we have a very low rate of inflation they will go down in nominal terms and if we have a high rate of inflation, they will go down in real terms. In any case, they will steadily go down. In the future, the poor who will be receiving these payments will receive less and will be able to purchase less of the basic necessities of life from the income that will be made available to them under this program.

This will happen without any further legislation. This is buried in the legislation.

What does the government gain by insisting this simple adjustment formula be changed in order to have these benefits, which are not very great to begin with go down over time?

The government is asking the poorest members of society to bear the first burden of its efforts to reduce the size of the government and its expenditures. It is interesting to contrast this practice which has become characteristic of this government's way of doing things with another aspect of government policy, registered retirement savings plans. One of the speakers I referred to this morning, Mr. Patrick Johnston, was a witness to the legislative committee considering Bill C-80 this summer. He mentioned the contradiction between the government's stinginess with respect to child benefit payments and the way it has treated the legislation increasing the RRSP limits for those wealthy enough to put money aside to save for their retirement and at the same time receive a very generous tax consideration.

When the government increased the RRSP limits from $7,500 to $15,000 per year, Mr. Johnston reminded the members of the committee this simple change would cost the government billions of dollars in forgone tax revenues because the government provides a tax shelter for those people who make RRSP contributions, which costs the government tax revenue. Beginning in 1995, the amount is some $10.7 billion annually. The whole child benefit program is not even going to be half that, yet this government is chipping away from the beginning on the real value of those incomes.

There is an anomaly and a contradiction in these two facts which speak volumes about the philosophy inherent in this government's approach. That is why we would like this government to approve the full indexation of this formula, eliminate this tag and accept the motion that has been proposed by my colleague to allow the full indexation for these benefits at least to be made.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Madam Speaker, I believe I have about five minutes.

I would like to read into the record some comments that have been made about Bill C-80. These are comments made by so-called third parties when they appeared before the legislative committee. I think it is important to read some of the statements into the record because it is quite easy for government members to go around and say: "Do not take comments from the opposition on this side of the House seriously. After all, it is just politics and they just oppose for the sake of opposing". That is hardly the case.

Take, for example, what Patrick Johnston of the Canadian Council on Social Development said before the legislative committee:

> I believe one of the real shortcomings of the bill is that it does not recognize the insidious damage that has been done over the last several years to the range of social benefits because of our failure to index them fully to the cost of living. This is just a seepage year after year.

Here is another one from Martha Friendly of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She said:

> We believe this legislation and other government policy initiatives lead us away from the kinds of children's benefits and programs Europeans enjoy, toward which we think we should be moving. It moves us toward the targeted and rather mean-spirited programs of the United States—we argue that Canada's role in the development and promotion of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should lead us as a nation in the direction opposite to that in which we are moving.

Here is one from Richard Shillington, co-author of the *Canadian Fact Book on Poverty*. He said:

> The white paper was written, one can only conclude, by people who thought the more you understood the program the less you would like it. I have been doing policy research for a long time, both as a civil servant and as someone who does word research for groups who appear here. This is a new low.

That is pretty devastating stuff. These are not words made by politicians who are perhaps trying to do something just to exploit legislation, to take some political advantage. These are coming from third parties who are neutral, who are objective and who are coming at this in a serious and responsible way.

This is what Trevor Williams of Family Services Canada said:

> —without indexation this program will continue to slip year after year. It may potentially in the future have no real value whatsoever to the families who are receiving it.

To me, that says volumes.

• (1800)

Here is what Michael Goldberg of the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia said:

> What we're disappointed in is that the bill and the contents don't meet the objectives the bill is intended to achieve—
>
> In 1989 the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion to achieve a goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. We are unclear how this 30 cent solution contributes to that noble goal.

This comes from Lise Corbeil of the National Anti-Poverty Organization. She said:

> We believe that Bill C-80 is flawed and dangerous—we therefore ask your committee to recommend rejection of Bill C-80. The extra $400 million is little when compared to the $3.5 billion siphoned from child benefits since 1985 when partial deindexing of benefits was first introduced.

It is important those comments be put in the parliamentary record.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, the awful truth about the Westray disaster is that we will probably never know the whole truth about the Westray disaster.

The Nova Scotia inquiry now under way will determine with clinical precision the chain of events leading up to the tragic and horrible blast that killed 26 miners. Contrary to repeated claims by the federal government, federal aspects of the Westray disaster may never be examined by that provincial inquiry.

The Nova Scotia government order establishing the provincial inquiry and the provincial statute authorizing that order specifically restrict the inquiry to matters "in relation to which the legislature may make laws". That means every aspect of the disaster beyond the jurisdiction of the Nova Scotia legislature is beyond the scope of the Nova Scotia inquiry. As a result, many matters within federal jurisdiction but nonetheless crucial to an understanding of the disaster may never get the attention they deserve.

These matters include questions like the following: What information regarding both finances and safety did the Mulroney government solicit, receive and consider before the mine was commissioned? What role did the federal government play in making the mine possible and how were the decisions leading to the investment of taxpayers' money made? What are the federal government's current fiscal responsibilities to the mine, its owners and creditors?

None of these important issues can be investigated by the provincial inquiry. Even inquiry commissioner Justice Richard said that: "I have no jurisdiction as a provincial inquiry over documents outside the province". Yet the minister of state indicated in this House people should not worry about this restriction because the government sent certain federal documents to the provincial inquiry anyway. Oh, frabjous day. The government has forwarded documents, lots of them.

Consider the government itself shows which documents to send. It may send more, it may not. It may respond to specific requests from the provincial inquiry for further specific documents, it may not. It may agree to allow members of the government and of the public service to testify before the inquiry, it may not.

In fact, what the Nova Scotia provincial inquiry may learn about the federal government's role in the Westray disaster is precisely as much or as little as the federal government itself chooses. Put another way, those of whom culpability is suspected will have absolute control over any aspect of the only accident inquiry which may confirm or refute those suspicions.

In place of the age-old doctrine of innocent until proven guilty, the government substitutes the wondrous new doctrine of innocent until guilt is admitted. This is macabre and a shameful affront to the memory of those 26 men whose families hoped for simple truth from the inquiry process.

If there was negligence, let it be divulged. If there is guilt, let it be assessed. Most of all, if there is doubt, let it be resolved. If there is confusion, let it be settled. If there are crucial facts, provincial or federal, as yet in darkness, let them be brought forth to the full and cleansing light of day.

We owe it to those who died. We owe it to the families who mourn. We owe it to the communities of workers in the dangerous industry towns that speckle our nation to discover the truth for it is only the truth that will enable

us to take the measures necessary to prevent it all from happening again and again and again.

I again ask the government whether it will now stop trying to hide its own actions behind a provincial inquiry which cannot investigate them and call a federal inquiry which can?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, the hon. member's call for a federal inquiry into this tragedy is entirely unnecessary.

Both Judge Richard and inquiry counsel have stated they are satisfied with the mandate of the provincial inquiry. Indeed, Judge Richard addressed this question directly in Halifax on June 17, 1992 when he said:

> There are no constraints on my perception of the terms of reference. To reinforce that, I had some input into the framing of the terms of reference.

It is clear that those charged with conducting the official inquiry are satisfied and that alone should address the hon. member's concerns. Since it apparently does not, I would draw to his attention the fact that there are two other parallel inquiries going on as well. The Nova Scotia Department of Labour is conducting an inquiry, as it should in circumstances where there is a loss of life in a project for which it has regulatory jurisdiction. Furthermore, the RCMP is conducting its investigation of this incident from the criminal justice perspective.

If all this is still not enough for the hon. member I would remind him that the government has repeatedly stated its intention to co-operate with both the inquiry and this House to the end. We have tabled thousands of pages of documentation outlining the federal government's role as the financial guarantor for the project.

Indeed, we will continue to review the documentation for further release and officials have been available to respond both to the public and to the media since very early on in this particular process.

This project was regulated, licensed and inspected by Nova Scotia provincial government authorities. It would be an inappropriate public policy and a wasteful duplication of effort if we were to interfere in their jurisdiction. The member's claim that the Richard inquiry cannot look into federal involvement is simply wrong. I know when he realizes that he will withdraw his call for further inquiries.

[*Translation*]

PERLEY BRIDGE

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Madam Speaker, I do not know if you ever cross Perley bridge between Hawkesbury and Grenville to go to your riding. Many people and members of this House use this bridge occasionally. I can tell you that the bridge needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

In April 1992, I asked the Minister of Public Works a question, but in his absence, the Minister of Supply and Services answered me to the effect that discussions concerning work on this bridge, which involves the governments of Ontario and Quebec and of course the federal government, were about to conclude. In June 1988, four years ago, the then minister, Hon. Stewart McInnis, said that the bridge would reach the end of its useful life around 1992. Imagine the anxiety of my constituents who are wondering whether the bridge will be closed, whether it is safe and so on.

Since then, we have worked very hard. Plans and a prior environmental review show beyond any doubt that the public need have no concern for environmental safety and that a new bridge could be built along the present route.

• (1810)

On May 1, 1992, not so long ago, the minister wrote to me to say that with the change of government in Ontario, in particular, the new deputy ministers had to meet to ratify an agreement in principle on cost sharing, project management and the start date so that our constituents on both sides of the river, in Hawkesbury and in Grenville, could know what to expect. It is well-known that building a new bridge of this kind involves many factors. Many business people who had shown interest in the past in coming to spend or invest in our region have put that on hold pending developments on the Perley bridge.

I hope that the minister's parliamentary secretary will be able this evening to give us specific dates on when this work will begin and everything surrounding the building of this new bridge. In closing, I would like to add that huge amounts are being spent to maintain the bridge and keep it open to traffic. In spite of that, the people who use it are always afraid of going down with it one day. This is practically impossible, because the federal gov-

ernment, which is a good government, ensures every day that this bridge is completely safe for users.

So I eagerly await the response from my colleague, the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry): Madam Speaker, as our colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau pointed out so well, this issue is a concern for the federal Department of Public Works. The minister has mentioned how remarkably the hon. member has worked to see this issue through and we have spoken of it several times.

Of course, the bridge was built in 1931. There have been consultations and studies, in particular on its life expectancy and on the amounts that the department spends to maintain it, almost a million dollars annually. As our colleague pointed out, it is the only bridge on the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Montreal. It connects Quebec and Ontario. As the hon. member said, there have been discussions between the three governments, namely those in Quebec City, Toronto and Ottawa.

Our colleague also mentioned that meetings were held in early May. Apparently, agreements in principle were reached. I think that my colleague will be pleased that the issue is well on its way to resolution, not only on paper but in actual fact. The minister asked me to reassure the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau that real results should come within a time frame that will be respected.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, on May 4, 1992, I raised a very important question in this House with the Secretary of State, namely whether the federal government had finally reached agreements with the provinces on the minorities' constitutional right to manage their educational institutions.

Although these are legal, constitutional rights, the provincial governments' political will to implement them is non-existent in many cases.

According to the 1986 census, there were nearly 393,500 school-age children who had at least one parent whose mother tongue was English in Quebec, or French in the other provinces and territories of Canada. A breakdown of this figure shows that Ontario had the most with 34.5 per cent, or 135,600 students, followed by Quebec and New Brunswick. However, Ontario has still not passed legislation giving full control over educational institutions to the minority and thus assuring its young people a French education.

The Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities, Mr. Allen, told the latest assembly of the French Canadian Association of Ontario, ACFO, in June, that a new agreement in principle between the federal and provincial governments for funding French-language colleges would be concluded. The official announcement has still not been made and I raise the question today, in response to the expectations that Ontario's minority community has already expressed.

In answer to the question that I asked him on May 4, can the Secretary of State tell us today whether he has in fact met with the Ontario Minister of Education and whether agreements on education have been concluded between Ontario and Canada? Have bilateral agreements been signed with British Columbia, for example, or Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba? As we know, these agreements should have been the subject of a fairly important announcement, but they are slow in coming.

Where are we today? That is what I ask the parliamentary secretary. Are the federal government and the provinces still negotiating? Has nothing been signed yet? Has no agreement been concluded to date? Is it possible that, nearly five months after giving the minority groups hope that an agreement was imminent, we are still waiting today?

We are about to go into a referendum campaign; a constitutional agreement was initialed or actually reached in Charlottetown. The francophone communities outside Quebec and the English-speaking communities in Quebec must know the government's position on federal support for education. Is the federal government, which participated in the Charlottetown agreement, ready to say today that it promises to ensure the development of official-language communities in Canada and to help the provinces, which are always reluctant, always hesitant, always lagging behind, to set up education systems made for and managed by the minority? The

question is straightforward. I would like to have an answer that is as straightforward and direct.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to answer my hon. colleague. I will try to do so as briefly and completely as possible, with the little time available to us.

We have been questioned about our commitment as a federal government to the concept and principle of two official languages in Canada. I can say categorically on this point that no other federal government has been more attached to this principle than ours, and our commitment remains as firm as in the past. Of course, the other governments also have an important role to play in this field.

In the constitutional debate of the past several months, as the hon. member said so well just now, the federal government's position has remained the same. The Canadian Constitution should contain a clear and precise clause calling on the governments to promote the official-language minorities and their development. We must all do our part, of course. We want the other governments to co-operate, but we have no intention of imposing on them essential responsibilities which are ours as the government of all Canadians.

I now come to the question of lack of teachers in some French-language schools outside Quebec. Our government is aware of the problems in this regard. We have shown our interest by ordering a study on it through the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada. The study by the firm of Pageau, Skuce and Vézina identified some areas where the problems are particularly acute. The authors concluded that an unequal distribution of teachers and not an over-all shortage accounts for the real shortages in some regions, especially in some parts of Ontario and in western Canada. There are also shortages in some specialized subjects like science and music.

The study also shows that the distribution of teachers leads to another problem. Given the local shortages, teachers were naturally brought in from other parts of the country. This can create two difficulties. First, these teachers may not want to stay away from their region of origin for very long. Second, they might be unfamiliar with the realities and cultural needs of the local francophone population.

The government is very concerned with this whole issue, and we are now considering with great interest ways to co-operate in seeking solutions with several provinces and territories, but without infringing on their jurisdiction over education.

[*English*]

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, last April I raised a number of issues with this government concerning its lack of leadership in preventing the consumption of tobacco products. Canada at one time used to be the leader in the world in its program of health education, labelling and taxation, as a three-pronged approach to reducing cigarette consumption. However, the government has abandoned its plan to raise the legal age of smoking to 18; it has forestalled its plans to insist on more effective warning labels on cigarette packages; and it has reneged on its commitment to stop the smuggling of Canadian cigarettes back into Canada by the implementation of an export tax.

• (1820)

In looking at the first two issues, we know increasingly from the documentation in other countries, the World Health Organization, and the tobacco industry that they must recruit cigarette smokers before they reach the age of 18. If they do not recruit them before they reach the age of 18, people normally will not start smoking. We are asking that the age be increased to 18.

We have also been able to document that warning labels are one effective method of reducing cigarette consumption. The government has the opportunity to ensure that warning labels are more effective, that they are colour contrasted and are sharp to the eye, but it has backed off on this. It has the power to implement it regardless of whether there has been a court challenge.

I would like to contrast this with what Australia has done. Australia has banned all advertising for tobacco. It has stopped the promotion of tobacco products by all tobacco companies so they cannot promote cultural events or sports events. It has been determined that all of these are designed to recruit youth into the tobacco smoking market.

The same information has been presented in this House by myself based on memos supplied by the tobacco companies about their advertising campaigns being directed to young people below the legal age limit.

The government's flip-flop on the export tax is very obvious. It brought in the export tax. Sales of cigarettes for export, which are basically smuggled back into this country, dropped from 730,000 to 146,000 and then to 252,000 cigarettes a month. The government removed it, saying the companies had decided they would have a way and it jumped up to 958,000 cigarettes and the next month, June, to over one million.

In fact, even in the month of July in which there was a slight reduction it was still four times the amount of cigarettes that it was in 1986 and 100 times when compared to cut tobacco. This government is going to lose $800 million in lost tax revenue because of the removal of the export tax. Provincial governments are probably going to lose a like amount. The World Health Organization has had to revise its figures on the number of Canadians who die each year from tobacco products. Each year, 38,000 to 48,000 Canadians will die from the use of tobacco products. The increase has been caused because more and more women are using tobacco products.

Why is this government abandoning this world leadership? Is it because it is under the influence of that good friend of the Prime Minister, Bill Neville?

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I thought my hon. colleague would stand up and congratulate this government on what it has done with regard to tobacco.

As a member of Parliament and a non-smoker today, I could say to my hon. colleague that a lot of people in my area lost their jobs in the tobacco industry. I feel very sorry for them, but I will not smoke for any reason.

We were the first government to do something about non-smoking on aeroplanes. World-wide after six months they all accepted our law on which we are a leader in the industry.

In response to the $8 per carton export tax that was removed on April 8, the Minister of National Revenue announced the additional measure to counteract tobacco smuggling, including the new marking and identification code on products, warning labels, sales limit for duty-free shops, enhanced government industry co-operation, deployment of additional customs and RCMP resources, and higher penalties for smugglers.

[*Translation*]

At the same time, the minister stopped collection of the export tax, convinced that these measures and the initiatives he had announced on February 12 were a better way to deal with the problem.

I believe that once these measures are fully implemented, we will have largely dealt with the smuggling problem. Of course, putting all these measures in place takes time, and it will take even more time to get concrete results.

This fall, new labels will be put on cigarette packages for the duty-free market. These changes will be implemented gradually during the next few months, starting with the major brands. The new labelling will make it much easier to deal with smuggling on the Canadian market. Tobacco companies are willing to share all information on tobacco sales with excise officials who will then be able to make sure, with the co-operation of the RCMP, that exported tobacco products are delivered only to bona fide customers in the United States.

Officials at the Department of National Revenue are working closely with their counterparts at the Department of Finance. For instance—the hon. member gave a number of figures earlier, but I want to correct them—Customs and Excise officials estimate that in 1991, up to one-third of tobacco products smuggled into this country came from ships and aircraft stores.

The changes announced by the minister in February have had the effect of tightening supervision of warehousing, distribution and sales of these products. The results have been immediate and very conclusive.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, I will have to interrupt the parliamentary secretary to give five minutes to his colleague. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Adjournment Debate

[*English*]

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise today to continue a discussion started in the House in early May on the question of child poverty. At that time when I asked the Prime Minister a question I became concerned about what had happened in the area of child poverty since last December.

The child poverty issue is one that we are all committed to in this House. It dates back a few years to when all the parties endorsed a motion in a debate led by the former leader of the NDP, Mr. Broadbent, on the question of child poverty. We all made a commitment in this House that by the year 2000 we would be making a full effort to eliminate child poverty.

Subsequently, there has been an incident in which the issue of child poverty has been intertwined with the issue of public relations and partisanship and the momentum of a few years ago has been lost in this House.

I raise the question to remind the House of the commitment we all made and to make sure that the government understands the frustration made at the community level by the lack of action on child poverty.

For example, a simple indicator which is sometimes deceptive but is nevertheless an indicator we should listen to and follow is the number of children using food banks. If there has been one overwhelming shift in our cities since 1990 it is the number of children who have to rely on food banks each month.

When I visited the food banks in my constituency, particularly the one at Knox United Church in Central Park, I was struck by the number of people lining up three hours before the official opening on a Tuesday morning to get food and how many had to bring their children to help carry the food home. It is a tremendous and sad change.

I asked the government to explain why it was not consulting with the stakeholders and why it was not consulting more with the social policy groups that had concerns about Bill C-80 and why it was not discussing this more with the provincial governments. To my surprise, I found that the government could not present to the House what its consultation plan had been nor did it feel that it had to be any more extensive.

Subsequently, we find ourselves in a debate on child poverty without knowing why the stakeholders are so opposed to it and why the provincial governments have remained silent.

I hope to use this opportunity through the parliamentary secretary to get more information as to what the strategy of this government is to deal with child poverty.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I would just like to remind all members that child poverty is a major concern for this government and children are our most precious resource. Anything that affects the children of this country affects all of us.

In the recent budget the federal government proposed a new child tax benefit which is going to consolidate the existing family allowance, the child tax credit and the dependent child credit into a single monthly benefit beginning January 1994. It is targeted, it is simpler and it puts an extra $2.1 billion in the hands of Canadian families. It builds on existing federal programs which total $15 billion annually for children and families. Brighter Futures is another integral step that was recently announced, and within it the child development initiative which is going to address the needs of children at risk. This is $500 million that is going to be put forth by the government.

We will work in consultation—and I am glad my colleague brought that up—with the provinces, the territories, native groups and key community leaders on initiatives that will be specifically targeted at helping young children at risk. We will also be dealing with poor living conditions, ill health, abuse, family violence or neglect.

Canada's action plan for children was another step in Brighter Futures and it fulfils Canada's commitment from the world summit, which was co-chaired by the Prime Minister in September 1990. The action plan for children provides a framework for action for children in Canada, and indeed all around the world.

In February 1991 the federal government made a four-year commitment of $136 million to help eliminate family violence.

Therefore, while social assistance and social services are a matter of provincial jurisdiction this federal government cost-shares eligible provincial expenditures under the Canada Assistance Plan. Annual federal expenditures currently amount to $6.5 billion.

We all have to recognize our duty to find innovative and new solutions to address child poverty. No, the momentum has not been forgotten. Indeed, we are utilizing the financial resources that we have to the best advantage and targeting the children in poverty.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: 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 6.30 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 15, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

TABLING OF NOMINATION

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, pursuant to Standing Order 32, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a nomination which was recently made by the government.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

20TH ANNUAL MEETING OF CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

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 for the 20th annual meeting between the delegations of the Canadian and European Parliaments in Strasbourg, France June 8 to June 12.

I want to comment on page 15 of that report because all members of the House of Commons that attended the meeting from both sides have said that the minister of foreign affairs should look into what is happening at the European Parliament *vis–à–vis* Canadian trade matters in agriculture and forestry.

Clearly the message to our counterparts in the European Parliament is not being carried. They are not aware of Canada's agricultural policies and stand or its forestry policies and stand.

We urge the minister to get her delegates in Brussels to work with the European parliamentarians so they can better understand Canada's positions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATION OF 49TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour this morning to present the forty–ninth report of the Standing Committee on House Management and, pursuant to Standing Order 113(1), this report is deemed to be adopted once it is tabled.

* * *

[*English*]

DECADE OF THE BRAIN ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–358, an act respecting the decade of the brain.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce an act that calls on the Parliament of Canada to declare the 1990s the decade of the brain.

This follows a request by the World Health Organization for all nations to recognize the exciting advances made in correcting brain disorders and the need for more research. The bill is designed to focus public attention on this area of medicine and I call on all members of the House to support this initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois) Mr. Nicholson moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS ABOUT PERSONS INTERNED DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Laval–Est) moved for leave to introduce a bill entitled an Act to provide for the destruction of records concerning persons who were interned during the Second World War.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed to be adopted.

• (1010)

[*English*]

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I present this bill, an act to provide for the destruction of records concerning persons who were interned during the Second World War. After 52 years, the government and the people of Canada recognize that the persons who were interned in Canada, those whose civil liberties were violated during the Second World War because of their country of origin, are entitled to the restoration of their reputation and their dignity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this bill because some of them are still alive, including one who is here today and I am very proud of that as a Canadian.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Della Noce moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed to be adopted.

Bill read the first time and ordered printed.

* * *

[*English*]

HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–360, an act to amend the Hazardous Products Act (hazardous displays).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, last year the 18 month old daughter of a constituent of mine was nearly blinded when she tripped and fell into a shoe display rack whose metal hooks projected six inches from the peg–board.

A search of the database of the Health Protection Branch revealed that six other children have sustained injuries to the eye due to such hooks on peg–boards in stores.

An unsatisfactory response from the store in question prompted us to seek redress to such a potentially dangerous situation. While there is legislation which deals with product safety, there is a significant gap in the legislation concerning display safety.

This bill attempts to close the gap between product and display safety by adding a section to the Hazardous Products Act which would make it an offence to display goods in a manner that is likely to be hazardous to children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Ms. Clancy moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

PETITIONS

REFUGEES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many constituents of the Ottawa–Carleton region.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to ask the government to exercise compassion when dealing with refugees, in particular, those from Somalia and other countries around the world which have civil problems as well as suffering difficulties. They are asking the government to use as much compassion as possible.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN TOUR

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present to the House a petition circulated by the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Selkirk, Manitoba, in my constituency as part of the Proud to be Canadian tour.

Quite a number of members have presented similar petitions calling upon this House to endorse the strength and pride of our country as being proud to be Canadian and to stress the importance of national unity.

On behalf of the constituents of Selkirk—Red River and in particular the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Selkirk, Manitoba, I would like to present this petition.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today on an issue that I have spoken on a number of times in this House, that is the Three Gorges Dam project on the Yangtze River in China.

The petitioners, 100 in number, have asked this House and Parliament to pass necessary legislation to prevent any further involvement by the Government of Canada in the Three Gorges Dam project.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to present a petition regarding the goods and services tax.

The petitioners point out the ludicrous situation in which the goods and services tax is applied to feminine sanitary products such as tampons and pads. They ask therefore that the Parliament of Canada consider removing the goods and services tax from these products.

VIOLENCE

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36. I continue to receive petitions signed by hundreds of my constituents calling upon Parliament to accept legislation designed to eliminate violence against women and children.

They are especially asking for an emphasis on abuser rehabilitation. They want to concentrate special effort on the training of police, lawyers, court workers and judges to help them become knowledgeable about women and child abuse, and to focus public attention on this very important and long ignored problem.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have the responsibility and privilege to present a petition signed by many residents of the ridings of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

The petitioners point out that the criminal justice system needs to be revamped in light of the violence against persons and the way in which sentencing takes place, the way in which the Parole Act is applied, and in light of the whole approach to violence against individuals.

Therefore, these petitioners call on the Government of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act of 1972 and the Parole Act.

REFUGEES

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the House of Commons in the interest of the residents of Canada, and particularly from my riding, who wish to draw the attention of the House to the social and political conditions that are so unstable in the world's countries, particularly in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Croatia and Somalia and which are causing heartache and great problems. Thousands of these refugees as well as their families waiting here for them are trapped in a processing backlog. These refugees are suffering personal and economic hardship. Their futures are undecided as they await the slow process. These families are divided and separated for far too long.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to step up its actions on refugee cases and exercise compassion in the interests of family reunification, particularly for those from these disturbed places around the world.

JUSTICE

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I have a large number of petitions signed by Canadians all across this country who are objecting strongly to the treatment being accorded to Christine Lamont and David Spencer. They have been sentenced to 28 years in a Brazilian prison and have suffered miscarriages of justice, cruel and unusual treatment in

the Brazilian prisons, and discrimination in sentencing and parole.

They call upon the government to exercise the one thing that can bring them back to Canada and that is expulsion. They are beseeching the Secretary of State for External Affairs to request the expulsion of Christine Lamont and David Spencer from this Brazilian prison so they can return to Canada.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have two petitions to present.

The first one is signed by a large number of people, particularly seniors. They point out that under Bill C-22 the price of both new and existing drugs has increased substantially. They call upon the government to not proceed with Bill C-91 and in fact to repeal Bill C-22.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): The second petition is signed by a number of residents from within my own community of Surrey North, particularly a number of prominent people from the Sikh community.

They point out that family class and assisted relative immigrants have historically been an important part of immigration in Canada, and that family class and assisted relatives have persons in Canada who can assist them with employment, housing and the learning of Canadian languages and customs.

This petition calls upon the government to not proceed with its present proposals for the amending of the Immigration Act but to continue to give family class and assisted relatives the first priority for all immigration to Canada.

• (1020)

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition on behalf of seniors in Canada, but particularly seniors in the Dawson Court home in the riding of Thunder Bay—Nipigon, which I represent.

In essence, of the grants or subsidies they receive they are only allowed to keep $112 per month for the necessities of life. They are asking this government to foster a program.

As a result of the extra added cost they are now facing because of the restrictions being placed on all additional medicare plans and drugs they are asking this government to support and foster a move that will increase the subsidy that is retained by the seniors, not only in Ontario, but throughout Canada.

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that deals with the inconsistencies and contradictions of the current Income Tax Act.

This is one example. If one has receipted child care there is a particular deduction, but if one of the two partners in a marriage decides to stay home to take care of the children then there is no deduction.

These people find that this is unfortunate and that it needs to be corrected.

They also point out that there are a number of programs that lead to some confusion. They want greater simplification.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my other petition comes from petitioners who ask that Parliament ensure that the CRTC carefully regulate the use of foul language in radio and television programs.

These petitioners believe that it is not necessary to use inappropriate language to inform or entertain, and that quite often it runs contrary to the values they have in their home and to the efforts they undertake with their children.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from people who deplore the reductions and the cuts to the support of education from the federal government to the provinces.

They feel it is contrary to pleas to increase national productivity and to enhance competitiveness.

They point out that if we are not generous in supporting education today we will pay a big price in the future.

VIOLENCE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present today on behalf of my constituents of Kamloops, B.C.

The first is similar to the one my friend from Nickel Belt presented. The petitioners point out their concerns about the justice system and the problems attached to it particularly in terms of victims of violence.

They ask that Parliament consider recognizing that crimes of violence against persons are serious and abhorrent to society and that we consider amending the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act of 1972 and the Parole Act accordingly.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on behalf of a number of residents of the Sikh community in Kamloops who point out that family class and assisted relative immigrants have historically been an important part of Canadian immigration.

They point out that this particular class of immigrants is important because they can be assisted in finding employment and housing and so on much more easily. Therefore they are asking the government to give applications for family class and assisted relatives top priority for immigration to Canada.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, this petition is an interesting one. It is signed by a number of public servants who point out that the government has failed to follow its own law in terms of negotiating with its employees.

They are calling upon the House of Commons to have a free vote to express its lack of confidence in the government. This is an interesting petition.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, finally I have a petition signed by a number of veterans from Kamloops. They simply raise their concern that current levels of services provided to veterans through the Veterans Independence Program may be under some type of review.

They simply want Parliament to ensure that there is no increase in charges to veterans for board and lodging in institutions or for long-term care.

I see the minister here. I am sure that he will ensure that if there is any problem it will be rectified.

EDUCATION

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I am rising under Standing Order 36 to present a petition duly certified by the clerk.

This petition is signed by over 150 Canadians who are concerned about education standards and how they are handled.

They wish us as a country to be more internationally competitive and want us to have a better skilled and well trained labour force. They are particularly concerned about the 38 per cent rate of functional illiteracy in this country.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament in support of a national education standard in consultation with provincial governments to help rectify some of these difficulties that I have mentioned.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to submit a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, signed by numerous Canadians who recognize that the government is moving Bill C-91, an act to end licensing of no-name generic drugs in Canada and an act that will allow brand name drug companies to market their drugs without competition from generics for periods up to 20 years.

The petitioners argue that the price of both new and existing drugs has already increased substantially to individuals and provincial and private drug plans since 1987 when another bill, Bill C-22, allowed up to a 10-year period for no generic competition.

The petitioners call upon Parliament not to proceed with Bill C-91 as tabled. They say that will allow Canadians to have the full benefit of lower priced generic drugs and provincial and private drug plans can better serve Canadians without being forced to charge higher fees and/or provide less coverage.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition that was circulated by the

Kinsmen in Thompson, Manitoba. It is a petition to promote pride in being Canadian and it is to the honourable House of Commons in Parliament assembled.

Whereas it is appropriate to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada; whereas Canadians are normally a reserved people often concealing their patriotic feelings; and whereas, Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada have created an opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the Proud To Be Canadian project during the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Confederation in 1992, we the undersigned, your petitioners, hereby support the Proud To Be Canadian project as an opportunity to nurture a positive life-long relationship with our heritage and our flag and to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

It is very appropriate at this time that this petition be presented to Parliament.

BILL C-327

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present four petitions to the House, and they are personally gratifying.

These petitioners from across Canada are in support of Bill C-327. It is the employee ownership bill that will be debated for the second hour of the second reading this evening at five o'clock p.m.

The operative clause is that Bill C-327, an act to assist employees to purchase a controlling shareholding in the corporation that employs them, contains amendments to the Income Tax Act which will allow worker tax credits specifically for the purpose of purchasing the companies that employ them.

I think that anyone who reads the newspapers and pays attention to the media would find out that each and every day it becomes a more and more common occurrence that employees are looking to purchase a part thereof or the entire work place in which they work.

These petitions come from Sardis and Chilliwack, British Columbia, from my home riding of Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Toronto, Ontario; Regina, Saskatchewan; St. John's, Newfoundland; Yellowknife and Fort Smith, Northwest Territories.

I would encourage the other two parties to support the bill when it becomes votable in the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-80

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 move, pursuant to Standing Order 78(3):

> That, in relation to Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted for the consideration of report stage and one sitting day for the consideration of the third reading stage of the bill; and that, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted for the report stage consideration and on the day allotted for the third reading stage consideration of the bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this order and, in turn, every question necessary to dispose of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

• (1030)

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 agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 226*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Greene
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Joncas
Kempling
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Moore
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Sparrow
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)—99

Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dick
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hudon
Johnson
Jourdenais
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Porter
Reid
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Soetens
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Vincent
White

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Anawak
Arseneault

Althouse
Angus
Assad

Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Venne
Wood

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Benjamin
Boudria
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Heap
Hunter
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—60

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

• (1110)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, September 14, consideration of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowance Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowance Act, as reported with amendments by a legislative committee; and Motions Nos. 23, 25, 26 and 27 of Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing), and Motions Nos. 28 29, 30 and 31 of Mr. Walker.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on this amendment and on this bill, particularly, after the actions of this government which has imposed as we know time allocation on this bill at report stage.

Time allocation was also used at second reading and will be used, of course, at third reading. This government is very anxious to show Canadians that their word is not to be taken too seriously.

I want to quote the Prime Minister on August 18, 1984: "Universal social programs are a sacred trust not to be tampered with". The family allowance program, instituted by this Parliament, is going to be abolished with this Bill C–80. Liberals believe this bill is flawed and the government should do the honourable thing and withdraw it.

The stated purpose of Bill C–80 is to consolidate three existing child benefits: the family allowance, the refundable child tax credit, and the non–refundable child tax credit.

Instead Bill C–80 will replace these three programs with one single monthly benefit which will begin in January 1993 if the bill receives Royal Assent. I hope it does not. This legislation means the end, as I said, to universality of family allowances.

Canadians were not consulted by this government about ending universal access to this social benefit. One can question the integrity of this government and its word and ask what is next. What is in its mind? Pensions maybe? Medicare? Who knows. Everything in this government's right–wing agenda is up for grabs and can be taken away from Canadians.

In truth this bill is an election ploy, an attempt by the Conservative government to pass off a flawed bill as a positive step toward alleviating child poverty. I want to get to that because we have reports after reports.

I have one here adopted by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa—Carleton and addressed to the Prime Minister dated August 31, 1992. It states: "One in six Canadian children lives in poverty, poor children experience a 50 per cent higher death rate from all causes, health conditions for our aboriginal children in Canada have been compared to those of the Third World, and their average life expectancy is eight years lower than the national average".

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian adolescents. The high school dropout rate, which averages about 27 per cent across Canada, is over 90 per cent in some areas and among some groups of young people. This is disastrous record. An estimated one in four girls and one in ten boys is a victim of sexual abuse. It goes on and on and on.

There is no child policy with this government. There is absolutely no heart for the problems that are at this time striking our youth, our young people.

I do not have much time so I will just relate some of the problems with Bill C–80. For example, the government says these changes will increase assistance for children over the next five years by $2.5 billion. Nonsense. One should ask how much child benefits would have grown without these changes. Between 1986–87 and 1990–91, family allowance payments grew by $275 million and refundable child tax credits by $750 million. This is smoke and mirrors.

The new child tax benefit will be based on family income as reported in income tax. This means it could take 12 to 18 months for the amount to change to respond to possibly dramatic changes in family income. This could present a serious problem for some families.

• (1120)

Third, the government conveniently forgets to mention that through partial indexation the Tories already took $3.5 billion out of the child benefit system between 1986 and 1991. In five years $3.5 billion has been cut from family benefits. The benefit is indexed only for the part of inflation exceeding 3 per cent. What will the government do to ensure that the value of the child tax benefit does not erode through further inflation? Nothing. It is heartless.

For women who receive low salaries or work part time, this bill means that after paying their work expenses and day care that they will probably make more money staying home. This type of incentive is a step backward from the right of women to work and to economic independence.

These measures in Bill C–80 offer very little to middle class families. A two–earner family with an annual income of between $30,000 and $40,000 will receive additional benefits of less than $4 a month. With inflation at 3 per cent a year, this benefit will disappear within a year.

Canada's poorest families who are on social assistance will receive absolutely no benefit from this measure. There are 2.5 million Canadians now on social assistance.

Furthermore, C–80 is far from being adequate compensation for the government's callous abandonment of its promise for a national day care program. Where is that program which was promised in the last election? That is another one of those commitments that was not kept by this government.

Let me quote the reaction of various groups to the new child tax benefit act, Bill C–80. Gerard Kennedy of the Canadian Association of Food Banks called it "the most deceptive and cruel thing coming from government that we have seen in a long time. It is a tremendous blow to the hopes of low income people". Sue Wolstenholme of the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association states: "Either the federal government still does not grasp the problems of child poverty or child care which Canadian families face or they really do believe that they can trick the public with yet another illusionary tactic".

The government is admittedly and deservedly ashamed of Bill C–80. It wants it passed through this House so quickly that it imposes limits on debate so that people will not get the benefit of understanding this bill, of studying this bill and taking it for what it is worth, absolutely nothing.

The government has forced this bill through the House at second reading, imposed closure and forced it through committee and has forced it through report stage today and tomorrow to get the bill. Why? It is because it is ashamed of this bill. It should be ashamed of this bill.

The government knows that this bill does not address the vast problem of child poverty in this country.

Tory economic mismanagement with unemployment now up to 11.6 per cent has resulted in thousands of individual Canadians being in difficult situations financially and otherwise.

At one time it seemed that the government would take the problem of child poverty seriously. In 1989, remember, the government gave its support to a motion calling for the elimination of child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Instead, the number of children living in poverty has increased. In 1989 there were 863,000 poor children in Canada. In 1990, one year after, the figure was 1,013,000. That is a jump of 150,000 in a year. We can safely assume that these numbers increased throughout 1991 and into 1992, with layoffs continuing as they are in this country.

Mr. Speaker, you have indicated to me that my time is up. I will just read one last quote from the columnist Leonard Shifrin. This is what Mr. Shifrin had to say: "If there was a Pulitzer Prize for flim–flam, the Tory snow job masquerading as a budget white paper would win hands down. Despite what it seems to say, basic benefits are not really being raised for the poorest families".

In my riding of Ottawa—Vanier there are poor children, there are poor women, there are poor people and yet this government in this measure of Bill C–80 is showing absolutely no sensitivity. It has no heart. We will vote against this bill and fight this legislation.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, this is quite a sad day in the House of Commons as far as I am concerned. I have seen a number of sad days in this House since my election in 1988. Those sad days include many budget days when this government has dealt with programs that affect the quality of life of people in my constituency and across Canada in a very negative way. I have seen days when the government has taken steps to actually remove benefits that Canadians have come to count on to ensure that their businesses, their families and their country can survive.

This day is one that I never thought I would see either as an ordinary Canadian citizen or as a member of this House elected to represent the interests of the people of The Battlefords—Meadow Lake in northwest Saskatchewan.

Here we have a situation where this Bill C–80 will remove the family allowance benefit that has served Canadians since the mid–1940s, nearly half a century, and is now providing some $2 billion of assistance, primarily for families with children. The Canadian people are probably going to get a surprise in January because of this program.

I want to make very it very clear here today that I do not support Bill C–80. I do not support the removal of the family allowance program. I do not support the action the government is taking today to railroad the bill that eliminates the family allowance program through this House.

I know that in January my office will be receiving hundreds of phone calls from Canadians living in The Battlefords—Meadow Lake constituency, wanting to know where their family allowance cheque is for that month.

This summer the government railroaded Bill C–80 through committee stage. It ran this through so quickly that many groups that wanted to speak to it were unable

to do so. Those that did speak, spoke strongly against the inclusion of many of the arguments in Bill C–80.

Today we have just gone through a motion to limit the speaking time on this bill, all in an effort to deal with this matter while the country is locked in a debate over the national referendum. If there was any way this government could have orchestrated a clean way of dealing with this bill without subjecting itself to a tremendous amount of opposition from across this country, it has found it in dealing with it this week in the House of Commons.

This is not a bill that will address child poverty, as the government says. We all recognize that one in six children in this country are living in poverty. It is a deplorable situation for young children and youth throughout Canada. It is a comment on the government's economic agenda that has been in place since this government's first election in 1984, an agenda that began with the previous government and the previous government's attack on some of the social programs.

More important, what is happening here is that we are creating a situation whereby we are sustaining the stereotype Canadians have about this place, this institution and about parliamentarians.

• (1130)

When governments take action such as this government is taking on the family allowance bill, railroading it through during the summer and during a period of time when Canadians' attention is diverted elsewhere, it is to sustain the public's perception that this place cannot be trusted, that politicians, Parliament and government are doing things that will jeopardize the ordinary Canadian's ability to survive the daily rigours out there in the countryside. I have known this from conversations with my constituents for most of the last couple of years. It is a process of distrust that began quite some time ago and has continued through this government's use of bringing in the GST, the goods and services tax, at a time when the Canadian people were saying they did not want these additional taxes. The Canadian public has responded by reducing spending in this country and throwing tourism, small business and manufacturing into jeopardy because consumer spending is not there.

People are not prepared to provide any more taxes to this government and they feel the whole tax system is a threat to their ability to earn income and to provide for their families. We see this fear that Canadians have about the security of their income as they respond to matters that relate to pension income, income that is earned in the workplace, the declining value of the dollar that is earned in the workplace, the increasing costs of going to school and providing education for young people, the poor response of governments to crises in the fishery, in agriculture, in the mining and processing sectors and, most recently, the determination of this government to sell the North American free trade agreement to all of us at a time when we are saying that the free trade agreement with the United States has failed us. The government is simply creating one situation after another in which the Canadian people's response is they do not like what this government is doing, they do not trust this government and therefore they do not trust the institution of Parliament or any of those people who are working within that institution.

It is a threat not only to the well–being of Canadians but to the well–being of this institution which we must rely on for generations to come because we live in a democratic system, a system in which we understand the value of representation for the well–being of Canadians. When we throw that system into jeopardy, we are throwing into jeopardy our ability to respond in times of crisis and even in good times for Canadians.

I remember back in 1944 when the Saskatchewan people radically changed the face of this country by voting for and supporting the first socialist government in North America. Tommy Douglas was elected in Saskatchewan to lead that particular government. One of the things that guided Tommy through his years as premier and much of the philosophy of this party was his belief that people do not need governments in good times but they need governments in bad times. What governments do when times are good is prepare for the bad times so that we can sustain and rebuild a breaking and deteriorating economy and programs.

What is happening here is we have a government that did not provide that safety net during the good times. We have had some good times in this country, at the beginning of this government's term in office. Nothing was put away. We built debts and now we are trying to find ways to eliminate those debts by reducing the things that this country needs so desperately during the tough times. Canadians do need government in tough times. We need it in the fishery, we need it in the farming sector. Canadian families need the government during

the tough times to support them when they cannot support themselves.

The elimination of the family allowance, the elimination of the tax deduction that is part of this bill and the replacement of it with a program that does not make a whole lot of sense to me or to any of the witnesses who appeared at the committee stage are simply more indications that this government is not prepared to be there to help Canadians during the tough times.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record with respect to this bill and some of its amendments because I believe this is a critical piece of legislation that is being rammed through at a time when we are not being given the opportunity to explain it adequately to Canadians.

Some of you will recall this quote: "Universal social programs are a sacred trust not to be tampered with". That was made by Brian Mulroney on August 18, 1984.

It is rather interesting. Clearly universality is no longer a sacred trust. I suspect the Prime Minister would be saying he is not tampering with them.

[*Translation*]

"I am crushing them and eliminating them altogether." So in a way, he is right.

[*English*]

He is not tampering with them anymore. He is eliminating them.

People are upset that roughly eight years ago that statement was made and eight years later it is a complete reversal.

There is another thing that is upsetting Canadians with respect to this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, did you know that time allocation has been imposed 39 times since this government came to power in 1984, and closure 21 times? The government has tried to restrict debate a total of 60 times on key legislation, key issues, questions that are important to Canadians. If we look at the history of the Parliament of Canada, it seems that previously this happened a total of only 10 times, compared with 60 times under this government. These attempts to restrict the speaking time of members in this House are absolutely incredible.

[*English*]

The other thing that is bothering Canadians is that they see this, although the government has been able to fool some of them as an election ploy. There are time limitations imposed on the debate. We are being prevented from discussing this.

There were a few public hearings during the heat of the summer months. They were limited as well. The government is passing this legislation at a time when people are preoccupied with two major questions: the unity of this country and economic questions that we have never seen before; questions of unemployment, questions of social assistance, questions of food banks, questions of bankruptcies. During that period of time the government is trying to get this legislation through.

Hopefully, with the few minutes we have available to each and every one of us who wants to speak against this bill, we can explain to Canadians what is happening. There has been $3.5 billion taken out of support to Canadian families and $400 million put in. Clearly, that is not fair.

Families living on welfare will not get one penny more. I find that unfortunate because surely they are the families that need the most assistance. There will be one million families that will be net losers. The working poor will get, according to the estimates that were given to me, roughly $42 a month. It was the Minister of National Health and Welfare who said that is was better than nothing.

Yes, it is a little better than nothing but surely it is inadequate because it does not address the needs of children who are living in poverty. It does not recognize that if we do not meet that challenge today, we will have to come to grips with it later at a much higher cost in terms of crime, unemployment, social assistance and frustrations on the part of those Canadians who will feel that they were not given the opportunity to live and grow up in a kind of atmosphere that they could have contributed fully to Canadian society.

There is another disturbing element to this. The old family allowances program is now gone forever.

• (1140)

The new program will be starting at the beginning of the next year. For a period of time, a few months, there will be additional moneys made available but they are not really additional moneys.

That is made to entice Canadians, to make them believe that there is something here that there is not. Why was it done? Clearly, to try to get re-elected. I find this shocking. I find this so misleading that it angers me as it angers a number of Canadians.

I can well imagine that there was another telephone conversation on this item that went something like this:

[*Translation*]

"We should limit debate. We should make sure public hearings are held in the summer. We should be absolutely sure this bill is adopted when people are distracted by other priorities such as the Constitution, the referendum and economic issues".

[*English*]

If there was a call made, and there was, with respect to what the strategy would be with the North American free trade agreement, trying to discredit people who would oppose it, clearly there were discussions as to how this particular bill would be pushed, rushed and rammed through Parliament.

It is unfortunate that this is happening because it discredits the government in its efforts to attempt, for example, to bring about a sort of constitutional renewal and to have the question decided with some sort of finality in a positive sense with the referendum.

Some people may ask that since I am from the opposition, what could I say that is anything but negative. I applaud the fact that there are going to be fewer programs because I think there is too much complexity out there.

However, let us not lose sight of the fact that because we made that little bit of inroad on that point it does not address the major question. The major question is what are the needs of Canadian children and Canadian youth? My colleagues have given some of the statistics. I will not repeat them but let me say what third party people are saying about this agreement.

Ken Battle from the Caledon Social Policy Institute said:

> The federal government proposal to change child benefits is seriously flawed—(the proposal) does little in the short term and virtually nothing over the long term to make a dent in child poverty—Clearly this is a pre-election reform—

Sam Snobelen from the End Legislated Poverty said:

> To us it is clear the so-called "child benefit" will be a detriment to the entire country, especially to children, and eventually to seniors.

Joan Smallwood, minister of social services in B.C., said:

> The new benefit is not simple, not fair and not generous.

There is a whole lot more. Professor Shelly Phipps of Dalhousie University points out one of the major flaws that we have not talked sufficiently about:

> Suppose someone experiences a drop in income in January of a year, say 1993. Then they won't file an income tax return until April 1994. But we won't find out that they became poor in January 1993, and as I understand the proposal, they won't receive any child benefits at all until July 1994. So in this extreme case they could be waiting as much as a year and a half—

Citizens for Public Justice said:

> By withdrawing or failing to provide the kind of supports that families need to move out of poverty, the federal government's attempt to alleviate child poverty through the child tax benefit will be ineffective.

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto and the Child Poverty Action Group ask why fiscal restraint must come at the expense of families with children.

Lise Corbeil from the National anti-Poverty Organization says:

> We believe that Bill C-80 is flawed and dangerous—we therefore ask your committee to recommend rejection—

She points out that $3.5 billion was siphoned away from child benefit programs and $400 million is being put in.

Trevor Williams, Family Services Canada, says:

> —without indexation this program will continue to slip year after year.

Terrence Hunsley points out that it is flawed. Martha Friendly makes the same point that we are going toward the United States' system as opposed to the European system. Dr. Robert Glossop of the Vanier Institute of the Family criticizes the proposal.

Marcelle Dolment says:

> The Network finds it inconceivable that a government no longer wishes to recognize either the family responsibilities parents assume or their investment in the country, in the human capital that children constitute.

[*Translation*]

I have made it clear that this bill does not meet the needs of people who live in poverty. It is just an election ploy, and I am not quoting myself but what people who made a thorough study of these proposals have said quite clearly.

[*English*]

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak in favour of the motion of my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre.

I also want to commend my colleague on the leadership that he has provided in opposing this legislation. As we know Bill C-80 will create a monthly payment for our child benefit program. It is going to take the family allowance and the child tax credit and they are going to be combined into one.

My party and I have a lot of objections to this legislation. This morning, due to the limited time, I will only be able to touch on probably two or three of these.

First I want to say that this government has made a mockery of the whole legislative process with this legislation. What it has been trying to do ever since it was introduced is get this legislation through.

There has been a lot of objection to this legislation, not only from the opposition parties but from groups and individuals all across this country. Certainly, the government should have got the message when in the standing committee, every group and witness who appeared, except one, were opposed to this legislation. There were a lot of groups and individuals that the government did not even give the opportunity to appear before the committee and speak on this very important legislation, which will bring about profound changes in this area.

The Conservative government controls the committee and it, as I mentioned, allowed interest groups very little time to prepare. When they requested more time to prepare to appear before this committee they were refused. The government cut off the number of individuals in groups who could appear before the committee. After the presentations had been made they only allowed one hour of discussion on this important legislation. It really makes one wonder whether the government is really interested in hearing from groups and individuals, whether it is really interested in getting constructive and positive input into this legislation that we have before us. I know that the Canadian people expect better than this from the government, especially when it comes to an issue and a concern that is as serious and important as children's future.

Of course we have had glossy brochures that have been put out by the government on this. They say, and I want to quote: "—our future well-being and prosperity depend on our children".

Certainly, I agree with that. Unfortunately, with this program the government is really not looking after the needs of youth and children.

• (1150)

It took the government eight weeks from the time this program was announced to actually get it into legislation. Yet, the government only gave the committee studying this legislation eight days to hear from witnesses and groups interested in stating their views and in debating the bill. I am told that there were 10 social groups that asked the government for a little more time to prepare their briefs, and the government absolutely refused. I think that is very unfair. These social and interest groups in this particular area deserved to be heard. They have a lot to offer, a lot of constructive, good input to make on this legislation. However, obviously the government is not interested in hearing how this legislation could be improved or how this House of Commons could bring in a program that would better meet the needs of our children and our youth.

Across this country social groups—people who are involved in this area, are experienced in it and have the expertise and that know—have been very critical of this entire package and they have been critical of the government for not giving them adequate time and opportunity to study and debate this legislation. That is very unfortunate.

I served as minister of health and social services in Prince Edward Island and I always found that social groups and interest groups in this area had a lot to offer.

I believe the government has been very unfair in saying no to these people.

I want to quote the executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development. This legislation will introduce "some of the most profound changes to Canada's income security system that have been contemplated in recent years—As a result, they require far more serious and broad debate and discussion than a surprise two-week process in Ottawa would allow".

I feel that the government has been very unfair and I have stated why. I am not the only one I just quoted the executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Another group that has not really been adequately consulted is the provinces. This is despite the fact that 11 first ministers agreed in March of this year to form a partnership to work together on income security issues.

Despite that agreement, the federal government is just charging right ahead. It is paying lip service to this arrangement, but certainly there are a number of provinces that are opposed to this legislation and the government is really not listening.

I have a lot of other points I want to make on this subject. Mr. Speaker, I know you are signalling me that my time is up. Maybe later on third reading I will be able to put my other concerns about this legislation on record.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate at report stage. I would like to comment on some of the amendments.

Listening to the debate I cannot help but be amazed by the perspective shared by some of my colleagues opposite who think that our society is frozen in time and that nothing is ever supposed to change, when in fact society is constantly changing. The dynamics—especially in the 1990s it is so obvious the way the world is changing. There are all kinds of things changing, yet it seems that social programs in Canada, rather than being responsive to the needs of Canadians, are supposed to be static, frozen in time and never change.

I find that rather an interesting concept because I really think that it is dissonant with reality. I just put that forward as a general observation.

I listened with great interest to my hon. friend for Malpeque who served with great distinction as minister of health in Prince Edward Island. I was waiting to hear some of her substantive points but I found she spent most of her debating time discussing the amount of debating time that was available instead of getting on with it. I would have liked to have heard more of her substantive comments on the bill.

However, that being as it is, I have to say that it is my impression from the constituents that I represent and from what people tell me in Nova Scotia that one of their greatest demands of government today is that it use whatever money it takes in taxes efficiently and wisely and in the most expeditious manner.

I find it hard to believe that my hon. friends opposite continue to be mired in the belief that people like J. D. Irving need family allowance for their grandchildren. He is one of the people who is supposedly going to be hurt by this bill because he will no longer have family allowance for his grandchildren. When Eric Lindros gets married and has children they will probably not qualify.

My friends opposite think this is a heinous, villainous and Draconian thing. With respect, I do not think that is the case. I think that the demand and the expectation of Canadians is that those dollars will be used for the benefit of those Canadians and those Canadian families who need them. That is precisely the purpose of Bill C-80 and that is precisely why this change was so positively greeted by the Canadian public when it was announced in the budget last February.

All this talk about the sacrosanct nature of universality is just so much hog-wash and is not really relevant. The important thing is that programs respond to the needs of the times and that programs exist to support the people who need that assistance.

One of the things that has amazed me during my short tenure in this place to date is the fact that one is not obligated to speak the truth but one is not permitted to call another member to account for failing to speak the truth. Of course, I will cast no aspersions, but I must make reference to the fact that a number of members have talked about $3.5 billion being allegedly taken out

of the system through partial de-indexing. That is an extraordinarily misleading piece of information.

It is most regrettable that members would throw out a figure like that, which is certainly at odds with the truth and certainly ignores the fact that up to now since this government has been in it has increased the refundable child tax credit four times and has also introduced a supplement of $213 for children under seven when the child care expenses have not been claimed. Therefore, that figure is extraordinarily erroneous and would certainly mislead anybody who did not have an opportunity, as I have just provided, to become familiar with the facts of the situation.

I would also point out that Bill C-80 is going to increase child assistance by $2.1 billion over the next five years, and 80 per cent of those funds—

Mr. Samson: And not one cent for the poor.

Mr. McCreath: —and those funds will go to 80 per cent of the families, the families with the low income. With all due respect to my hon. friend, he is absolutely incorrect. The low income Canadians will be the principal beneficiaries and will end up receiving more money as a result of this measure. That is why the government has introduced it and that is why it is going to be welcomed, as it has been, by Canadians.

Similarly, Motion No. 25 calls for the elimination of the earned income supplement. That is not a complicated issue at all. The intent here is that it is the belief of this government, a belief obviously not shared by some of my friends opposite and I know not shared by the current Government of Ontario, that there should be incentives and encouragement and that nobody should be disadvantaged for trying to get out of the rut of welfare and back into employment. The intent of the earned income supplement is to ensure that there is no loss of income for somebody who does return to the work force and wishes to move ahead in life.

• (1200)

Indeed, my hon. friend from Ottawa-Vanier made reference to the fact that single women would be disadvantaged when returning to the work force. I believe he said they were single mothers. The point remains that the earned income supplement addresses this problem specifically and assists people to move back.

Moving back into the work force not only affects one's income, it affects one's self-esteem, sense of productivity and a lot of other things. I think our social safety net should be there to assist people but at the same time it should provide encouragement and opportunity for people to become productive members of Canadian society.

In conclusion, I think that it is important that the facts of this bill be known. It adds $2.1 billion to federal child benefits over the next five years. More than 80 per cent of Canadian families will receive these benefits. Two-thirds of all the families in Canada, 2.4 million families, will receive higher benefits. They are targeted at lower-income families. The system is going to be responsive. It has been well received by the Canadian public.

I respectfully suggest that my hon. friends opposite take their heads out of the sand and listen to what the Canadian people are saying. They will welcome this progressive measure that has been introduced by this progressive government.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, those previous comments almost leave me speechless, but they certainly beg some sort of appropriate, sensible, rational and compassionate response to that kind of nonsense.

Hard times have demonstrated how easily we sacrifice the care of the young, the old, the sick and the helpless. The fragile state of social order and tolerance cannot withstand the pressures of mass unemployment and growing economic disparity. The smug assumptions of our peaceable kingdom depend more on recent prosperity than on our long-term history.

I think this government is out there polling each and every day. It does not tell us the results but it is out there polling. I think it finds out that it is fashionable and almost popular to do this sort of thing. It can attack the watershed of social policy in this country and get away with it because times are tough. Where does one go when times are tough? One picks on those people least able to respond in any sort of organized fashion. The bill is cynical and the timing is even more cynical.

I am reminded of Christmas in 1989 when the last watershed was breached. That was the initial attack on universality in this country. It was the clawback provision. It was done for Christmas. It was a Christmas present for seniors and families that received family allowances across this country. There was a great desire to get it done quickly.

Here we are now sitting and discussing a referendum bill in Parliament that the government wants urgently to get through. Why, Mr. Speaker? It is because it is extremely unpopular despite what the polls say.

Our social safety net includes unemployment insurance, universal old age pensions, maybe someday a national day care program and also, in this hostile climate, family allowances. It is the product of many factors: our history and heritage and our need to huddle together against the cold. We are a scattered people who are thinly spread across a forbidding landscape. There are not enough of us to entice private capital to establish the institutions that in other societies define a nation and tie it together. Instead, we have used public capital.

Canadians are noted for what they have. The longer this government is in power we will be noted for what we had. If one was going to target a group, one would think that one would not target the poorest of the poor. One would think that one would not compare one level of poverty with another level of poverty. One would think that if one was going to target a group to assist the lower levels on the economic scale that one would attack the wealthiest of the people in the country to access the riches. Canada is a country that now is regarded as having one of the highest concentrations of wealth in the world. It does not seem believable, but statistics prove that in fact it is. More and more wealth is in the hands of fewer and fewer people.

We talk about priorities a great deal in Parliament. We talk about $4 billion helicopters that we may or may not be able to land, but that perhaps is not the issue at this point in time. Surely, the allocation of funds could be more appropriately allocated than with this kind of decision making.

There's the cap on CAP for the so-called wealthiest provinces: Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. That accounts for 29 per cent of the debt accrued by the Ontario government. We are criticized for caring and for responding to the needs of those people, but we are all having to pay. The federal government is washing its hands of social programs in this country. They are eroding them.

There was a discussion or a consultation paper in January 1985. I know this government was around at that time. It said that the concept of universality is a keystone of our social safety net. Its integrity must not and will not be called into question.

I appreciate that times have changed and there are dramatic things happening around the world and in this country. However, if something is a cornerstone it is a cornerstone. It is not something to peck away at or take away from so gradually that people may not understand. That leads me to the simplicity. It says it wants to simplify the system. I defy you to read the government brochure on the child benefit and attempt to understand it. It is nearly impossible. It is not simplistic, Mr. Speaker.

The government is going to spend $500,000 to inform Canadians as to what it is doing. I suspect it would be better spent on the people who require these funds. It is spending $1.8 million on the NAFTA agreement. This is ironic at best and tragic at worst.

When one pits group against group, even though not intentionally, the middle class may look at this and say it does not have any great inclination to involve itself in this debate at this point in time. However, they shall soon be affected. It is like the clawback provision. Since it is not indexed to inflation, sooner or later we will all get caught and it will be too late to turn back.

This is a watershed and a most unfortunate one. It is most unfortunate that it is being debated at a time when the very future of the country is at stake. It would otherwise receive much more attention from everyone, especially those most affected by this particular bill.

I am fearful that the government's course is one of Thatcherism, Reagan's economics, or, worse still, similar to that of the governor of Michigan, John Engler. He made a campaign promise and he followed through. One day he said that he would cut everybody including all single parents. There would be no more social assistance.

• (1210)

Immediately in the city of Flint, 83,000 people were put on the streets. Governor Engler said get a job but anyone who knows anything about Flint, Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan, there are no jobs. People are living on the streets. They are dying on the streets.

Under Mr. Engler's scheme, under the guise of saving money, the people's safety net probably will not be a money saver. He pulls a study of Mr. Hollister pointing out research that shows if 5 per cent of those who are cut off end up in prison, another 5 per cent end up in mental institutions, the state will pay out more than it saves.

Cutting people off was not an economic decision, it was an ideological decision. I believe that is why this government acts in the way it does. It is more ideology than good sound economic sense, especially for those among us who can least afford this kind of backward legislation.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in this debate and I am angry, frustrated and disgusted.

Today I listened to my hon. colleague and fellow Nova Scotian from the South Shore and earlier I listened to comments by the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs. I realized that both of these hon. gentlemen have the wrong end of the stick in this whole debate.

They both made allusions, one in a speech and one just in a comment earlier, to wealthy people. They both used the same family which happens to be one of the wealthiest families in our region of the Atlantic. Should those people or should their children be getting the family allowance?

It first of all shows a total misunderstanding or lack of understanding of the principle of universality and why the principle of universality is a good one, but I am not going to get into that at the moment. It also shows a misunderstanding of the way the family allowance in particular has worked.

There has been so little time for this debate. One is reminded of the quote from MacBeth about the murder of Duncan: "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly". This is the murder of the principle of universality. It obviously falls into the same category.

One of the things that has been missing in this debate is the question of the women who receive the family allowance to use for their children. I have gone to a number of meetings over the past several years with colleagues from the New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party, with women's groups representing women who stay at home. The Conservative Party in particular has always been a great champion, allegedly, of women who stay at home.

I am talking about the fact that if we are going to have universal accessible child care, for example, we must do something at the same time for women who stay at home, et cetera. Those of us who worry about the social programs affecting women in the work place, the economic programs, are somehow forgetting about women who stay at home. That has been a charge that certainly has been levelled at me and at other women on this side of the House by women and men as well on that side of the House.

It is time to turn the glass on this legislation in that context. I would ask my hon. colleague and friend from the South Shore and his other colleagues to think about this. I see the minister is no longer with us.

Some years ago a challenge to the universality of family allowances mounted in my own party. This was before I became a member of Parliament. I am happy to say that under the combined championing of the hon. Monique Begin, the hon. Céline Hervieux–Payette, the then senator Lorna Marsden and a number of women in the Liberal Party, we beat down that challenge to universality. Would that our colleagues on the other side of the House had had the same luck.

One of the things I learned in that battle some nine to ten years ago was what the family allowance cheque means to an awful lot of women in this country. It does not just mean something to single mothers or low–income women. It means something to women who live in the Rockcliffes, the Rosedales and the south ends. It means something to the women who live in Shaughnessy and British properties. It means something to the women in Westmount. In other words, it means something to women who happen to be married to men who are wealthy.

If my hon. colleagues on the other side learn nothing else from this debate, maybe they could learn for once that women who are merely married to men who are

wealthy do not by any means *de facto* have access to that wealth.

I know of women in every one of those neighbourhoods that I cited here today who have saved the baby bonus cheques sometimes for years to get out of violent situations, miserable situations, to save their lives and protect themselves. That is just one aspect.

My colleague from South Shore is laughing. Perhaps it does not happen in his riding, although I know differently. Perhaps he does not have personal knowledge of that but I do and other women in this House on both sides have knowledge of that.

The money is not going to Mr. Irving or Mr. somebody else. The money is going for the benefit of the family and for the benefit of the women and the children in the family. How well do you know each individual? How well do you know a family that may be listed very highly in Dun & Bradstreet corporation or in a financial listing? Does the hon. minister who just made a crack, the hon. President of the Treasury Board, really know what every individual wealthy family in this country is like on the inside? Does he really know and can he stand in his place and say that women who happen to be married to wealthy men do not live lives of quiet desperation? It is merely a small point but it is one that means something to women in this country.

If this government had any commitment to a sensible and fair tax system, we would not have this kind of foolishness emanating from it. Every time it takes the wrong end of the stick or, should I say, the wrong end of the horse. That is what it is taking here.

It tries to sell this to us by telling us that there are more benefits for low income families. There are not. It is wrong. The experts will tell you there are not more benefits. It will try and tell you that there are more effective benefits to those in greatest need. That is wrong too. It tries to tell you that it will make the child benefit system simpler and more responsive.

What the government effectively wants to do is what it has effectively wanted to do to this country since the day it took office in 1984 and has been putting upon the people of Canada ever since. That is a systematic and deliberate attack on the infrastructure and the social safety net of this country.

The time has come when Canadians are standing up from St. John's to Victoria and saying they will not have it. They will not have it in South Shore. They will not have it in Moncton, New Brunswick. They will not have it in the province of Quebec. They will not have it in Wild Rose and they will not have it anywhere in this country.

When that glorious day comes when the people of Canada can tell this government what they think of these ideas with regard to the sacrosanct sacred cows that they have dealt with, the government will know.

• (1220)

I will mark the hon. member's words and I also know how people will be marking their ballots on the South Shore. God help us, I cannot wait for the day.

We look at the child benefit program. We look at the history of the family allowance in this country. We look at the fact that in the 1930s when these programs came into being, they were brought about because of the greatest economic depression that the North American continent had ever seen.

We are living through a period of the second greatest economic downturn that this country has ever seen, and we are living through it because of the fiscal policies of this government. That is the answer.

My colleague in the New Democratic Party talked about Thatcherism and Reaganomics. These are the same things being practised by this government and that is why this country is suffering, that along with a misnamed free trade agreement.

Government policy has caused the hardship in this country. Canada survived the Dirty Thirties because of social programs. We are surviving now because of social programs. If this government keeps it up, we will not have this safety net and Canada as we know it will not survive.

It is sad that the primary attack of this government is against the women and the children.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the effect of the motions being debated here today would be the outright cancellation of the child tax benefit.

In this respect, I am not quite sure if my hon. colleagues understand the implications of their motions. I am surprised that they would want to take away a $2.1 billion increase in child benefits. This is particularly

perplexing since most of the money would be directed to low income families.

Are they trying to save money on the backs of low income families? If so, I fervently disagree.

I believe that if we were to adopt these motions, we would be giving up an historic opportunity to enrich child benefits and to improve the way they are delivered. Accordingly, let me take a moment to remind the House what this bill is all about.

I am a firm believer in the redistribution of scarce resources for the general benefit of all Canadians, particularly our children. It is a Canadian tradition of which we should be rightfully proud. It ranks high among the reasons why Canada is regarded by many as the best place in the world to live and to raise a family.

However, I also believe that our social programs have been strong and effective only because they have been amended and reformed over time to meet the changing needs of our society. That is why I strongly support Bill C-80. It will replace the traditional, and some may say antiquated, child benefit programs with a modern, fair, responsive and simple system.

Let me explain. For almost a century the Government of Canada has provided direct financial assistance to parents to help with the care and upbringing of their children. Over time, the benefits have evolved into a patchwork system which includes family allowance, child credit and a refundable child tax credit. This patchwork system of benefits is not sufficient to meet the needs and expenses of today's Canadian children and their parents. As identified by several national groups and scores of individual Canadians, this jumble of benefits has a number of shortcomings which must be addressed.

For example, Canadians agree that the current system does not provide enough support to lower-income families; especially lower-income working families. Many have expressed concern that targeting family allowances on the basis of individual income is unfair because families with similar incomes may receive different levels of benefits. Others have decried the delays faced by parents in receiving benefits as well the differing sets of eligibility criteria and delivery mechanisms.

The child tax benefit has been designed to rectify these and other shortcomings of the current system. For instance, support to low-income families will be increased substantially. Over the next five years the child tax benefit will provide $2.1 billion in increased child assistance and 80 per cent of that new money will go to families with annual earnings under $40,000. Moreover, the new earned income supplement of up to $500 will help low-income working families offset employment related expenses and a possible reduction in social assistance benefits upon joining the work force.

The child tax benefit will also be fairer. Benefits will be targeted on the basis of family—rather than on individual—incomes. Families earning similar incomes will receive similar benefits. This will better ensure that assistance is directed according to family needs.

The child tax benefit will be more responsive to the current needs of Canadian children and their parents. Under the system now in place parents may face up to a year or more to receive their full refundable tax credit. Under the new system benefits will be provided on an up-front, monthly basis. This will ensure that benefits arrive when they are needed. It will also mean that parents will no longer feel the need to sacrifice portions of their benefits to tax discounters to obtain badly-needed cash.

As well, a family may now have to wait for a year or more to receive a full increase in benefits arising from a change in family status. This could be the birth of a child or the breakup of a marriage. Under the child tax benefit, monthly payments will be fully adjusted following a change in family status.

Finally, the child tax benefit will be simpler. The three different eligibility criteria and delivery mechanisms of the current system will be reduced to one. Payment will be in the form of a single, tax-free monthly cheque. Moreover, payment levels will be calculated automatically and the tax return will be shorter and less confusing. Gone will be the days when parents had to complete special calculations on their tax returns to receive child support. For higher-income families, the repayment of benefits to the government at year's end will also be a thing of the past. In short, the child tax benefit will simplify the tax system and streamline and substantially enrich the government's support for families with children. It responds to the changes urged upon the government by interested groups and individuals. I am pleased

to note that it has engendered world-wide support. Thank you for your support, Mr. Speaker.

• (1230)

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have a few moments to speak on this bill this morning. There are a number of reasons, the first of which concerns the content or the way it was introduced. In light of some of the comments made here today, in fact in the last few moments, there was an obvious attempt once again at circumventing parliamentary procedure and the purpose of this House.

Before I talk about the subject of the tax benefit I want to recall for the House a comment that was made by a colleague of mine last week when he spoke on the referendum. It was the member for Acadie—Bathurst. He talked about the credibility of the House and the credibility of those people who sit here. What is happening with this bill is the very reason Canadians are wondering why this is still called the highest court in the land.

We have Bill C-80 which talks about the child benefit which was introduced in the 1992 federal budget. It is overhauling, purports to overhaul or will overhaul if it is passed, a system that has been in effect for years. How has this happened? Before I address the content of whether it is right or wrong in terms of content, let me just have a look at the process.

This bill was introduced on June 1 for first reading. It had two days of debate when the government invoked closure on the second reading. It then went to committee. The committee sat, I understand, during the summer under the auspices of the finance committee. There was not even enough time to get expert witnesses to come and discuss the intricacies of this bill so that legislators, members of Parliament, of this highest court in the land could understand what was happening. As a parenthetical comment, every witness except one said that they thought this bill was wrong, unfair and unbalanced. All but one said that.

We are in the House now today for debate at report stage. The report from the government side says that it wants this to be the way it was when it was laid out in this white paper. We are proposing amendments. These amendments should take a week to go through in chapter and verse so that those people whom we serve could know and decide for themselves whether they are getting a good deal or a bad deal.

This is the *modus operandi* for this government. Look at the number of times that closure has been invoked in this House. My figures tell me it was 31 times since this government came to power in 1984. I am sorry. That was time allocation which essentially is the same as closure. Closure happened 19 times. That is a total of 50.

I was not able to find the records and I was not able to get the information, but I believe it has happened roughly one-tenth as much as in the history of this country since Confederation. This will give you some indication of what the process is and in how much detail this bill is being discussed.

I see the member for Wild Rose is just leaving. I really object to one of the statements she made. She gave all kinds of reasons and I guess she spouted out government-prepared memoranda and documents. One of the statements was: "How could anybody oppose a $2.1 billion increase in this program?"

What she did not say was that one has to measure this against the $3.5 billion that has already been taken out of the child benefit system in the last five years. If she thinks the Canadian public is being fooled by an additional $2.1 billion against a zero background, I want to remind the public that it is $2.1 billion for the next five years. That $2.1 billion is not as much in real terms as the $3.5 billion that was taken away five years before. If I were a bargainer and a gambler I would not call that a good deal.

I am now into the content of this bill. I am not going through what it says because there is no time and other speakers have talked on that subject. The assistance to the poorest families does not increase by anything at all.

There is the the long-awaited national child care strategy. I recall when I was campaigning four years ago that there was a great program introduced by the government that was going to come up with a child care program. As I understand it, it has been completely abandoned and it is creating additional hardship on low and middle-income families, of which I have many in my riding. It is very difficult for single-income families.

I have already spoken about the lack of consultation, but in my mind, in principle, that is the biggest difficulty with this bill. Once more we are reducing social benefits to Canadians and they are not getting the opportunity to

hear the debate by chapter and verse as it used to be done before 1984. I could go on.

One of the concerns that I really have is the business of indexation. It can be a difficult thing to understand. It can be an easy thing to understand. Essentially, deindexing will amount to a clawback that in the long term will hurt Canadian families.

I am not sure that we need any more of that because we have had an effect on people in my riding, a reduction in UI benefits, a cap on the Canada Assistance Plan which, while it does not pertain to my province, has a principle involved, a reduction in health payments, a reduction in co-operative housing payments and a reduction in transfer payments to Newfoundland including Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. This means less money for those who need it.

I do not profess to be an expert in the details of this. That is one of the reasons I wanted to be here when it was discussed. I could decide one way or another how I could explain it to those people who would ask me questions. I think I have enough information for that now. I wanted them to listen to the debate.

In the time remaining I really cannot do more than make a few comments on what these few witnesses who came before the committee had a chance to offer. I think the one that describes my feeling about the bill more than anything else is this: "To us it is clear that this so-called child benefit will be a detriment to the entire country, especially to children and eventually to seniors. Therefore, Bill C-80 should be thrown in the garbage can, not passed".

I think my hon. friend from Malpeque would tell me that that is almost a maritime description of something we do not like. I could not find more eloquent words to describe it.

We are in the process of debating our amendments. Our amendments essentially would deal with the deletion of the entire bill. That is first. Second, we would ensure that there would be full indexation of the benefit and of the threshold amounts. Third, we would include possibly a child benefits adjustment board to deal with the response to this problem.

I looked at a case last night and discussed it with the critic in this area. One could go as much as 18 months before an adjustment was made. There are an awful lot of people in this country in particular economic conditions who cannot wait 18 months for this kind of thing.

Finally, our amendments would ensure that the provinces cannot decrease the amount of the proposed benefit. Critics are concerned that a province could cap welfare payments as the new, combined benefits would provide a larger monthly amount to families.

• (1240)

I can conclude very quickly. I am concerned as a legislator that once more I am being cut off from information and I do not have enough time to discuss this with my colleagues on all sides of the House. I am concerned about the closure, I am concerned about the principle of parliamentary debate, and I am concerned that this is a rotten bill and we are being asked to pass it.

I for one will vote against it, and I think that most of the members on this side of the House also will.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I was very quietly minding my own business over here listening to the debate, and I have been provoked into saying something about Bill C-80.

One of the things about this bill that strikes me as important, and it is something that Canadians have to think about—and we have said it time and time again—is that this bill destroys universality. The Tories come along and make this very specious argument that we do not need universality and that we need to re-focus the amounts of money we put into family allowances so that the real needy get money for the raising of their children.

What is at the root of universality? What is the root when we talk about family allowances and children? What we are saying with universality is that all Canadians are responsible for the raising of our children. These are not moneys directed to one group of children or to another group of children. It is not redistribution of wealth that we are really talking about here in this Tory package. Universality recognizes that all the children of Canada belong to all Canadians and that all of us have a responsibility to raise those children.

Bill C–80 is not new. The Tories did not dream this up. This was a Liberal machination.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Rodriguez: Absolutely. The Tories are only Liberals in a hurry. I want them to keep that in mind. They are on a fast track to nowhere.

Mr. Merrithew: John, you will never change.

Mr. Rodriguez: The minister says I will never change, but the minister must remember his history. It was Judy Erola, when she was minister, who proposed the idea that we had to get rid of family allowances and destroy their universality. She got into a whole lot of trouble when she made the famous, or infamous, statement: "What contribution do women make who stay at home and look after children?". That was the day that she started going downhill.

This refocusing did not start with Bill C–80 and the Tories. It started over here with the Liberal Party. Therefore, when Liberal members stand up and parade themselves as the greatest defenders of universal family allowances they ought to hang their heads in shame.

Mr. Duhamel: The polls must be really bad.

Mr. Rodriguez: No, I am just trying to set the record straight. We have to put it right there so that Canadians remember Judy Erola, who was a Liberal minister.

Mr. Duhamel: Tell me about the polls.

Mr. Rodriguez: The same Judy Erola, and we are going to hear a lot about patent protection, is the same one who is now the lobbyist for the pharmaceutical association. We have to keep these things in focus.

If we all accept the principle that all the children of Canada belong to all of us and that we all have to contribute it is not enough to go around saying that our children are our greatest resource and that our children are our future. We use children on the back of our loonies. The Prime Minister uses children for photo ops. Children wave their little flags and sing about how much they love Canada. We use children all the time. Yet when we look at what we are doing to them and their parents in this bill and in certain other actions of the government we realize that it is all phoney, that the government really does not like children. The Tory government is anti–child. I want to say that and I want to put that on the record.

How else to describe a bill with the purpose of taking total amounts of money for family allowances and refocusing them so that the neediest get the most, when in fact the neediest do not get more? The neediest are those whose parents do not have work and are on social assistance. We call it welfare.

In this day and age there are all the cutbacks that this federal government has embarked upon, restructuring the economy, the recession that was brought on by this government, and all of the unemployment that has ensued, and the cutbacks in the unemployment insurance program that have forced people onto welfare. We hear the municipalities constantly complaining about the fact that they have to pick up the welfare costs now that all the people who have run out of UI are spinning onto it.

We have seen all of the job losses resulting from the free trade deal with the United States. The neediest of the neediest get not one penny more from this package, not one penny more.

However, those in the $125,000 a year bracket get more. Think about it. As a socialist I have often talked about class politics. It is my bread and butter to talk about working class people rather than the wealthy classes. I have always been told: "Oh, Rodriguez, you are always using the rhetoric of the 1930s. You are always going back to class politics".

Well if ever there is a bill that reinforces class politics it is Bill C–80. It puts parents and Canadians into classes. Those who are unemployed and are on welfare are the poorest of the poor and they get nothing more than they got before.

The working poor get $42 a month more per child. Those up in the next bracket, $40,000 to $60,000, get a little more. Those in the $120,000 a year bracket get more.

That is clearly dividing the community into classes. The government exploits class politics. The Tories are exploiters of classes and they trade off the rich against the poor.

This is the government that started deindexing. Talk about really stamping people down into the mud. It has kept the indexing of the family allowances at 3 per cent. Only if the inflation rate is above 3 per cent will the government reflect it in an indexation on the family allowances. If inflation is under 3 per cent there is no indexation. If it is 2.5 per cent it means that the amount

that the poorest of the poor are receiving is eroded even further.

The government has totally reneged on what it had promised with respect to, for example, a child care program. What happened to the child care program of the former health minister, now the Minister of Communications? Where is it today? If Tories really cared about children that is where they would put money. We do not have adequate child care in this country.

• (1250)

We hear all the pious statements across the way about how they are opposed, about how Tories do not like child abuse. Where is the adequate child care program? Where was the program that was promised?

Parliament had a committee. It studied the proposals and it's report is up on a shelf somewhere. This is a government that has no commitment to full employment. If we really want to show respect for children and for people we have to guarantee them a job, not use them as fodder in the war against inflation, stagflation, deflation, rheumatism, in-grown toe-nails and ptomaine poisoning.

If we have a commitment to full employment then we recognize that a person has dignity when they work. They do not really want to get welfare cheques. They want a job. They want a paycheque, not a welfare cheque.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to address the issue, especially after my hon. colleague has waxed so rhetorically and so eloquently from a partisan point of view on an issue that is very serious.

I say it is serious because he did begin on a rational level. That rational level would talk about the basic philosophy that underlies the directions of both this government and governments past.

Speaking of governments past, Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and those who are following this debate in the House will grant me the indulgence of falling into a partisan discussion for a moment because the hon. member who just preceded me has raised a question which must be addressed in order that we put this debate in its proper perspective.

From a Liberal point of view, when we were in government we initiated a series of legislative initiatives for which the member for Nickel Belt takes great pride. As a Canadian and as a member of this legislative body, the House of Commons, he should take great pride in those initiatives which we collectively as a government and as a people put forward.

They have served as a role model everywhere throughout the world and have been duplicated in many other jurisdictions. When he suggests that the government is engaging in some nefarious deed that follows fast upon the heels of a government that collapsed some 10 years ago then he is asking us to stretch our imagination just a little bit too far.

Most important, he does great injustice to the essence of this debate, which my colleagues from this side of the House, from the Liberal Party, have pinpointed with particular attention to the details both in the amendments and in the bill itself.

Those amendments, the essence of those details, address the directions of a government whose philosophy has gone sorely adrift. We have seen over the course of this last session a cap placed on CAP. The consequences of that are now seen in this legislation.

What has happened is that the government essentially said: "We will not assume the responsibility that we had accepted for the health and welfare of all Canadians everywhere in this country", initially under the guise of saying that those residents in provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, those three provinces that do quite well on their own, do not need the financial assistance that a federal government provides as part of its obligation to its citizens.

Nothing could be so silly. The Government of Canada does not subsidize the provinces. What it does is transfer back into the hands of its citizens the wealth which is generated by them and which is there for their benefit.

We have seen as well that the government, in order to facilitate the projects determined by deficit cutting and cost cutting, has attacked those most vulnerable, the seniors. We have seen over the course of these last several sessions the government slowly eating away, gnawing away, eroding the basis of support upon which seniors have come to rely, at a time when they are least

productive from an economic point of view, at a time when they would be most dependent upon the state which they had helped to found, to develop, and to enrich, a state and a government from which they are owed at least some dignity, some respect and in the final analysis a modicum of financial support.

In the city of Toronto from where I come, a senior citizen is asked to make do on some very bare minimum monthly payments. To add insult to injury, we say that in spite of the fact that this government has been unable to put forth an economic program that would take advantage of the great resources this country offers. We are going to show that we respect our seniors and we are going to raise their monthly amount by 33 cents. It is not even enough to cover the cost of a postage stamp to send a complaint to their local member of Parliament.

This kind of legislation in Bill C-80 hides the fact that the government is very restrictive, small "c" conservative and, if I could lapse again into partisanship, almost reactionary. Were I in another country, I might say that this is right wing republicanism. I am not and I will avoid saying that.

What we have is the initiation of a philosophy that says we no longer need to support those basic social pillars that identified us as a progressive society. Do it under the guise that we are going to make the system more efficient. Listen to us, we are going to pump over the course of the next five years—my colleagues look in askance, "five years?"—$2.1 billion. This is after pillaging those systems of $3.5 billion. The phrase "smoke and mirrors" comes to mind to those who follow what the government is doing.

There is no question that the government does not want a socially progressive set of legislation or pillars for our society. It is a dog eat dog world. The marketplace must reign supreme. It must have its dictates imposed upon the way that people behave, the way that people act out their lives in this country.

There is much to be said for the workings of the marketplace. Where are those kinds of principles, I say to my colleagues opposite, applicable to everybody in our society and not just to those who are weakest from a financial point of view?

I pointed out to the minister responsible for the privatization of Petro-Canada some months ago that the Canadian government, so eager to cut the deficit and reduce the debt, to show fiscal responsibility, to help those who are in need, was more than quick to contribute to oil companies, some of them not even based in Canada. These were not tax grants but outright cash grants totalling $832 million between 1989 and 1990. Then the government has the courage to come before this House and say with the rationalization of its social programs it is going to pump in another $400-odd million dollars per year over the course of the next five years. Give us a break, as they say on the street. We cannot possibly all be that gullible or that stupid.

This is the same government that says it is making a progressive step forward when it gets out of the unemployment insurance scheme. It used to be a three-party program of government, employer and employee.

• (1300)

To get right out of that and to put the onus on the employer and the employee at a time of recession when neither the employer nor the employee could afford to make that contribution hurts those people who need it most.

We must keep in mind that much of what is being applied today is going to have a negative impact on those children who will be the men and women of tomorrow who will guide this country. I refer government members to the statistics they throw back at us, that if we do not pay today we will pay tomorrow through education costs and through other social costs.

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.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

GEORGETOWN GIRLS' PIPE BAND

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, at this time when we are renewing our country's Constitution and focusing on Canada's promising future, it is comforting and instructive to also remember our rich past.

In Georgetown, one of the communities I am proud to represent in Parliament, that past includes strong Scottish heritage. Perhaps most symbolic of that is the Georgetown Girls' Pipe Band which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

This band has performed with distinction across Ontario, Quebec, in the United States, and even in Scotland. The anniversary will be marked by a Scottish tattoo which I am sure will be impressive and majestic and to which I invite all members of this House.

My sincere congratulations to every one associated with this outstanding band and my thanks to all those in Georgetown and across the country who keep the flame of our heritage alive.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the National Action Committee on the Status of Women said that it could not support this constitutional deal.

In the same breath it claimed to be speaking on behalf of the women of Canada. It does not speak for me.

[*Translation*]

The Charlottetown agreement is not perfect, but for the women of Quebec, it is a step in the right direction. We must defend our rights by ensuring that Quebecers say yes to Canada and yes to protecting women's rights that are guaranteed in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We must say yes because economic instability affects women particularly. We must say yes. Otherwise women will be among the first victims of economic and social problems. No, Mr. Speaker, Judy Rebick does not speak for me. I have my own voice and I will say "yes" on October 26.

* * *

[*English*]

HMCS *PROTECTEUR*

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Government of Canada for sending our ship *Protecteur*, together with engineers, Canadian Forces personnel, machinery, supplies and equipment, to Miami to assist the population of south Florida in getting life back together again.

I am sure it is not the intention to help the United States financially, but the Americans certainly need our competent, well organized and trained people to rebuild schools and public institutions so they can be working again.

I believe this is the kind of assistance that one neighbour ought to give to another.

* * *

JOB RETRAINING

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, due to this government's lack of foresight and lack of commitment to training, many Islanders are being forced to stay home and collect unemployment benefits rather than spend the time upgrading their skills through the fee payer program.

The budgets have run dry for the fee payer program and those who are victims of this government's economic policies are now falling prey to this government's lack of commitment to retraining.

This government has cut $200 million over the past two years from the Canadian Jobs Strategy program. With unemployment at 11.6 per cent across this nation and 18.6 per cent in Prince Edward Island this is absolutely unforgivable.

I call on the federal government to take action to ensure that unemployed Islanders are given access to retraining.

It is better to have an unemployed individual in a classroom upgrading his or her skills than sitting at home waiting for a job offer that may be a long time coming.

* * *

RACISM

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, Simon Israel, former head of mergers and acquisitions in ScotiaMcLeod's New York office, was fired mainly because he objected to anti-Semitic remarks from a senior officer who commented: "There's one that Hitler missed".

This comment was made in reference to a Jewish colleague who also was fired. Documents obtained by *The Globe and Mail* show that ScotiaMcLeod admits the Hitler comment was made and later repeated several times by ScotiaMcLeod's New York president.

We have to be constantly on guard to ensure that when racism rears its ugly head we promptly repudiate it. In our society racism starts in anodyne and anecdotal ways, then becomes part of a culture that spreads like fire.

Knowing the senior officials of Scotiabank, the parent company of ScotiaMcleod, I am convinced they do not countenance racist remarks. It is incumbent upon them to dissociate themselves from these statements and to deal effectively with the executive or executives responsible for these injurious words.

* * *

ATLANTIC EXPRESSWAY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to press on with negotiations with the Governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to fund the Atlantic expressway. This proposed highway system, combined of course with the fixed link to P.E.I., is essential if any real improvement is to be made in the economies of Atlantic Canada.

Reduced rail services have had a negative impact on transportation while industry demands immediate and economic delivery of goods and services. The benefits of our location adjacent to the major markets of the northeastern United States can only be realized with an up-to-date highway system.

I urge that all parties re-energize their negotiations in the interest of completing this project which is in the interest of all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHARLOTTETOWN CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, on October 26 all Canadians will be asked to take a stand on the Charlottetown consensus report. It will be an important vote in our nation's history.

The August 28 constitutional agreement is not perfect but it is the best that this government could give us. I have some reservations about the weakness of provisions on economic union and the Senate. Obviously, we have an equal Senate at the expense of an effective one. Nevertheless, we think that these deficiencies can eventually be corrected.

[*English*]

As a member of Parliament from the only officially bilingual province in Canada, I am pleased that this new deal will at last recognize and enshrine in the Constitution the equal status of New Brunswick's two official linguistic communities.

I anticipate working together with all political parties, interested groups and individual citizens of Restigouche—Chaleur in support of this agreement despite its shortcomings.

Furthermore, I urge the citizens of my riding to examine this document and, most important, to vote and voice their opinion on October 26.

[*Translation*]

TAX SYSTEM

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for months the Germain family of Val-d'Or, Louis and Clémence, have been trying everything to find solutions for their seven children who are all under 10 years old. They have something against Canada's tax system: they think that the Canadian government should consider the number of dependants, namely the wife and children, and the husband's salary, regardless of the income earned from all other sources.

That is a typical example of a large family in Canada that is penalized by the Canadian tax system.

* * *

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have received more than 50 calls in my constituency office in Winnipeg asking for information on the constitutional proposals and the referendum. People want a copy of the consensus report. They also want a brief description in an unbiased kind of way, possibly preferably by a third party, of what these proposals are all about.

The government spends millions of dollars on advertising and trying to make itself feel better than it deserves. Surely it can address this issue which is an urgent one right now.

[*Translation*]

The citizens of Canada want to make an enlightened decision on October 26, so they need information.

[*English*]

I call upon the government to make this information available now.

[*Translation*]

Can we make sure that our fellow Canadians have the information they need to make a good decision on October 26 and vote yes?

[*English*]

HMCS *PROTECTEUR*

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join my friend, the hon. member for Mississauga South, in bringing to the attention of the House the mission of the HMCS *Protecteur* which is down in Florida right now helping with the reconstruction efforts after Hurricane Andrew.

The *Protecteur* departed from Halifax as we all know on September 10 carrying building supplies, tools and vehicles for use in rebuilding two heavily damaged schools in Dade county. The vessel docked yesterday and our crew has already begun working on the sites. The over 300 crew and specialists on the ship will be assisted by Canadian Air Force engineers who had arrived over the past weekend.

Around the world, through humanitarian actions like this and the efforts such as the UN peacekeeping forces, Canada is noted for its willingness to assist people and countries in need.

I think Canadians should recognize the blessings that such catastrophes are very rare in our country. I extend my appreciation to the involved Canadian Forces personnel and their Commander Douglas MacLean.

I am sure that British Columbians in Esquimalt and Victoria will provide the *Protecteur* a warm welcome once it returns to its west coast base after this mission.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House we heard the minister of trade repeatedly state that his arguments in favour of NAFTA were based on fact. At the same time he repeatedly denigrated the opposition for spreading misinformation. And yesterday was no different.

On a point of order just after Question Period the trade minister stated he wanted to clarify an error in his trade ads which the member for Windsor—St. Clair, that is myself, had clearly shown to be incorrect. However, this trade minister chose to further misstate the facts. He compared unadjusted March employment to unadjusted June employment.

• (1410)

Had opposition members done that, he would surely have jumped all over us for misusing statistics. Unadjusted stats are used in year–over–year comparisons or by statistical incompetents. The facts he should have used to compare the months within the same year are those that had been seasonally adjusted to remove distortions. Seasonally adjusted manufacturing jobs in July 1992 totalled 1.8 million while in March 1992 they totalled 1,760,000, a difference of only 43,000 jobs.

In fact the NAFTA propaganda distorted the facts, and that is what we pointed out here yesterday.

* * *

REFORM PARTY

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I regret the Reform Party is against the Charlottetown accord because it is not perfect. The Reform Party wants to ignore our constitutional problems, thinking they will go away.

How can a five–year moratorium solve an issue? Will aboriginal peoples have to wait five years for justice? Will Canadians be stuck with the same tired old unelected Senate for five years and maybe forever? Will Canada's international economic reputation be damaged by the uncertainty of our country's future?

Most Canadians have enough common sense not to allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. I fear Preston Manning has contempt, utter contempt, for common sense.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHARLOTTETOWN CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister presented a proposed constitutional agreement. He said that it was the most important reform since Confederation in 1867 and that the negotiations had been an unprecedented success. Personally, like many others in Quebec and even in Canada, I have always maintained that it was not an agreement but rather a draft or a preliminary version.

Again today we see in *La Presse* that the Prime Minister of Canada and Mr. Bourassa are continuing to write to each other because they do not have a common understanding. That proves this is a draft and it is scandalous to ask Canadians to vote on a proposal that is only a draft. It is outrageous to spend $125 million for the pleasure of satisfying political parties.

* * *

[*English*]

THE LATE BRUCE HUTCHISON

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, a towering giant in the field of journalism has died. Bruce Hutchison, one of Canada's leading authorities on political and economic affairs, died yesterday at his Victoria area home where he had lived since the 1920s. He was 91. He was editor emeritus of *The Vancouver Sun* where he wrote a weekly column until illness struck him just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Hutchison was truly a national treasure. Besides being a working journalist for 74 years, he wrote 15 books which helped define and shape the Canadian identity.

Although known for his shrewd insight and gifted writing skills, his first love was that of the outdoors which, he said, was the source of his wisdom. He worked at a time when it was fashionable for pre–eminent commentators to hob–nob with prime ministers, and he met all of them going back more than 70 years. That era is now over.

Bruce Hutchison was honoured by Canada several times including an appointment to the federal Privy Council this past July. He was indeed a great Canadian.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHARLOTTETOWN CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that I am satisfied with the Charlottetown proposals that will serve to renew Canada's Constitution after October 26.

These proposals respect Quebecers' historic demands and enable us to close an issue which, due to its importance, had a first claim on our energies and

resources. We will now be able to devote these to the social and economic development of Quebec and Canada.

The people of Québec–Est have been patient. They have waited for years for a solution to this acute problem which threatened to demolish the most beautiful and best country in the world. Now that we have found solutions, I will ask my constituents to ratify them so that we can work more on giving them a better quality of life and on preparing with them the future for the generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I have rarely been as proud to be a Canadian and a Quebecer, thanks to this agreement.

* * *

[*English*]

STATISTICS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, the government's manipulation of Statistics Canada data seems to be spreading like a virus.

The symptoms were visible in 1990 when Statistics Canada cancelled plans to produce a net price index which would have shown how much the GST contributed to inflation.

Last year the government muzzled a study on the debt which showed that the main reason for the increase in Canada's public debt was corporate tax cuts and high interest rates, not social spending.

In August, when the Minister of Agriculture addressed a rally in the Melfort area, he added exports and imports together to show a massive increase in trade even though the true figures almost balanced out. This genius at manipulating the analysis is mind–boggling.

Yesterday the Minister for International Trade tried again. He altered the trade data, even though the member for Windsor—St. Clair had the actual tables from StatsCan right in front of him and the minister was wrong.

We have seen the government try to rewrite history. Now it is trying to rewrite the statistical facts and the very essence of the truth for this place.

[*Translation*]

CHARLOTTETOWN CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the *Union culturelle des Franco–Ontariennes* or UCFO held a major convention. I am pleased to inform you and all members of this House that the organization has dissociated itself from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. UCFO has said yes to the Charlottetown constitutional accord. Franco–Ontarian women realize that their rights will be better protected in a united and prosperous Canada, and I want to congratulate them for saying so.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Minister for International Trade refused to dissociate himself from an established policy which consists of keeping lists of all so–called enemies of the state who are fighting the free trade agreement.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he also agrees with this policy of keeping lists of enemies of the state or whether he agrees with the opposition parties who see this as a shameful strategy on the part of the government.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, in the old days we used to keep information in various files, clippings of newspapers, speeches from opposition members and so on, but more recently we have come on a new gadget. It is called a computer. We use a computer to store this information as opposed to filling up filing cabinets row on row on row.

That is the basis on which the comment was made that she is referring to in the taped message or taped conversation.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

On whose authority were those Conservatives authorized to spend millions of dollars of public money getting their message across and millions of dollars of public money on an issue that has not even been debated in Parliament?

There has never been a debate on the NAFTA. There has never been a vote on the NAFTA in Parliament. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister's office in fact authorized and approved this strategy or whether it was simply the Minister for International Trade running off on his own.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is quite right. We have gone to some lengths at getting out the information on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

We have sent copies of this to all members of Parliament, to the premiers and to ministers of trade and industry in the provinces. Indeed we have sent copies of this to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the New Democratic Party, and I am sure she has had an opportunity to review that. We have sent this to key associations, a number of chief executive officers, academics, trade and business associations, the media, foreign press, foreign embassies in Canada, as well as a large number of other people.

It is the desire of this government to meet the request that Canadians have put to us, which is: "When you do something, make sure that we understand what it is and we get the information on it so we can draw our own conclusions, make judgments and get views back to the government based on that".

• (1420)

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I asked the question of the Deputy Prime Minister because I thought he would avail himself of the chance to dissociate himself from the policies of his colleague. Since he is choosing not to do so, I will direct my supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board.

[*Translation*]

I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether he authorized the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of compiling lists of persons who endorse policies that are contrary to the policies of the government. Does he agree that spending money this way on the very day his government is cutting family allowances is a serious matter? Can he justify such expenditures?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think the spokesperson for the opposition is dangerously close to twisting the truth.

The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has a budget for promoting its policies, and it is entirely normal it should do so. The hon. member should be flattered that the department bothers to tape what other people say, in order to comment and respond accordingly.

[*English*]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the government is spending millions of taxpayers' dollars on an advertising campaign which is intended "to explain how Canada stands to be a big beneficiary of free trade with Mexico". Is this broad assertion substantiated by studies of the impact on industrial sectors and workers?

The minister says that he wants to provide information about NAFTA. Will he now table all such impact studies to lend some substance to what otherwise will be seen as an expensive piece of self–puffery?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, let me put this into context.

There were two pieces of what might be called advertising material. One was the tabloid which my friend from Hamilton is holding up. I know she has appreciated reading it because it has provided her with information which I hope she will use. The other is a radio advertising program which sets out the impact of the free trade agreement on Canada.

My hon. friend is well aware that our exports to the United States in the early part of this year were at record levels. Our trade surplus with the United States was up at annual rates around $19 billion in the first part of the year compared to $14 billion in 1988. Clearly there has been a positive impact of the free trade agreement on the Canadian economy.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the minister refers to the newspaper insert and to media presentations of NAFTA.

He will know perfectly well that there is nothing in that document or on radio and television that analyses NAFTA. There is nothing in that document that says what is contained in NAFTA. He knows that. It is merely a piece of propaganda puffery.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacLaren: I take it from the minister's answer, which did not answer my question at all, that he will not table the impact studies which must exist on NAFTA on the Canadian economy.

He has promised to release an environmental study by the end of this month. How could he have prepared an environmental study without doing sectoral impact studies? He knows that. How can he hope to design even at this late date the adjustment assistance programs, which he continues to promise Canadians but does not deliver, if he has not done impact studies?

Will the minister now table the impact studies that must exist on NAFTA?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend received a binder, as did his leader, which sets out the impact of NAFTA on various parts of the economy: agriculture, the auto industry, textiles and apparels, financial services, telecommunications, transportation and services, energy, government procurement, rules of origin, standards, and comments on the impact on the environment, labour, wages and adjustment, the impact of NAFTA on cultural industries, health care and so on. I am sure my hon. friend has poured through all this material and finds it very useful. It explains a very important policy as it affects the Canadian economy.

I would be quite happy to table this, Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues wish it. The Leader of the Opposition, his Liberal trade critic, the leader of the New Democratic Party and her trade critic have already received it.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about what they believe is a manipulative propaganda campaign of disinformation being put out over the NAFTA agreement. It started with the tabloid that was sent out by the Minister for International Trade. My question first goes to him.

In the tabloid, it says clearly that "manufacturing employment has increased between March and July by 113,000". Statistics Canada clearly points out that it increased by 43,000. Which of these two sets of statistics should Canadians believe, Statistics Canada or those put out by the minister in his propaganda pamphlet?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my friend may not have been in the House yesterday when I corrected the answer that I gave to his colleague from Windsor. I said that there was an error in the tabloid and I appreciate my friend from Windsor pointing it out.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): What happened was the seasonally unadjusted figures for March were compared with the seasonally adjusted figures. That is where the error came about. If the unadjusted employment figures are compared, the increase in jobs is 181,000, so I do not believe we are giving an incorrect picture to the Canadian public when it is looked at from that perspective.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, what the minister has forgotten to add is that during that same interval 27,000 manufacturing jobs disappeared, which he has not included in his readjusted figures.

Let me go on. I can choose from a number of pages in this tabloid. I refer to the comment on page 2 that says: "Since the NAFTA, no country has been able to take a larger share of the United States market for manufacturing goods than Canada". That is patently untrue. A review of United States government statistics between 1988 and 1991 shows that the growth of Canada's share of manufactured goods was 10 per cent, South Africa's, during that same period, grew by 11 per cent; Mexico's by 33 per cent and Australia's by 45 per cent. None of these countries had a trade deal with the United States.

When the Minister for International Trade says that Canada has the largest share of the United States market as a result of the free trade deal, would he agree that that too is inaccurate?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend would like to give the specific points he wants the background information on, I would be very happy to get them for him.

The facts are that Canada has increased its share of the import market of the United States. There is a very good reason for that. We have seen the U.S. tariffs against Canadian products go down while tariffs against other countries' products have stayed the same. Our exporters have taken advantage of this and it is why we have seen the significant increase in our export performance, as well as in the balance of trade with the United States.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my last question for the minister is something I think will concern all Canadians. We are all concerned about the use of taxpayers' money to sell the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico.

I want to remind the minister that selling the free trade deal with the United States cost federal taxpayers $31 million and the corporations spent $25 million for a total of $56 million.

We know that this is going to be significantly harder sell for the government because Canadians now know who really benefited from the Canada–U.S. trade agreement: multinational corporations, yes; Canadians, no.

My question for the Minister for International Trade is this. Having spent a combined total of $56 million to sell this Canada–U.S. trade deal, how much does the government plan to spend of taxpayers' money and that of their corporate allies in its sales job to sell NAFTA?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I indicated just a few minutes ago that the only plans we have are the tabloid and radio advertising and that amounts to $3.1 million.

• (1430)

It surprises me that my colleague does not refer to some other statistics in this tabloid which show that pharmaceutical exports are up 90 per cent, chemical products up 33 per cent, man-made fibres up 133 per cent, clothing up 89 per cent, electrical machinery up 74 per cent, railway equipment up 126 per cent and aerospace products up 77 per cent. Those are the success stories and they are the responsibility of many, many workers across this country who are working together to produce these results and generate employment back here in Canada.

This government supports them. This government brought in the free trade agreement with the United States to help them do this and they are succeeding.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, this minister just does not get it. This debate is not just about trade, it is about ethics in government.

For eight years the reputation of the government has been tarnished by lack of judgment, failing to separate the interests of Conservatives from the interests of the Canadian public.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister this question. Will he now do the right thing? Will he at least try to correct the wrong created by putting an end to this kind of propaganda campaign today?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Canadians have asked us time and time again, through the prosperity initiative consultations where we have been in 186 communities across the country, is to give them the facts on trade. These people hear all the wild statements from the opposition parties and want to know the facts.

This tabloid is the result. The information, drawn from Statistics Canada, shows the successes that Canadians have had because of their open access to the United States market.

The information also shows how individual provinces have done: Alberta, a 30 per cent increase in its exports; Saskatchewan, a 18 per cent increase in its exports. These are the successes that we want Canadians to understand.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, we have the facts all right. They are in the transcript that we have in hand.

[*Translation*]

The transcript we have of conversations between the top brass of the Conservative Party indicates there is almost one hour of conversation. These conversations were not spontaneous. Canadians want to know once and for all who authorized this propaganda campaign. Did the Minister for International Trade, the Deputy Prime

Minister or the entire Cabinet do so? Who is the guilty party?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that my department is responsible for the trade negotiations. As minister, I am responsible for getting the information out to Canadians.

I ask my hon. friend, is it wrong to repeat Statistics Canada information and put it in a way that Canadians can understand it? In that way, they can see which industries are doing well because of free trade.

It is exactly the information that Canadians are looking for so they can judge how well we are doing in trade, so they can judge the importance of trade because it is trade that brings incremental jobs to Canada. It is trade which brings about the standard of living that we enjoy in this country and it is trade that we are going to continue to reinforce through policies like the NAFTA, the free trade agreement and other export development efforts. In that way we can help increase the standard of living of Canadians.

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ATLANTIC FISHERMEN

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the minister asked if it was wrong to spend multi-millions of dollars on these kinds of propaganda campaigns at this time.

What the minister ought to be asking himself is what the effect of this kind of answer is on a public that is already cynical and sceptical about all politicians.

In my riding today 350 fishermen and plant workers, 10 weeks after the announcement of an emergency assistance program, are still trying to have their applications processed. They are not processed because of a shortage of personnel in the office of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has just told me he has 1,500 inquiries a week from people waiting to have their applications processed. They are not processed because of insufficient staff in the Department of Fisheries.

I want to ask the minister who just asked this House and asked Canadians "is it wrong" if it is not time to end spending millions of dollars fishing for votes for the PC party and start helping the fishermen and other unemployed Canadians who need the help of this government?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that the hon. member has picked a very poor example. With respect to the northern cod disaster alone, the moratorium, so far we have looked after 19,223 fishermen and plant workers. This has all been done since July 2. They have been looked after. We now have an appeal process under way so that people who feel they should be on the program but have not been accepted can appeal.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is $865 million.

Mr. Crosbie: The Minister of Finance reminds me that $865 million is the cost of the northern cod moratorium alone. Surely the hon. gentleman should be fair and try to find some real example. I know it is difficult to find one, but try to find some other example than the one he has given.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, we on this side applaud any measure by this government that will bring any real assistance to the people of Canada who are badly hurting during this recession.

What we are saying to this government on behalf of the thousands of fishermen who are still awaiting a decision on their applications as the result of a bottleneck in administration in the department of fisheries is that this kind of propaganda campaign at this time, costing millions of dollars, this cynical gesture, does not restore public confidence in the public administration process.

Will the Minister of Finance intervene now? Will he cancel his multi-million dollar propaganda campaign? Will he put the money to work on behalf of unemployed Canadians? Will he, in the process, in the middle of a referendum campaign, restore a measure of confidence in the public policy process of Canada?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, one of the very positive advantages of the NAFTA agreement is with respect to the Canadian fishing industry because it opens up markets in Mexico to Canadian fish and removes the tariff. Cod is not the only species we produce in Canada.

I might remind the hon. gentleman that there is a species called salmon, particularly in British Columbia, and many others. The Fisheries Council of Canada and the fishery producers in Newfoundland are very strong supporters of the deal negotiated by my hon. friend who had the fishery right on the top of his list when it came to breaking into the Mexican market.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. As the minister knows by now, Dularie Boodlal has been told by the immigration department to return to Trinidad even though she has supported herself and three children without public assistance for over three years in Canada.

As the minister also knows, Mrs. Boodlal's estranged husband, after 11 convictions in Canada for assault and uttering death threats against her, has returned to Trinidad and immediately, by telephone and letter, resumed his threats to kill her when she arrives there.

Will the minister issue a permit on humanitarian and compassionate grounds and allow Mrs. Boodlal to stay in Canada and apply for landing and support her children, by her word, in peace?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, first of all I cannot, because of the Privacy Act, discuss the details of any individual person in Canada subjected to the Immigration Act.

The hon. member refers to a situation that is really bad. I have read the same report in the press that he has and I agree it is criminal that any person would be treated the way this woman has been treated. We treated it as such in this country and the justice system has worked.

Two weeks ago I intervened in a similar case in Thunder Bay. Information was brought to my attention which allowed me to intervene. If the hon. member knows of facts that ought to be brought to my attention in this specific case, I urge him to do it.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his proposal.

I have the information copied from the Legal Aid Service of Parkdale which they have already sent to the minister.

• (1440)

As well, he has them in his office, including the copy of the letter from Mr. Boodlal threatening to kill her.

The minister also knows, if he has read the file, that the department refused Mrs. Boodlal humanitarian and compassionate landing on the basis of a false accusation supplied in a letter from a Toronto policeman, even though the police department and the immigration department denied sending or receiving that letter. They used that letter as grounds. This is shown in the records of the minister's own department, obtained by the Parkdale Legal Aid Services.

While the minister is investigating this, will he investigate the improper action in his department of this sort, using a false letter, denying that they have not, and ensure that this kind of life-threatening action does not occur again in his department?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I know it is easy to bash on bureaucrats, but I think that the bureaucrats and the officials in the department of immigration do a good job with the means they have.

They have a lot of information and they make the decisions they have to make. There is a process in place to review cases, and we do that.

If the hon. member wants to lodge a complaint about officials of the department, these are civil servants and there is a process to do that. I urge him to do just that.

[*Translation*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday the Minister of Transport stated that the government would take every measure to make sure that we have, and I quote, "a safe, effective and competitive airline industry". My question is this: What measures have been taken by the government to make sure we have a competitive airline industry?

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has been clear both in his responses last week and through the press despite the opposition attempts to muddy the waters. The minister was very clear in his statements regarding deregulation and the benefits of deregulation to the transportation industry in the country.

The figures are there. The transportation agencies have confirmed that deregulation has assisted the industries. The minister and the department have been more than helpful throughout these negotiations in assisting the continuance of competition in the industry in the country.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday in the House the minister said: "There were too many people employed in the airline industry".

The Leader of the Opposition met hundreds of these people in Vancouver on Saturday. These are people who are ready, willing and able to make concession and sacrifices to save their jobs. What is the Government of Canada prepared to do to help them?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to correct any misunderstanding that the member opposite or any members may have taken from statements attributed to the minister.

It is clear that the minister was referring to an acknowledged and accepted over-capacity in the airline industry in Canada. Clearly, the minister and all of us in this House share the member's concern about employees in the industry in Canada and we are all doing our part in trying to maintain that industry.

I have been meeting again with employees of both airlines. I am encouraged by statements from the presidents of those airlines that, in their merger discussions which are ongoing and which are as yet incomplete, both are doing what they can to ensure a minimum loss of jobs in the Canadian airline industry.

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JOB TRAINING

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

With an 11.7 per cent jobless rate in Toronto, the highest since the Great Depression, I would be interested to hear the minister's response to the hundreds of complaints I am receiving about the job training programs.

Not everyone can lose her or his job at the right time in order to coincide with the deadlines for training programs. Hundreds of people in my riding are losing the opportunity of re-entering the job market simply because their UI benefits will run out before the completion of their courses.

Will the minister make job training his first priority by extending the UI benefits where necessary? Also, how will he get over 200,000 Canadians in Toronto working again since he has failed to do this through his job training program?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we will achieve that objective when Canadians fully realize that the matter of training is not an issue that concerns the federal government alone. In the last three years, for the information of the hon. member and his colleagues, we have tripled the amount of money for the training of unemployed Canadians. This year it is over $1.355 billion.

The member asks what more we must do. We must get on with the prosperity initiative and get Canadian corporations to train more of their employees. This message is now sinking in. The private sector has got to play its role in making sure that we have in this country the most skilled work force in the world.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): A supplemental to the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

The unemployed constituents who come to my office for help are coming to my office because they feel they have nowhere else to go. My unemployed constituents want to earn a living, not to get welfare, nor to take advantage of other taxpayers. They have not only lost their jobs, they have lost their confidence and will accept any job to regain their dignity.

The Canada Employment counsellors are frustrated and their frequent advice these days is "go see your MP". Is this the government's job creation strategy, "go see your MP"? What exactly is the minister doing to help the over 200,000 jobless find meaningful full employment in metropolitan Toronto?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): The hon. member refers to 200,000 people. What about the 700,000 Canadian men and women from coast to coast who benefit from the adjustment and training program of this department? This is the same member who on the floor of this House, along with his colleagues, delayed the passage of a bill that allows those unemployed Canadians to train. Bill C–21 was objected to and delayed by those members. Those people who did not have the skills are today getting them because of the tripling of the money we spend on training Canadians.

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NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): My question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

As we heard last week, some people are saying that Canadians can vote no in the October 26 constitutional referendum and the constitution will just go away for five years. Can the minister tell my constituents that they can, in fact, vote no without destructive consequences?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, anyone who says that there would be no negative consequences to voting down this package is engaging in wilful blindness.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What would happen, for example, with aboriginal Canadians is that there would be a very strong sense of betrayal, whose consequences no one can predict.

What would happen in the province of Quebec almost certainly is that the forces of separation would gain momentum and would gain force.

What would happen with the Senate is that the Senate we have, which no one wants, is the Senate that we would keep.

I have to say, as someone who was there through all of those long negotiations, I do not believe that we could ever again, under any kind of circumstances, get the kind of unanimity on such a broad range of issues as we have achieved in the Charlottetown accord.

So there would be very negative consequences to voting no and very positive consequences to supporting this accord and letting Canada get on with the rest of our life.

* * *

• (1450)

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The B.C. salmon industry is in trouble. American fishermen have deliberately taken 700,000 Fraser River sockeye, twice their entitlement under the Canada–U.S. treaty agreement and 1992 is the low year of the four–year cycle. According to DFO estimates, 1.2 million Fraser sockeye have disappeared after entering the Fraser River spawning system. DFO has been trying to find out what happened to these salmon. Can the minister tell us anything at all about the department's investigations to date?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, in British Colombia we have a situation where there is a major change under way in the fishery as the aboriginal people are admitted to take their place in the fishery in accordance with the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada delivered in 1990.

There are major changes under way in which we are trying to involve the aboriginal people by entering into agreements with them for conservation purposes, the healthy management of fish resources, and several experimental agreements under which certain groups are

allowed to sell fish for the first time in many years this year. This results in tensions.

As a result of these tensions, a great deal has been made of a situation with respect to the alleged disappearance of salmon going up the Fraser River from the Mission Bridge to the spawning grounds.

All of the runs of salmon are not completed yet in British Columbia up the Fraser River. We do know that in the early short run some 110,000 less salmon reached the spawning grounds than we thought would make it there.

There may be several reasons for that. It might be poaching. If so, we do not know who the poaching was done by since the poachers were not caught. It may be environmental conditions because of the warmer summer in British Columbia this year.

Or it might be that the electronic equipment used at the Mission Bridge is not accurate enough. It is like a poll; it is plus or minus 20 per cent in its calculations. Next year we intend to have two pieces of equipment there to check. There are all kinds of reasons why it may be that some salmon did not reach the spawning grounds.

The significant thing is this, that this was the best year for sockeye salmon on the Fraser River at this stage of a cycle in 80 years. It was the best year in 80 years and that is the thing that should be noted.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister made an important point. It has been a good year in a 16 year attempt to rebuild the stock, particularly in Stuart Lake, but they have been wiped out. Those fish did not get back there to spawn and there will not be that kind of a return four years from now to Stuart Lake.

We have to know the whole truth before the minister enters into any plans, any deals, any agreements with any resource users between now and 1993. Our B.C. salmon must not be allowed to go the way of the Atlantic cod.

The B.C. Fisheries Commission, the fishing vessel owners, the B.C. Fishermen Survival Coalition, the Sto Lo Musqueam Tsawwassen Bands are all calling for a federal judicial inquiry to investigate the apparent disappearance of hundreds of thousands of returning 1992 Fraser salmon according to departmental estimates.

Will the minister agree to a judicial inquiry into the disappearance of these salmon, the policies of the department with reference to all user groups, and the irresponsible lack of patrolling and enforcing his own regulations?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, there is a special investigation under way in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the British Columbia unit with reference to the extent and cause of any sockeye shortage on the Fraser River such as I tried to outline in my previous answer.

That unit, the B.C. region of the department, will be reporting to me after a thorough investigation on what they think occurred this year and what improvements may need to be made. We have already decided on a number of improvements for next year, including new equipment at the Mission Bridge for the counting of salmon that go into the river, the use of helicopters for patrol purposes, increased enforcement, new regulations with reference to the use of sales slips. I could go on and on.

If I do not get a satisfactory explanation from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with reference to what happened this year, I am quite willing to consider having an independent inquiry into the situation. Nothing sinister has happened. It is regrettable that some fish did disappear this way. Our B.C. salmon stocks are not in danger. Forty-five thousand salmon reached the spawning grounds in the early short run, which is the second highest number ever to reach the spawning grounds there. We had been hoping it would reach the record again this year, but it did not. It is still the second highest ever. So B.C. salmon stocks are not in danger whatsoever.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is directed to the minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs.

On June 30, Judge Pierre A. Michaud of the Quebec Superior Court handed down a judgment in the Libman case after consulting with about 50 experts. In his

judgment, he said it was contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to allow unlimited spending during a referendum.

My question for the minister is this: Considering that he has always claimed he respected the Canadian and Quebec legal systems, and defended the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is the minister prepared to add the necessary amendments to bring the Referendum Act into line with Judge Michaud's judgment and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? Yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I understood that the decision of the Quebec court was that the Quebec law was not in violation of the Charter of Rights. The decision was not that the Charter of Rights made the federal legislation invalid.

I understand that the court decision is under appeal. In any event, that is a court decision respecting Quebec law. It has nothing to do with the federal legislation which is in place which we believe to be fair, proper and certainly consistent with the Charter of Rights.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not seem very concerned about respecting the Canadian and Quebec legal systems and appears to prefer to ignore the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Will the minister nevertheless respect Quebec's referendum legislation and, together with his colleagues, refrain from any kind of advertising during the Quebec referendum and immediately order the cancellation of extensions to three advertising campaigns costing a total of nearly $20 million, campaigns that have been discussed repeatedly during the past few days in the Quebec media? Will the minister do so, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Given the hon. member's political affiliations, his love of the Charter of Rights is truly touching. Presumably, not wanting to lose the protections of that, he will be voting yes on the referendum.

The reality is that the referendum in Quebec will be held under Quebec law because it is a provincial referendum. The referendum in the other provinces of Canada will be held under the law which this Parliament has passed. The law is just, fair and proper.

At the end of the day I think he should have confidence in the people of Canada, including the people of Quebec, to make the right decision in spite of whatever he or any other politicians might say.

* * *

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the government made an agreement back in 1990 with Seafreez providing for the operation of the fish plant at Burgeo and assigning specific groundfish quotas for that purpose.

As the minister noted, the company now says it plans to breach that 1990 agreement by processing the Burgeo quota at other plants.

I want to ask the minister what he plans to do to see to it that Seafreez keeps its end of the bargain and failing that, would he agree to undertake to see to it that local interests are enabled to take over the operation of the fish plant at Burgeo and be assigned the appropriate quotas to do so?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, as usual there are quite a number of complicated facts with respect to this situation. The Seafreez plant at Burgeo was closed in April. The reasons given then were the absence of a labour contract, labour productivity problems, and plant infrastructure problems.

• (1500)

Several years ago, as a result of the efforts of my predecessor as the minister of fisheries, the Seafreez company was able to take over the operation of the plant at Canso, Nova Scotia and a plant at Burgeo, Newfoundland from National Sea Products with considerable assistance from the government and the allocation of quite a considerable amount of various species of fish.

There was an arrangement that 50 per cent of the fish to be transferred from National Sea was to be processed at Burgeo, 50 per cent at Canso and 60 per cent at Canso

of certain other underutilized species and 40 per cent at Burgeo. That still remains the case.

The Government of Nova Scotia entered into an agreement to help Seafreez, particularly in relation to Canso. The Government of Newfoundland did not enter into any agreement to help the company with reference to operations at Burgeo, but my predecessor and I made sure that these provisions were inserted to assist the people of Burgeo.

I intend to see that these provisions are carried out, or we will have an accounting from the Seafreez company. I am by no means satisfied with the statement it recently made. It is not in accordance with the agreement.

Mr. Speaker: I am wondering if the hon. member could perhaps put a very short supplemental. Then I am turning for a single question to the hon. member for Mississauga South.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the minister will know that the Ramea fish plant is also closed as is Burgeo.

He will know that the landings are absolutely dismal in 3Ps, 3Pn and 4R. People are suffering. The economic fallout, the closed fish plants, the job losses are every bit as bad on the south coast as they are on the northeast coast where he declared a moratorium.

Why is he discriminating? Why will he not extend that compensation package to those people in those communities who are hurting on the south coast, the southwest coast and the west coast of Newfoundland?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the fish stocks in places like 3Ps and others, and it is true that most of the fish stocks in Atlantic Canada, certainly the cod stocks, are not in good shape. The TACs recommended for next year are even lower than most of those in effect for this year. The situation is not good with reference to any of these stocks.

The difference between these stocks and the northern cod stock is that the very survival of the northern cod species was threatened, according to our scientists and to all the evidence we have seen, because of the fact that there are only two year classes of any great size, the 1986 and 1987 year classes, which if we allowed them to be caught before they spawn would mean the end of the species.

We had to close that fishery. The other stocks are not in as bad shape as that and we cannot take the same kind of measures. We cannot close the fisheries if it is not recommended that they had to be closed to save the species. That is the position I am in.

I agree that there are fishermen who need assistance in the areas my hon. friend mentions and I hope that my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and I will be able to assist them later in the year as well.

* * *

THE BAHAMAS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I think everybody in the House applauds the government's job in assisting Americans with the hurricane damage in Florida. I was wondering what assistance and efforts the government made to assist the Government of the Bahamas in rebuilding villages like the village of Current on the Island of Eleuthera that was totally wiped out by the hurricane with its fishing dock and its school washed out to sea and every house levelled.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, clearly Canada has responded to the difficult situation in the Bahamas as it does in other places around the world under similar or difficult circumstances.

Fortunately within the Bahamas the damage was very localized and the main damage was not in the major population centres. Consequently the international appeals were smaller than one might have expected.

Canada has contributed $25,000 as part of a $400,000 relief effort by the Red Cross. We have also offered through a private Bahamian relief organization to assist with some building supplies and we have on standby further relief ready to go.

The organization was not quite in place at the receiving end, but we are quite prepared to help our Commonwealth colleague in the Caribbean in any way that we can.

Government Orders

POINT OF ORDER

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I asked the Minister for International Trade to table all impact studies that the government has made on the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The minister undertook to table a document today. May we assume that document represents all the impact studies that the government has made of the North American free trade agreement?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has asked if we can assume that the document the hon. minister referred to a few minutes ago contains all of the impact studies.

All the minister is required to do under the rules at the moment is to table that document from which he quoted and of course he said that he would do so. At this point I do not think I can inquire further.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other Acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): We shall proceed with consideration of the last group of motions tabled at the report stage of Bill C-80. In accordance with the Chair's decision, Motion No. 36 and Motion No. 38 will be grouped for the purpose of debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved:

Motion No. 36.

That Bill C-80 be amended by deleting Clause 15.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre) moved:

Motion No. 38.

That Bill C-80 be amended in Clause 15 by adding immediately after line 3 at page 21 the following:

"(3.4) A taxpayer may request in writing that the Minister determine the amount of the child tax benefit referred to in subdivision a.1 in case of a decrease in the taxpayer's earned income.

(3.5) Within three months of receiving the request referred to in subsection (3.4), the Minister shall determine the amount of the child tax benefit and pay the adjusted amount to the taxpayer."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue the efforts on behalf of the Liberal caucus to improve this piece of legislation or if not, to defeat it.

In this particular Motion No. 38 we would like to address the question of changing circumstances for Canadian families. However, before I go on to that, I think I would be remiss if I did not speak to the issue of the time allocation vote we had this morning. This marks an anniversary of sorts. This marks the 50th time that this government across from us has used either closure or time allocation to cut off debate. I must say with some sadness that it is one of the first times it has used it against children of this country and in the debate on one of the most important issues in social policy.

We have tried several times in the last few years in House of Commons subcommittees and in different forums across the country to bring to the public's attention the questions and issues surrounding child poverty. The fact that the government moves in quickly with time allocation within 24 hours of the beginning of the debate, when this House sets upon to debate it, is the very real sign and indicator of its commitment to children's poverty.

The fact that the government has all its rhetoric for helping out families, but when push comes to shove it does not have the time to talk about it, is something that I hope every Canadian voter will remember in the coming year.

In this legislation there is an anomaly which I think should be addressed by the House before this legislation passes. If the government fails to address it then the legislation should be defeated on this point alone.

• (1510)

When the government set up this piece of legislation it made the decision to base the benefits received by each family on an income year—December 31 of a particular year—then not make adjustments to that until the following July 1 or 18 months later. This means that the

government has set up a bureaucratic process which has absolutely no ability to adjust to people's changing circumstances. If I can use my time in the House this way, then I would like to point out a few situations in which it could be disastrous for families.

Here is an example. Say that somebody is working in Calgary in the oil and gas industry. It would not be unusual for a professional to be making over $66,000 a year. Let us say that one professional in the family was working and making $66,000 a year with three children. Under the current system this family would not be receiving any benefits under the program. However, if on January 2 of that year the income earner was laid off, they would be immediately into UI which is a drop in income from $66,000 to $22,000. The UI would continue for one year at which point the family would have to turn to other methods of supporting themselves. There is, for example, social assistance.

Look at that evolution. A family in the lower-income levels would be receiving, for the three children, at least $270 a month plus some other benefits. Let us just round it out and say the family would be receiving $300. The family, under the way the government has set up this system, would not have access to that money for a full 18 months after their change in circumstances. For a family of five, $300 a month could represent, in very modest circumstances, a substantial portion of a food bill. However, instead of being able to respond and to be able to assist these families, the government is sitting back and leaving it up to the provinces or the municipalities to look after it.

One should stop and think about it. Look at the growth of food banks, for example, and the growth and need for nutrition programs in the schools across this country. One begins to realize that the fact that it has set in motion another piece of legislation which is inflexible and not responsive means that once again families in distress, going through absolutely wrenching experiences in trying to maintain income levels at a very difficult time, do not have access to the support which is being advertised across the country as a brave new way of assisting families. The very time one needs assistance, one cannot get access to it.

Take another example of a family working in a resource community. It could be in the mining community of northern Ontario across the Canadian Shield or in the coal mining industry in British Columbia. Those are very cyclical industries. When things are going well, families with both adults working in a community can very easily make in excess of $65,000 a year together. On the other hand, circumstances can change. Take for example what has happened in Elliot Lake. It is not only one person in the family who loses income, but it is probably both people in the family who very quickly lose their income. Again, there are circumstances where people are tied into a community. They would probably like to have the opportunity to stay but the support system which could be available to them through simple amendments to the legislation is not available to them.

We are proposing that when a family gets into difficulty, then it is able to appeal to the Government of Canada for the benefits levels to be changed after three months. We think this is a straightforward and administratively simple way of adjusting the issue of declining incomes whereby families are put under undue stress. It could be tied in to, for example, the record keeping related to the unemployment insurance system. It could parallel appeal boards in other parts of the government. Take, for example, the pension appeals board where people write to the government and appeal to the government based on their changing circumstances. There are a number of situations that could be addressed if the government would show the initiative and respond to this amendment and show some understanding of the duress that families are in.

From time to time one is struck in the House by the way that other people tell the story of poverty and what it means. Tonight the CBC television network will show a program called *Voices from the Shadows*. It is the voices of people in poverty talking about their lives and their difficulties.

The face of poverty has changed in this country pretty dramatically. People who a few years ago could not imagine themselves being poor, now find themselves poor. As we stand in the House and listen to each other's debates, we have to remember that we are not talking about a marginal group any more. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of families.

I was struck, as we talked about the responsiveness of this legislation, by a comment from one of the women in the program. Her name is Donna Benjamin. She said:

"It's scary when the payments stop coming and the municipality isn't giving you any more to help you out while you are not getting it. It really doesn't seem fair to me that the government is almost holding the mother responsible for the actions of her husband. They are basically punishing the mother and the children rather than the fathers".

People end up in circumstances beyond their control. They end up in transitional times which are very, very difficult for people to survive. Say there is a program that can provide cash on a monthly basis to families. Say that the most important program we had in social policy—the family allowance—is abandoned in favour of targets and targeting. Say that it says publicly that the most important objective is to reach those families who most need it and then it leaves out of the legislation the ability to adjust to changing circumstances to assist families. One is forced to wonder whether or not the government is serious about this issue or whether or not there is some window dressing here that we do not quite understand.

On that basis we introduced this amendment with the hope that the government would see that this is one small step to improving a bad piece of legislation, but it is a necessary step. The failure of the government to accept this amendment will force us to continue to oppose this legislation.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, we have been discussing over the last day or so the government's proposals to respond to the problem of children in poverty.

Today we have seen the government impose extra speed to the debate. It is not prepared to let this debate go its full course and to allow all those who want to to speak in the House about this serious issue and the serious misdirection that the government is following. It is, as always, reprehensible to cut short a debate. However, in this particular case which deals with the children of Canada and the future of Canada—our most valued resources as I think we all would agree—it is particularly reprehensible to shorten the debate to force this bill through as this government is doing.

I would like to limit my comments on this amendment to just a couple of points. First, within this section and within this proposal, the government is finally ending universality in child benefits in the so-called family allowance. The argument we have heard many times is why should the bank president and the rich get some income support from the government to raise their children? Why should that money not be taken away from those who are better off and given to those who are less well off and who really need it most?

On the surface of course it is an argument which has some merit, but it is not an argument which calls for the end of universality. With a fair and progressive taxation system we, of course, would be taxing back most of that child payment. So, in terms of the fiscal reasons or the financial reasons why the government presents itself as being concerned about this issue, it really is a much smaller issue that the government would have us believe.

• (1520)

There are many much larger tax benefits that the rich in Canada have, benefits that are larger than this family allowance. Why would we not look at taking those away from the richest of Canadians rather than just dealing with this little family allowance? Why in that process would we be saying to all Canadians that raising children is not as important as it once was? Surely, as we all know, the rationale behind the universal family allowance is that it costs money to raise children. Children are the future of the country and will pay the taxes in the future and will work and contribute to the economy of the country. Consequently, we need to recognize those extra costs for raising children and support, albeit in a relatively small way, the efforts of those parents, not only on behalf of the parents and their children but on behalf of the country as a whole.

We are taking away the universal family allowance, saying that it is no longer appropriate for the country to recognize that all those who are raising children are contributing to the public good in that process.

An important argument in favour of keeping universality is that it is a much cheaper program to administer. Universal programs are very efficient to administer because of low administration costs as they go to everyone and then are taxed back via the taxation system. In terms of efficiency and cheapness it is appropriate to have universality.

The most important reason is that evidence from those countries, particularly European countries with universal programs, shows that they have the lowest child poverty rate. In other words, there is a link between universal programs and effective child benefit programs. Those countries, particularly the Scandinavian and northern European countries, that have universal programs and where there is not a push to remove universality have done a much better job than countries with targeted programs in dealing with child poverty. Of the developed nations, the United States is the only country with a worse child poverty rate than Canada's. Countries such as Sweden and Norway with universal programs have child poverty rates of approximately one quarter of those in Canada.

Universality works. It makes for a better response to children's concerns and the desire to maintain them at a standard which enables them to fulfil their desires and expectations more fully than is the case if they are poor.

The other point I want to discuss in this context is with regard to the contrast between children who live in poor families that work and those who live in poor families that unfortunately cannot work. In an economy with 11.6 per cent unemployment, and officially the rate is going to be much higher than that, on average one in seven or eight households will have an unemployed person in it. We can see how difficult it is at the present time for Canadians to obtain employment. They are not unemployed because they want to be, contrary to what lies behind some of the comments from the other side. They are unemployed because they cannot find jobs. It may also be that they are unemployed because they do not have the required skills.

Children who live in poverty, whether they live in a poor family that works or a poor family that does not work, do not choose to live in poverty. It is entirely accidental that they are born to poor parents. It is entirely accidental to them that their parents work or do not work.

Under this legislation if they happen to be born to poor parents who do not work, that family will be $500 worse off than if it is fortunate enough to work.

This contrast between the deserving poor and the undeserving poor is one which troubles those of us on this side of the House. It also troubles all those who work on behalf of children because it is clear that rationale is not likely to end with this particular proposal but is likely to be considered in the context of others as well.

For example, there are very real concerns about Canadian pensions and medicare. Are we going to say that the rich should not have access to those programs as well? In that context, the same point goes for universality as it does in the context of family and child benefits.

At the risk of reiterating something that I said yesterday, it is really time that this government address the real problem and not tinker around the edges. That is what is happening here. For the poorest of Canadian children, not one extra penny will be available to them. To those who are not quite so poor, such a small amount of money available to them will really not make a huge difference, certainly not enough to those children and those families out of poverty. Lest we see that it is an unrealizable dream to raise poor Canadian children above the poverty line, as the Minister of National Health and Welfare has said, there are countries like Sweden where child benefits bring poor families up above the poverty line. It is not such an odd notion that we should not put up with one million children living in poverty.

It is time that the government address the real problem with real solutions. It is not only unfortunate but it will be a terrible future for Canadian children because this government does not address those real concerns.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to speak to the amendments to Bill C–80, a bill to repeal the Family Allowances Act. I congratulate my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre who has put forward many amendments to this very regressive bill.

This bill, should it pass in the House of Commons, really means the end of universality as we have known it in Canada for a good many years. Concerning the three existing programs, some of which have been traditionally available to all families regardless of income, this new system will bring an end to them.

The government is doing it as a way to help children in low income families. This is a fallacy because those who are on welfare will not get one penny more.

The partial deindexation of the benefit and complete lack of indexation of the threshold amounts will result in the gradual erosion of the benefit amount as well as lessen the number of families eligible for the benefit.

At present there is no proper mechanism to ensure that dramatic changes in family income are reflected in the monthly benefit amount. As it stands now, it could take up to 18 months for the benefit to be adjusted.

Another major concern is the lack of a federal–provincial arrangement which could result in the provinces capping welfare payments.

This bill signifies the end of universality and the end of recognition of the higher expenses parents incur in raising children today.

The family of a woman who probably enjoys a combined income in her family and is probably above that threshold would in turn be paying back any benefits it had received through the family allowances over the years. It would be paying that back in income tax at the end of the year. This woman said to me she knew that every month she was getting a cheque for her children. She could spend it whichever way she wanted on those children. She could give it to them or she could make allowances for whatever. It was something that she looked forward to even though she realized that she had to pay it back at the end of the year. Now this government is taking it away.

The beginning of the end began long ago. While the government boasts that this legislation signifies an estimated $2.1 billion increase over five years to the child benefits system, we must remember that $3.5 billion has already been taken out of the child benefits system between 1986 and 1991.

The long awaited and promised national child care strategy, a significant deterrent to child poverty, has been completely abandoned, creating additional financial hardship on low and middle income families, especially single parent families. This government has brought forward several initiatives which have negatively affected poor families, such as the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan.

• (1530)

Another area of concern is over what this legislation might mean for women in our society. Some women in abusive relationships, as an example, will now be losing their only form of income, the family allowance. The statistics speak for themselves. Many women feel trapped in these relationships because the only thing that separates them from the poverty abyss is the income of their abusive male partner. Now they are losing their only independent source of income.

It has been established that one of the main reasons for spousal violence against women is the need to control. What better way to control someone than by depriving them of all financial resources? For these women family allowances has been a life–saving buoy.

There are other areas of concern regarding this legislation: the lack of consultation both before and after the release of the white paper; the manner and speed with which the Conservative government is trying to drive the legislation through Parliament unamended; the fact that the Minister of National Health and Welfare would not appear before the committee to defend his proposal which supports the disturbing trend under the Conservative government of transferring social policy to finance; the regressive nature of the increased child care deduction; the enrichment of the RRSP tax deduction which will cost the government millions of dollars in unclaimed revenue and be of assistance only to higher income groups.

The government through this legislation will be using $500 million to provide bigger monthly payments to a carefully targeted group of low income Canadians, thereby creating an illusion of wealth for thousands of low income Canadians in the months leading up to the next election.

Early in January, just as people are coping with paying holiday bills, they will get a big increase in their monthly cheques. For example, a two–child family with an annual income of $30,000 will get $153 a month instead of $70. A few months later, at income tax time, it will be able to claim the usual child tax credits. The government is hoping that most will not realize that it will be their last opportunity for claiming the usual child tax credits. The government is hoping that no one will realize when it is election time, possibly next spring, that their cheques will begin to decrease in July because they are not indexed to inflation.

The government is hoping that low income families will not realize at election time that they will not receive in November their usual $800 first instalment of their 1993 refundable child tax credit. There will be no such thing any more if this legislation goes through.

This is a government that is deceitful at its worst. The government is hoping that no one will realize when it is time to vote that their child credits have disappeared from the tax system as they have all been rolled into the bigger monthly cheques sent out in the initial months of this plan.

This is creative financing at its best. Government spin doctors have been having a field day.

This bill is flawed. It is deceitful and it is unnecessary. It will hurt every Canadian family with children, particularly those families impoverished or on the brink of poverty and also women in unfortunate situations of abuse or neglect. It is not too late for this government to listen to some reason and to have a conscience for these people and these families in situations in which they cannot afford to do without this.

I ask the government to reconsider, to take this bill back and seriously look at the flaws that are inherent in it.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but make a few comments on this legislation.

On November 24, 1989 the House of Commons adopted a resolution. I will read this resolution into the record. It states:

> That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

That was supported by the House of Commons.

Fairly recently, in fact I think it was last May, we approved and became a part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In fact, Canada co-chaired this convention. We were very proud and honoured to see our country playing such a leadership role at the international level in trying to promote the rights of children abroad. That is to be commended, but since May 1992 we have seen no national strategy and no action plan.

The only thing we have heard to date is a comment made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare on May 7, 1992 when he was asked by one of my colleagues about his plans concerning child poverty in Canada. His comment at the time was that there were no specific plans to deal with child poverty.

It led me to believe that what we have put in writing in this House and what we have voted on is not really what we are taking action on. In other words, it is the public at large that is going to look at the action of this Parliament and the vote of this House with suspicion, and rightly so because it has been deceived more than once.

I say this because we have poverty in our country. In fact, one out of every six children in Canada lives in poverty. As well, the death rate of poor children is 50 per cent higher than it is for members of the population with higher incomes. When we look at aboriginal children in Canada we find that their life expectancy is at least eight years shorter than the national average. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian adolescents. I would suggest that figure would increase for poor children.

Let us examine the illiteracy rate of high school students and the drop-out rate of over 30 per cent. All these things require an over-all national strategy to deal with this question. We require a collective effort, not only on the part of the federal government but on the part of the provincial and municipal governments.

Unfortunately, the person or the group or the government that has taken the lead so far on child poverty has abandoned it and has passed it on to other levels of government without any sense of responsibility or any sense of accountability. That is very sad. That is why we are seeing the third sector, the non-profit sector, stepping in to fill the gap. That is also why church organizations are being forced on their own, without any kind of assistance or involvement from the government, to use their own resources to try to help fight child poverty.

I have one example of those who are working tirelessly. Members of St. Andrew's Church in my riding have circulated a petition nation-wide—I assume that all members in this House will be approached to circulate this petition in their ridings—urging the government to keep its commitment when it comes to dealing with child

poverty and promising to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

• (1540)

Another level of government, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa–Carleton, in our national capital region, has unanimously passed a resolution calling on the federal government to take action and keep its promise in trying to deal with child poverty in Canada.

These are not enough. It is the responsibility of the federal government to not only direct the traffic but also to send a proper signal to those other partners that we are serious about what we are doing.

It is not fair for legislation to be put in place that tries to tell the community out there that we are trying to help them if they are poor, the working poor, or of middle income when what we are doing is taking money away from them.

I am talking about the supplement that the government has decided in its own wisdom not to link to inflation or to the cost of living. Anyone, whether in the private sector or the public sector, knows that we live in a society where there is not always zero inflation.

As a matter of fact, in the 1980s the inflation rate was over 12 per cent. With a 12 per cent inflation rate and a zero per cent increase in the supplement for those poor families these people will be losing over 12 per cent on an annual basis. Inflation has eaten away at the supplement that the government is saying that it is giving them.

Second, we are putting in place legislation that gives responsibilities to other levels of government without telling people that there are any strings attached. We know too well what happens to transfer payments for education. Provinces take the money from the federal government, turn around and spend it on bridges and roads. Our institutions suffer as a result of that.

We have an incredible illiteracy rate. We have an incredible drop–out rate in our schools. We have an incredible drop–out rate in our universities. Simply put, this is because we do not have enough resources at the institutional levels. This is no different from what will happen with the new legislation.

My colleague from Nepean mentioned that this marks the end of universality. If we do not want to be so radical in our assumption, if it is not, it is half way to ending universality in our country.

We are saying this because we believe that there is a need for a national strategy to deal with child poverty. There is a need for a national strategy to attack the question of poverty, not for half measures that hurt those who need our help the most. These half measures are not helping the poor.

That is why I and my colleagues have been encouraging the government to look at and deal with some of those amendments which were put before the minister and the government.

What happened? We had closure. Tomorrow we must go to third reading and rubber stamp the bill whether we want it or not so that it will become a law in January 1993. That is not very fair. It is not very fair because we have to allow a proper consultation to take place. We have to examine it and do an impact study to determine whether this bill as it is fits into what we have already committed ourselves, which is to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

We also must look at this bill and determine whether it fits with what we have promised. Not only Canadians but every country all over the world must see that we are serious about dealing with the question of child poverty in our country. Frankly, what we have before us does not address the question at hand. In fact, it falls into a hole on its own.

The government is making a major error in moving very quickly without a proper assessment of this legislation.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to this debate in my offices and listened to drivel from the other side about this very important measure that was set out in the budget of February in detail. This measure was set out then and it has gone through all the stages of committee hearings and public exposure since then.

I heard my friend from Ottawa Centre say: "We need more time, we need more time, we need more time". What nonsense. Surely to goodness a change set out in the budget of February should be able to be effected on January 1 of the following year. That is surely not expeditiously cramming it through.

Surely that is ordinary common sense in the ordinary disposal of decent legislation. If anything, the government is much too slow on these tax changes. My friend from Ottawa Centre ought to be ashamed of himself for saying that they need more time, that it does not fit in with an attack on poverty, that transferring money to families on a monthly basis, on a tax-free basis, is not something that will help people to raise their children. It may not solve all the poverty problems in the world, but it goes a long way.

He attacks it on the basis that it does not do anything for people who are on welfare because they do not have earned income. The last time this House did something for people on welfare, for example the disabled, we gave them money and the provinces took it away. We cannot give them money in this bill because the provinces will just take away their entitlement. We are giving them exactly what they had before, no less and no more. There is not any change in their welfare arrangement because the moment we give them more money from the federal treasury, the provinces grab it.

That is a sensible reason why people in the welfare stream are not specifically looked after in a better fashion. There is no desire to hurt them or penalize them, but there is also no desire to make another transfer to another greedy provincial government that, the moment we give a tax break, immediately issues a new budget and raises its taxes again to grab all the tax room that the federal government in its desire to help people has made available. That is the sensible reason. The member ought to know that, say that and understand that.

Mr. Harb: You mean Ontario or British Columbia?

Mr. Blenkarn: Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia and every other province in the country.

What we have is a transfer, an amalgamation and a settlement of three confusing transfers that are already there, to which has been added another $500 million. We were transferring family allowance money out to people. That money is taken from the family allowance and put in this package. We were transferring to people allowances toward children in the Income Tax Act, a poor allowance, a rotten allowance. It was originally $65 for the first two kids and $130 for the subsequent children in a family, not much of an allowance and only good to people who had taxable income.

Mr. Volpe: I am glad you noticed.

Mr. Blenkarn: Not a heck of a lot but a complication, so we took that out. We are adding that into the till. What else? We have an existing child tax credit program, but people qualify on the basis of filing their tax returns. If they happen to owe tax money, guess what happens? The Minister of National Revenue grabs it. Yes. So the present system works out to help the taxman collect his taxes. It does not help the people who do not have any money. In this system we transfer money to the people who do not have any on the first of every month in advance, tax free. What is wrong with that?

Does the member for Ottawa Centre think there is something wrong with transferring money to people with needy families, tax free? We are taking away the family allowance, but we have already taken the family allowance away from every person with an income of $50,000 or better. Under this scheme people with $60,000 worth of income are still beneficiaries. All this scheme does is make it easier for ordinary folks to raise their kids. I do not know why members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party have something against people wanting to put money into the hands of people to raise their kids, but they do.

It is high time this bill was voted on and high time these foolish amendments were voted down.

• (1550)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to again speak on this most important legislation.

I would like to point out to the hon. member who spoke before me that we do think it is haste when the government is trying to undo 50 years of social policy in this country in seven months.

The past seven months when this Parliament has been in adjournment, has been preoccupied with the Constitution, has been preoccupied with high unemployment, has been preoccupied in completing the trade deals, this government has been sweeping aside 50 years of social policy.

Yes, we are upset. Yes, we are saying that this government is acting with undue haste. Fifty years of Canadian social policy is going down the tubes. One of the things that is most striking about this whole debate is that it is taking place the same week that we are setting

out on a referendum to try to keep this country together, a unity referendum some people are calling it.

If you go right across this country and ask people what identifies us as Canadians, what makes us different from the Americans, what keeps us together, they will identify social programs. Traditionally they would identify three social programs: old age pensions that everybody received; family allowance that everybody received; and medicare that everybody received without fear of financial bankruptcy.

A mother in the Gaspé peninsula or in Pouce Coupe, B.C. or in northern Alberta or New Brunswick would say that she is in receipt of the same family allowance for all of her children. It was a unifying force. It was something that identified us as distinctly Canadian.

It is like a ball game. It is three strikes and you are out. Old age pensions are gone as a universal program. Family allowance will be gone as a universal program. This bill makes it no longer a universal program.

That leaves medicare, which is under attack as a universal program because of the government's cutbacks to the provinces which lessens their ability to pay for universal health care. In fact, the medical association in British Columbia has said clearly that universal health care programs are no longer sustainable in Canada and that it is a policy of the B.C. Medical Association to no longer have universal health care.

With all of these wrapped together, the very fabric of Canada is under attack by this government at a time when we should be launching into a unity debate about keeping this country together.

This is also bad social policy. In fact, I had the opportunity to speak earlier about the whole question. This goes back to the Elizabethan poor law, the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. It is also based on another fundamental flaw in income security programs, and that is the concept of categorical assistance.

Categorical assistance was developed in conjunction with the concept of the deserving and undeserving. There were various categories, and the assistance rates varied, not based on their economic need, not based on their social conditions, not based on what it would take to ensure that they were above the poverty line, but based on their category.

Therefore, there was the blind person's allowance, handicapped person's allowance, veterans' allowance, mother's allowance. It was a long time before men who were unemployed were given any kind of assistance. They were in the lowest of categories in terms of categorical assistance. This is now perpetuating it because we are now going back to a concept of categorical assistance.

This is no longer a universal family allowance program. This is a categorical income assistance program. Certain people in one category will get a certain amount of money. Other people who happen to be working and are now deemed deserving, will get additional money, an additional $42 per month per child. The poorest of the poor, the ones who have no earned income, get less.

If you really sit and think about this, what are the case examples? A mother who has been working, trying to support her two children on $11,000 year loses her job because of the trade deal. What does the government do? It takes away from her $84 a month. It is incredible. Here is a working poor mother who loses her job and what do we do in this legislation? We say to her: "You are only half down, we will kick you down a little farther, we will take away another $84". It is an incredibly stupid social policy. The mother who is living with an abusive husband, who after a certain length of time deserts her, what do we do to her? We say to the mother: "Your husband has deserted you so we are going to take away your family allowance because there is no income coming in. He is considered a single person paying single income tax on his own. What we are going to do is take away your family allowance".

We say to the abused mother or the children who are being abused: "Do not dare leave that abusive husband. Do not dare leave that person who is abusing your children because if you do we are going to take away your $84 a month. We are going to make it as difficult and as impossible for you as we possibly can". This is bad social policy.

I wish the Conservative government had gone back and read a few books on the development of social policies and income security programs in Canada. It would have realized that what it is doing is going back to the whole concept of the deserving and the undeserving poor, the concept of categorical assistance, where assistance is provided, not based on need, not based on what it takes to live, but based on various categories. There is

a category of the working mother and the category of the non-working mother.

At the same time this government is making it extremely difficult for the provinces to deal with family poverty, particularly the larger provinces, Alberta, B.C. and Ontario where it has cut back dramatically on the Canada Assistance Plan. The Canada Assistance Plan is designed to provide income assistance to the very poor, the people who have no other source of income.

A witness before the committee said it best: "I think it is critical to remember that children are not poor in themselves. They are poor because their parents do not have enough money". That is what we have.

Mr. Speaker, you are signalling that my time is up. Unfortunately for many Canadians, it may be that the time is up for family allowances. I would just remind Canadians that it is strike two on universal programs. Old Age Security is gone, family allowance is gone and the only thing left is medicare, which if this government continues its present course on social policy will also be gone.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I would have appreciated if that speech could have been given to the Legislative Assembly in British Columbia because it would be addressed to an NDP government that would be able to deal with the problems the way the member asks us to do. About 75 per cent of his speech addressed problems dealing with the province of British Columbia and not the federal government.

• (1600)

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member for Surrey, I often wonder if we are talking about the same bill in this House.

I do not know if it does any good to confuse the Canadian public as to what is actually happening here. He makes statements to the effect that we are eroding certain programs that we have in this country. That is totally inaccurate. He is suggesting that we are tearing up or destroying the very fabric of Canada. That is a total exaggeration.

Some of the fundamentals of this program have to be explained, and I do not think he has done a very fair job of that. What we are talking about is a bill that will replace an existing patchwork of benefits into one new package. This new package will be called the child tax benefit. We are taking three patchwork programs and replacing them with one.

I question whether the members on the other side actually read the pamphlet that the minister, who is with us today in the House, put out explaining the program. In fact, it reached many Canadians; I know it reached my constituents. They have read it and have responded well to it. This booklet called *The Child Benefit* outlines clearly what we want to do. It is far different from what the member has just suggested.

In very simple terms, what we want to do is replace three patchwork programs with one program that works.

What will the net result be? The net result will be that it will put more money into the hands of Canadian families that need it. It will put more money into the hands of Canadian families. That is something which the opposition ignores completely. They have ignored it all week in this debate. The fundamental truth of this program is that it puts more money into the hands of Canadian families that need it.

I will explain to my constituents quite openly that if they earn over $70,000, this program will not benefit them. I will admit that. I will admit that this program will benefit no one that makes over $70,000 in this country. But those people are not complaining about this program anyway because under the present patchwork system, the family allowance is taxed back anyway. They are saying, why give me something that will simply be taken away come tax time? So that is what we have done.

I have letters on file in my office from my constituents actually complaining "why do you send out this thing?" and the constituent explains "this thing called family allowance, only to tax it back at the end of the year?" I suggest he is absolutely right. Why would we do it?

That is what we are doing with this new program, as is so clearly explained by the minister in this pamphlet. The minister steps through what this program will do for Canadian families. If the NDP wants to argue that it is

going to hurt Canadian families that need it most, that is a fallacious argument, it is not accurate at all.

The only families that will receive less under this program are families making over $70,000 a year and at the end of tax time there is virtually no difference for them anyway because the present family allowance is taxable. It is taxed back. The system that we are talking about now will be a non-taxable support package, one payment coming in monthly. It will allow families to manage their money better. There will be a flow of money coming in monthly versus getting family allowance on a monthly basis and having to wait until tax time to take advantage of the other parts of the program, whether it be the child tax credit or the refundable child tax credit. Let the Canadian people know that this program will help families.

I want to give some examples of what it will actually do. Again, this is outlined in our brochure. It uses an example here of Patricia and her children. Patricia is a single parent who works in a clothing store. It outlines exactly what this program will do for her and her children, a single parent with two children, one aged three and one aged eight, the wages of that family of one working parent of $19,000 a year with child care expenses of $1,500 a year.

Under the plan that exists now, Patricia receives a monthly family allowance cheque of $69.76 for a total of $837 a year for her two children, Andrew and Jane. She pays tax. Can you believe it? A wage earner of $19,000 pays tax on that little bit of money, although she says, which is accurate, she receives an equivalent to married credit of $915 for Jane and the regular child tax benefit of $71 for her son Andrew.

It says that in November 1992 Patricia receives a prepayment of the refundable child tax credit. The remaining $400 is paid after the tax refund is filed. Total annual benefits for Andrew and Jane are $1,925.

Under the new system, after the introduction of this in January, the single parent will receive a single monthly cheque of $211.67 versus that single monthly payment of $69.76. Under the new program the total annual benefit would reach $2,540.

Unlike the program we are presently under, the new child tax benefit will not be subject to tax. She will also retain the equivalent to married credit for that one child.

The annual assistance for this family, a single mother working with two children, will be up by $615. By my standards that is more, not less. So it is with all families in that category of under $70,000 per year.

Again, the fundamentals are correct. Do not let the opposition confuse the Canadian people as to what is happening. The new system will work. It will be much fairer for those people that need income.

The other interesting thing about this new program is that welfare recipients, for example, will not receive less than what they did under the old program. The member opposite just admitted yes, in fact they will get the same. The important thing to remember, and I stress this, is that low income families, the working poor, will receive more.

If you question why would that be, it is very simple. Giving people the initiative or an incentive to do it themselves has to do with self-esteem and respect. Most people that I speak to want that self-respect. They want to feel that they have done something to better themselves. They want governments to recognize that.

• (1610)

All the other safety nets will be there for people who, for whatever reason, do not work or cannot work. We have those systems, the existing federal or provincial programs. But where we have fallen down as governments, and I am talking both federally and provincially, is that we have not recognized the working poor. That is the one big advantage in this new program. For once, we are recognizing the working poor. Over all, I can support this new system and I think that all fair-minded Canadians will support this new system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I am resuming the speech that I had to interrupt for lunch. I would like to come back to the speech given by my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party.

[*English*]

When he says that he can support this legislation he ignores something that we have been addressing throughout the entire debate this day and the last.

That is that it is fundamentally flawed because it shows a particular philosophical departure from those tenets which we have established as being central to a Canadian identity, a social identity, one that puts the individual citizen first and foremost as the object of all legislative initiatives.

This morning I said that we have a basic problem with this legislation. That problem is seen in the way it does not address the interest and the needs of those elements of society which are most vulnerable.

Even my colleague from the Conservative Party has noted that young children of single parent families, which by the way have the largest increase in numbers in terms of types of families we have in this country, and children from welfare families are the ones most prone to the difficulties that are imposed by the vagaries of our economy, our marketplace and our society.

We see that not only through the very short term. Immediate needs of food, shelter and clothing, needs that will not be satisfied by this legislation, needs which set the fashion, have been diminished because of the government and this minister's actions in the past when we have cut $3.5 billion from this kind of a program through a cap on CAP and other such programs.

Those children suffer in the immediate short term, but they suffer as well through some of the findings of the government which findings indicate that students from families that have been improperly nourished by financial means find themselves at a disadvantage in school. They are the children which are most likely not to succeed. They also represent the greatest portion of those who fall into that category of dropping out prior to achieving a high school diploma.

What happens? I closed off this morning's debate with the suggestion that if we do not pay now, we will pay much more later. The government does not seem to appreciate that its own findings suggest that not nourishing our society at this level today means that we will have a loss in productivity which it has identified with its studies. We will have a built-in clientele for large unemployment as we head into a highly technological advanced period in the history of mankind. Most of all, we will create a clientele of dependency among those who are going to be very ill equipped to handle the new changes that come upon us.

Yet this government says that we must accept this legislation without any of the amendments that the opposition members who have so studiously laboured over this bill are putting forward.

When I say studiously laboured over in order to arrive at such amendments, I remind the Speaker and members of this House that only one witness that appeared before the committee studying this legislation had anything positive to say about the legislation, just one, a junior professor at one of the universities. But all of the associations that deal with social policy, those that deal with the front line consequences of this type of legislation, bash the government. They were invited by the government to appear.

This kind of legislation putting forward initiatives and law does not do a heck of a lot for generating confidence in the general public. It is the same lack of confidence that I fear may be hitting us with respect to the constitutional package proposed by the government in this last week.

The Minister for Constitutional Affairs said that we have to accept this deal and that it is really the only one we could have had. I quote him: "Our goal here is agreement". Nothing else, just agreement. It is agreement based on some principles we had before us but no final, official text. I wonder sometimes whether it is possible to achieve agreement in an adversarial parliamentary system that is not designed to strike agreement very easily. I wonder if that agreement is possible when the negotiators at the table, all the first ministers and representatives of the aboriginal communities, found themselves developing a climate that perverts an old ethic that has governed legislators and civic-minded citizens the world over for the greater part of this century.

Unfortunately, I would have to quote an American president who verbalized that ethic when he said 30 years ago: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". We found the emergence of a package from negotiators who went with one basic approach: "What can I get? Gimme, gimme. Let us see

what we can get for ourselves", rather than what we can do to enhance this country and to make it grow.

I wonder if Canada can be well served when we had provincial premiers at a table determining the directions of Canada and on one hand allegedly pleading for a Senate that will represent provincial and regional interests and on the other hand attempting to institutionalize an annual First Ministers Conference on the economy, not realizing, of course, that what they are doing in this process is undermining the role of members of Parliament and senators.

It is these kinds of things that erode the sense of confidence. For example, we could have had an opportunity at that moment for all members negotiating to tear down some of the things that divide us such as, on a commercial basis, things like tariffs. The minister asked us, "to stop focusing on the past and its wrongs and to focus on the future and its promise". He ignores something I would like to bring to the attention of the House. This is a *Globe and Mail* article dated August 17, sent to me by one of my constituents, Mr. Kohn, written by an associate professor, a former resident and citizen of Canada, now at the University of California in L.A., Professor Harry Vinters.

He says:

> On visits home I see a nation torn apart by bitter squabbling over constitutional language issues largely focused on the "founding cultures" both of which have become fossilized, intransigent and practically oblivious to the fact that much of Canada's current vigour derives from neither its French nor its British roots. It comes instead from the strength and diversity of relatively recent European, Asian and Caribbean immigrants.
>
> Nearing the turn of the millennium, Canada is a country whose Chief of State is a man named Hnatyshyn and whose political leadership includes people with such names as Mazankowski, Jelinek, Romanow and a collection that one could scarcely have imagined even 50 years ago.

That package and the country is asking people who come from that kind of a background for yet one more sacrifice, to face their own identity so that others can be satisfied in the fashioning of a Canadian one.

I and many others from such a community will support that package nonetheless. Once and for all we hope it will end a lot of the squabbling that has afflicted all of Canada. Second, perhaps we will finally send a signal to the international community that we have set our house in order and that we will carry on and finally solve some of the short-term issues on regional representation, questions about distinct society and the concept of aboriginal self-government.

• (1620)

Finally, I think it gives all Canadian citizens an opportunity to say Yes to Canada.

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

[*Translation*]

I would like to say something in Italian because for one last time hopefully the ethnocultural communities of our multicultural society are being asked to make one more sacrifice on behalf of Canada. They are willing to put their own identity aside in the hope of promoting a Canadian one even though others are busily fractioning and partitioning Canada. They are destroying the wealth and resource of a Canada that the immigrant community and it's children know but which the current government scarcely recognizes.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to say that in my own language.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to take part in this debate on Bill C-80 at the report stage. In particular, I would like to speak for a few minutes on the amendments before the House which we feel are quite important. However, before doing that I would just like to say that the Conservative government has been clever and consistent in taking from low and middle-income Canadians over the past number of years.

There is the example of the $3.5 billion that has been cut out because of the deindexation of the child benefit system, the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan and budget cuts to social housing. It cancelled the national child care program, it has reduced UI eligibility and offered no new retraining or job creation initiatives.

These are just some of the areas that in my mind this government has inflicted right across Canada on Canadians. This was done whether they were unemployed because jobs have been lost over the last few years, the working poor who have depended on housing, the poor who have lost hope and have no jobs or working mothers. This government through all its social programs has made a dedicated effort to cut back on those most in need.

As it cuts back in this particular instance, it is the children in Canada who are going to hurt. I will just quote from Dr. Robert Glossop of the Vanier Institute of the Family when he said: "The anti-poverty impact of the new system will be negligible and will provide benefits inequitably to different categories of the power." I believe that and I will explain why.

The point of this bill is that for the first time in Canada's post-war history we will have no affirmation of a commitment by this government to children universally and to the parents who care for them.

It may seem like we have to cut back because these are tough times but I cannot help but feel that it would be better to allow the family allowance benefits to continue for another year rather than rushing this bill in a very depressed time in the economy. It could allow the spending to continue out there and bring back the indexation or the $3.5 billion it has cut since 1986 to 1991 from families in the family allowance program.

Of course the minister says we need it. He needs it. It needs it. This government needs it to get re-elected next year. They need to give Canadians $1,020. This will be the same amount as what the person who receives the $1,020 in January would have received under the present system.

There will be many others who will say it is good for the government to cut the family allowance, but they do not realize that the non-refundable child tax credit will be gone as well as the refundable child tax credit as well as that which the woman or parent or person who raises the children will have no right to unless they qualify.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. With due respect, the member is stepping through a number of figures which are inaccurate. At the end of the day the very family she is talking about will have more money, not less money, and therefore I think she has to be corrected.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): You will understand that this is a matter of opinion. Therefore the Chair can only listen to the points of view of both sides.

I again recognize the hon. member for South West Nova.

[*English*]

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I hope that the hon. member is not taking my time with his inane comment. He has a minister who does not even go to the committee to explain to the members what he is probably espousing.

The minister may want to counter that. I agree that the same people will receive the same amount of money. There are many more who will not receive.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the hon. minister.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I take exception to what the member said about my presence in the committee. I have proven in the past that I can go to the committee when we believe the minister can provide the information. This is normally available to all members, including the Conservative members, who have exactly the same figures and can talk about that accordingly. I would appreciate if the member does not refer to my absence but to my presence at the committees.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for South West Nova.

Mr. Walker: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Walker: This has been a very interesting exchange and I am very happy to have the minister today participating in the debate because I think he will begin to recognize how much we would have appreciated and enjoyed his participation at an earlier stage to clarify some of these questions between other members.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I must remind members on both sides of the House that no mention must be made of a colleague's presence or absence in this Chamber. I ask the hon. member to return to the consideration of the motions in question.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, it was not a question of his absence from this House, because he was indeed here. It had to do with his absence from the committee. He can come here, to the House, at any time, but I was referring to his absence from the committee.

[*English*]

I want to get to the crux of it. Yes, the people who received benefits before will continue to receive them. I have no qualms at all about that. They will receive their entitlement to the child tax credit with a refundable child tax credit because they are going on the income tax year of 1992. It will not be until 1993 that that same family will realize that there is no child tax credit coming back and

that there is no non-refundable tax credit or the family allowance. Three things are going for most Canadian families. It is not most Canadian families, but for any family that has a net income of $25,000 to $66,000. Their benefits will go on a decreasing scale as they get to the net total income of the family earnings of $66,000 and a bit. I think it is $66,721 for a family of two. If there was a larger family it would probably be a little higher.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is one of those programs that the government shows an inability to change in mid-stream. It brought out a February budget where it wanted to put a cap on CAP and it did. It is now doing it to the family allowance where people would be spending this money in a depressed time, keeping the economy stimulated and keeping the jobs out there because of the government spending. This side of the House is asking this government for any type of massive job creation across Canada so people will start working. They are taking money out that would keep stimulating it when most people are saying the government has got to do something. It cannot just sit there. I say this because, over all, this government will now put on an added onus—this is where the amendment comes in—because it will take anywhere up to 18 months for a couple whose income changes within a year.

Mr. Speaker, I realize you are telling me I have two minutes. I hope you are not taking the minister's time and including it in my 10 minutes. It should not be so. I just want to say that there are two fears about this program. It is geared to the lower income in the working poor. A lot of those lower-income people rely on other assistance. Let us say it is provincial welfare assistance. I have seen it in the past where, if it is a disability pension and they are receiving social service assistance, then as the Canada pension disability goes up, the province takes it back. This is what will probably happen without a commitment. This government never gets that type of commitment anyway. It would not bother. The province has every right to take it back.

• (1630)

What is even worse is that as it takes back paying the social service assistance, it will not have to pay the 50 cent dollar on the social service assistance that would have been paid. So it is gaining on the Canada Assistance Plan because it will not have to pay that welfare. Even if it is only $4 or $10 a month, it is something that is being taken away from the Canadian people and from people who need it such as children. The onus is going back to not giving it to the children, but making sure that if there is a gain that the province can come in and take it away. They do it under the disability pension for people in my province. You get the indexation one month and the next month the cheque goes down.

There is another thing I want to say and it is a shame. I wanted to say that our party feels there should be a child benefit adjustment board. There are those people who do suffer the loss of a job and have to wait for their next yearly income tax. There will be a transition there that is going to hurt families and children across the board.

The minister may want to rise and say that people can write in right away and do this and this. Does he know that I am getting pensions that are under the Canada disability plan that have been there for many years. They are getting $20,000 back and they have to pay the welfare back? The systems don't work any more in this government.

This government is a tired government. This government has got to go. It has lost the confidence of the Canadian people and this is just one more action to help I don't know who. It may help their election perhaps by bribing some Canadians until June next year.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before giving the floor to another speaker, 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 Halifax—Judges; the hon. member for Don Valley East—The Environment; the hon. member for St. Boniface—Linguistic Minorities; the hon. member for Hamilton West—Employment.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take part in the debate this afternoon. But some regrettable things are being said and I think it is important to set the record straight so as to explain why Canadians very favorably received this bill in April and are very positive towards what this government is doing for children.

[*English*]

At the same time we understand why the Liberal party had a problem with the provinces in the past in the way that they are mixing up the responsibilities of the province. The member from Nova Scotia said that the welfare system does not work. The federal government is involved in the social benefits for welfare, but at the same time—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the member for South West Nova.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I never said the welfare system in Nova Scotia does not work. If I ever said that then I would be at a loss, because that is what a lot of people in my riding are on. The minister has by capping CAP tried that. I would never say that the welfare system does not work because that is the only income most people have who are not working.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please! It is a matter of differing opinion.

I again give the floor to the hon. minister.

[*English*]

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful the way that the member understood what I said. I did not say that the welfare system did not work in Nova Scotia. I said "the member from Nova Scotia". This is where I understand the member is from. I said that the welfare system, wherever you are in the country, is under the responsibility of the province, whichever province we are talking about.

I want to explain today the reasons why Canadians welcomed the announcement we made in April and June about the package for children. Canadians know very well that first we dealt with the convention for children which was signed by the Prime Minister last December in front of all the children of Canada and is highly regarded by all Canadians.

Second, we announced the package of children's benefits which represents more than $2 billion over five years for the children of Canada. We are trying to help what we called at the time the low income workers' children, those who will not receive the benefits of the social benefit system but at the same time are within the $10,000 to $20,000 bracket.

A lot of women in the $10,000, $11,000 or $12,000 bracket will receive $400 a child more than they did before. That is the category of people we are targeting.

At the same time, we announced in June—

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. The minister states that a woman will receive an extra $400, but the documents states $500. Would the minister please clarify whether it is $400 or $500.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): If the documents say $500, trust the documents, because the documents were prepared by the minister.

What I was about to say is that we also announced what we called at the time the *Children at Risk: Brighter Futures* with $500 million for children. It deals with the question of the promotion, the protection and the prevention of all problems that our children, particularly those who are between zero and seven years of age, face in the country. All of this represents more than $3 billion announced by this government for the children of Canada over the past six months.

I repeat what I said. It was highly applauded by Canadians. We know that 75 to 80 per cent of Canadians agreed, particularly with the children's benefit program. Canadians agreed that we should be giving more money to the poorer people, the poorer families and less to those with higher incomes who are more able to look after themselves and their children. That is the policy we are talking about.

The reason we asked the House to pass the bill today is so that we will be able to give that money to the children of Canada beginning January 1, 1993. It is a good reason. We believe that it is a good policy.

The opposition should applaud it. I do not understand why they are opposed to us giving $1 billion more to the children of Canada. It is not the way they would do it. We are doing what we can within our capacity. We have to face fiscally and economically that reality, not in the way they did it before when they had exhausted almost all the capacity that this country had to pay not only for children.

[*Translation*]

Also, I think that Canadians in general are satisfied with the way the government has acted toward Canada's children, especially with the fact that in the past six months we added $3.1 billion to the money already paid. That was quite an effort, recognized throughout the

world, considering that the programs for children in Canada are now among the best in the world and still managed in a fiscally responsible way.

Again, when we look at all we are doing, of course, as we say for the constitutional agreement, it is not perfect and we are quite aware of that. But given our ability to face our actual situation today, we think that $3.1 billion, of which $2 billion will be allocated directly over five years to help low income working parents improve their revenue, is a matter of balance, whatever the New Democrats in particular think of the famous sacrosanct principle of universality whereby people earning $500,000 a year got family allowances when low-income individuals benefited less.

With that in mind, I hope and trust—

• (1640)

[*English*]

—the opposition will now applaud the quality of the bill, particularly because it is part of a package which has been announced over the last six months. We have, among the industrialized countries of the world, almost the best programs and we provide the best programs we can for the children of Canada.

Therefore, I would appreciate it if the opposition would recognize what this government has done. It may be the most that any Government of Canada has done for the children of Canada.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take part in this debate and to support the amendments put forward by my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North Centre.

This amendment would permit the Minister of National Revenue to reassess the child benefit amount in the case of a loss of family income and make an adjustment within three months. This amendment would address the responsiveness problem in the bill which would result in an 18-month delay in adjusting the benefit.

Listening to the minister speak just a moment ago begs the question: If this legislation is going to be that great a benefit to the children of Canada, why did all of the groups, why did our critic in the Liberal Party and the other critics and the various groups across the country appearing before the committee have a different opinion?

I fear that the Canada we have known in the social sense is about to come to an end. The legislation being debated marks the end of universality of one of the oldest social programs and, as far as I am concerned, is replacing it with a magic show full of smoke and mirrors and sleight of hand to make the poorest of Canadians feel that they are receiving some kind of a benefit just before the next election.

We have seen some remarkable displays from this government in the past. While it gears up for the next election, our mail boxes have been flooded with tabloid style advertising sheets, as we know, singing the praises of the free trade deal and promising even better results from NAFTA. To read the propaganda being put forward, one would be hard-pressed to figure out why over 1.5 million Canadians are looking for work and why the country is in the depths of the worst economic downturn since another Prime Minister was going to blast his way into the markets of the world in the 1930s.

The legislation which is before us today is somewhat similar to the sheet being put out about how healthy our economy is. The legislation is part of a fundamental change in our social policy, designed to give the illusion of increased benefits beginning next January, reinforced at tax time by seemingly increased family benefits.

We know that the next federal election must be held before the end of November 1993, coincidentally about the same time the benefits which seem so real early in the year will start to disappear and the true nature of this legislation will become obvious. This legislation will then be seen for what it is, part of an agenda which is designed to further advance the interests of those that control the assets of this nation. The old saying "the rich get richer while the poor get poorer" has never been more true than when speaking of this legislation.

As I said before, almost every witness who appeared before the committee studying this legislation condemned it. Representatives from welfare groups and agencies, from family services groups and academics were virtually unanimous in their condemnation. It was said that the legislation would do nothing to reduce or eliminate childhood poverty, nor would it do anything to allow people to raise themselves up to a higher economic

standing. As I pointed out earlier, it creates the illusion before the next election that benefits will increase.

The whole process leading up to where we are today has been flawed by the unseeming haste of the government to get this legislation through without proper debate or study. We were allowed two days of debate and then closure was invoked.

The legislation was then sent to committee where brief hearings were held revealing mostly negative impressions of the legislation. Now, today, we are at report stage and the bill will soon become law.

The government will then try to implement these changes which are exceedingly complex before January 1 next, necessitating the training of some 4,000 public servants in the new program before its implementation.

They then will be administering a program which will be so complex that most taxpayers will not be able to make their own calculations but, rather, will have to depend on the calculations of these public servants to have their entitlement determined.

There are two ways that this House could deal with the bill in a just and a fair manner. It could be thrown out and new legislation could be brought in which would reflect some of the concerns that have been expressed before the committee. The other option is for the government to listen to some of the amendments that have been proposed which, while they are not perfect we admit, would at least remove some of the most glaring inequities in this legislation.

Our party would of course like to see the entire bill done away with and a just, a fair and an equitable benefits package developed. We certainly have the resources and the expertise to do that, and to bring something before this House that would be a positive step toward eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, which has been the stated goal of this House since 1989.

I am not naive enough to believe that the government would do this. Perhaps it will listen to some of our other suggestions which would at least make the current legislation a little more palatable. The full indexation of the benefits proposed—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It being 4.45 p.m., pursuant to order adopted earlier today, in accordance with Standing Order 78(3) it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 36. 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the report stage of the bill before the House.

Call in the members.

(*And the bells having been rung:*)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The first vote is on Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

The vote on this motion will also apply to Motions Nos. 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 69 and 71.

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

(*Division No. 227*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse		Anawak	
Angus		Arseneault	
Axworthy	(Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Axworthy	(Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare		Berger	

Black	Boudria
Breaugh	Butland
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy	Comuzzi
Copps	Dingwall
Duhamel	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hunter	Karpoff
Keyes	Laporte
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
MacAulay	MacLaren
MacLellan	Maheu
Manley	Marchi
McCurdy	McGuire
Mifflin	Mills
Murphy	Nystrom
Parker	Peterson
Plamondon	Proud
Riis	Rodriguez
Samson	Simmons
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Belsher	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Cadieux	Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Collins	Cooper
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Danis	Darling
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Fee	Feltham
Fretz	Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Grey (Beaver River)	Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Horner	Horning
Hughes	James
Joncas	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Layton	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Marin	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean	Merrithew
Moore	Nicholson
O'Kurley	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Shields
Sobeski	Sparrow
Tardif	Tétreault
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
White	Wilbee

Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—93

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair	Lewis
Milliken	Oberle
Reid	Rompkey

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare Motion No. 1 lost. Therefore I declare Motions Nos. 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 32, 34, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 69 and 71 lost.

[*English*]

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you might find a disposition to apply the vote as just recently taken to grouping number two, grouping number three, grouping number four, and then in reverse for concurrence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Although we were not consulted, since the three parties are no longer in the habit of consulting, we agree to co-operate.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the the proposition. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the proposition?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Hicks: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sorry I was a few seconds late coming in. I did not hear you read the question. Therefore I did not vote but I would naturally be honoured to have my name added on the subsequent votes to those of the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chartrand: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, I was away for the vote and I would like my name to be added to the list of those who voted with the government for the following motions.

[*English*]

The House divided on Motion No. 23, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 228)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare	Berger
Black	Boudria
Breaugh	Butland
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy	Comuzzi
Copps	Dingwall
Duhamel	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hunter	Karpoff
Keyes	Laporte
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
MacAulay	MacLaren
MacLellan	Maheu
Manley	Marchi
McCurdy	McGuire
Mifflin	Mills
Murphy	Nystrom
Parker	Peterson
Plamondon	Proud
Riis	Rodriguez
Samson	Simmons
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Belsher	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Cadieux	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford	Collins
Cooper	Corbett
Côté	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Danis
Darling	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dobbie
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Fee
Feltham	Fretz
Friesen	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Horner	Horning
Hughes	James
Joncas	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Layton	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Marin	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean	Merrithew
Moore	Nicholson
O'Kurley	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Shields
Sobeski	Sparrow
Tardif	Tétreault
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
White	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair	Lewis
Milliken	Oberle
Reid	Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 25, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 229)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare	Berger
Black	Boudria
Breaugh	Butland
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy	Comuzzi
Copps	Dingwall
Duhamel	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hunter	Karpoff
Keyes	Laporte
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
MacAulay	MacLaren
MacLellan	Maheu
Manley	Marchi
McCurdy	McGuire
Mifflin	Mills
Murphy	Nystrom
Parker	Peterson
Plamondon	Proud
Riis	Rodriguez
Samson	Simmons
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Belsher	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Cadieux	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)

Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid

Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 26, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 230)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay

Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren

MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker

Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid

Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 27, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 231)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 28, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 232)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)

Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 29, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 233)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 31, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 234*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 36, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 235*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)

Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The House divided on Motion No. 38, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 236)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance) moved that 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: 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I think you might find a disposition to apply the votes taken on report stage in reverse on this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 237)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Bourgault
Cadieux
Chartrand
Clifford
Cooper
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Feltham
Friesen
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Horner
Hughes
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—95

Andre
Attewell
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Fee
Fretz
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Black
Breaugh
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Murphy
Parker
Plamondon
Riis
Samson
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Berger
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Finestone
Fontana
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Karpoff
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Mills
Nystrom
Peterson
Proud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Volpe
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Milliken
Reid
Lewis
Oberle
Rompkey

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

When shall the bill be read for the third time? According to the order made earlier today, at the next sitting of the House.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

EMPLOYEE SHARE PURCHASE PLAN ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, June 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Butland that Bill C-327, an act to assist employees to purchase a controlling shareholding in the corporation that employs them and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, the House is faced with a private members' bill, Bill C-327. It stands in the name of my colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie. I think not only this House but all of Canada is indebted to my colleague for having put before this House a very creative and innovative proposal.

He is to be congratulated because in his own community he was faced with a very serious problem. Here is a member of Parliament representing a community in which the major industry employing some 5,000 or more people was faced with a shutdown.

This member of Parliament, along with the community, decided to work diligently to try and address that specific problem. Rather than spitting into the wind, rather than cursing the darkness, my colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, decided to work diligently to find a solution to a problem that faced not only Algoma Steel but increasingly in 1992 faced many other communities.

We are in a period of recession and we have been in periods of recession before. I remember the recession of 1982 very well when plants were closing, when plants were laying people off in my own community. INCO and Falconbridge closed down for a whole year. The workers were laid off but hope sprang eternal in their breasts because they knew once the economy turned around they would be recalled and production would continue and they would earn wages and be able to pay their expenses and keep their families.

It is very different in 1992. Invariably when the plants close today, hope does not spring eternal because we are faced with a recession and a restructuring of the economy not only in Canada but world-wide. Some may not want to admit it but the fact is a lot of plants are closing here and when they close here they move somewhere else. We attribute that to the effects of the free trade agreement with the United States.

There is evidence of thousands of jobs being lost because the plants close here and relocate to the sunshine states where costs are less.

Plants do not have to worry about heating in the winter. In some cases there are no minimum wage laws in those states. The laws governing the organization of trade unions are very weak or non-existent, they are right to work states. They do not have effective legislation, not only on the books but enforced, with respect to occupational health and safety in the work place.

I was just listening to *As It Happens* last night. I heard about a chicken plant somewhere in Mississippi in which the conditions were most appalling. A fire took place in the plant and workers lost their lives.

As I said, in 1992 we are dealing with a different situation, not the same situation that existed in 1982. Plants are leaving now and not coming back. In some of these instances it is not that the plants are not making money, it is not that they are not making profits. In many instances it is that they are not making enough profits.

We have the case of Algoma. We have the case of Spruce Falls Pulp and Paper plant in Kapuskasing. It was going to close, not because it was not making money, but because it was not making enough money for those who owned the plant.

What my colleague has proposed is an employee ownership plan. At the moment we have no federal structure for employee ownership. It seems to me that federal governments, not only in the past but now the present government as well, deal with these situations in a knee-jerk reactionary approach. It is crisis management. As the crises arise, they try to come to a solution to the problem. Ontario and Manitoba are contemplating and have proposed legislation which sets a framework within which employee ownership can take place.

What my colleague has presented to the House of Commons is a bill, Bill C-327, which sets out the parameters and lays out the structure in which this type

of ownership can take place. Why is it needed federally? As my colleague has pointed out, there is a need for the federal agencies to be involved. It means that we are thinking of a whole new concept. We are making the capital markets available to workers. Presently, capital markets are available to corporations and very wealthy individuals. What we are attempting in this plan is to make those capital markets available to workers.

To do that we need the co-operation of Revenue Canada, for example. The plan my colleague has put forward requires that the incentives extended to corporations *vis-à-vis* the Income Tax Act on investments should also be available to workers.

Surely this has to be a positive thing for Canada. When a worker starts taking responsibility for his work place in terms of being an owner, that has to have an effect, not only in terms of decision making, not just on the plant floor, but all the way to the board room. That input is important to the overall productivity of the plant. The sense of ownership that comes with this kind of plan is an important incentive for a worker to feel like part of the operation, thereby resulting in greater productivity.

• (1730)

This is the most effective way of redistributing wealth within the country and maintaining Canadian ownership in the work place and the corporations of the country.

Presently there is no federal legislation on this matter. Quebec has been light years ahead of the federal government with its co-op legislation which allows a corporation to shift from being privately owned to a co-op.

There are solidarity funds that allow for shares to be purchased in companies. That is not the plan my colleague has put forward. His plan deals with the individual workers working together as part of a collective purchasing ownership in the corporation, actually owning assets and influencing decisions on the daily operations and on the over-all strategy of the plant.

As I said before, I want to commend my colleague for this initiative. It certainly brings to our attention a very creative and innovative way to approach the problem in which we find ourselves. The example I mentioned before in Kapuskasing where the workers' jobs were saved because of an ownership plan and the Ontario government. This is probably one of the great achievements of the Ontario government. It saved the community that depended on that plant. I might point out that between December 1991 and June 1992 the plant turned a profit of $2 million.

I say to my colleague and to my colleagues in the House that Bill C-327 is the flagship of employee ownership in Canada. It is an idea whose time has come.

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, we are considering today Bill C-327 which proposes a 50 per cent tax deduction for investments to finance employee takeovers of the businesses where they work.

This deduction would be available to employees, employers or financial institutions involved in such investments.

The proposal raises a number of questions which deserve our careful consideration. One should ask whether the proposal is good for employees, whether it is good for business and finally whether it is good for taxpayers as a group.

We have been fortunate enough to have this summer to ponder these questions. I have spent considerable time studying the issues involved and have come to the conclusion that on the whole this proposal raises more problems than it resolves.

However, I welcome the opportunity to share with hon. members the reasoning which brings me to this conclusion.

I would begin by examining the proposal from the employees' standpoint. None would deny that Canadian employees put forward a great deal of effort in order to bring home their pay cheques. Their cheques must cover their bills for food, shelter, clothing and transportation. If they have special needs, these too must be met with the same pay cheques. We certainly cannot overlook the amount that must be set aside for provincial, federal and municipal taxes.

On top of all these spending pressures, Canadian employees must do their best to provide for their future financial needs. Perhaps when faced with ill health or unemployment, and almost certainly with decreased earnings during retirement, employees must try to set

something aside and must decide where best to place the nest egg.

This is not an easy decision for any of us. We all have acquaintances who are willing to undertake what we would consider overly risky investments. They do so in the full knowledge that high rewards often accompany high risks. At the same time, we all know of those who invest with safety first considerations at the top of the agenda. They are prepared to take a somewhat lower return in exchange for the peace of mind that comes from safe investments.

Which is the best strategy? The answer to this apparently straightforward question is it depends. It depends on the individual making the decision. What is best is a very personal decision that is governed by a number of factors, including the individual's past experiences, current situation and outlook for the future. Should we, through the income tax system, be sending individuals signals telling them how to allocate their hard won saving? Is acquiring a controlling interest in one's employer company a desirable investment for everyone? Is it such a desirable investment that it warrants the government's seal of approval in the form of a 50 per cent tax deduction? I would be tempted to answer no to some of these questions. What concerns me particularly is the plan proposed in Bill C–327 which was designed for situations where the financial viability of the employer is in some doubt. Such turnaround situations constitute high risk investments, not bad investments necessarily, but certainly not one that everyone would make in the absence of a tax break.

It is not appropriate for the government to entice employees to place their savings in a particular investment by leaving the bait of an attractive tax break. We do not provide 50 per cent tax deductions for lottery tickets and for good reason. Many Canadians buy lottery tickets nonetheless. I wish them the best of luck. It is a lottery ticket buyer's own calculations and whims which lead to the purchase of a ticket, not the lure of tax deductions.

I am convinced that a good number of Canadians have found and will continue to find investments in their employers to be a good home for their savings. The tax system should by no means discourage such investments. My point is that the tax system should likewise avoid tipping the balance in favour of a particularly risky type of investment. Bill C–321 would do just that.

I strongly believe that our tax system will serve employees in Canada best if it plays a neutral role with respect to investment decisions.

I mentioned at the outset of my remarks that we must also assess this proposal from the point of view of the businesses which would be affected. If this proposal is good for business, some would argue that it may be worthy of our support even if it is questionable from the perspective of the employee investors.

It is timely to ask this question because some fundamental assumptions underlying the traditional relationships between the owners, managers and employees of business are in the process of being re–examined.

Increased employee participation is cited by many analysts as the key to business success. These same analysts often suggest that it is crucial for employees and employers to recognize that they have a common interest in the success of the organization. One of the key devices identified for reinforcing this appreciation of common interest is a remuneration structure which enables employees to share in the successes of the enterprise.

In these discussions, employee ownership is sometimes cited as the answer to Canada's problem of productivity and competitiveness. If employees acquire control of the business where they work, they clearly are participating in the operation of the enterprise. If they own shares, the remuneration is clearly tied to the success of the business.

But employee ownership is not the only means for achieving such ends. Much has been written of late concerning the success achieved by quality circles and other approaches to involving employees more fully in operational decisions. These techniques work and they do not involve employee ownership. Many firms offer profit–sharing plans or tie a portion of pay to the individual, department or enterprise performance. These techniques too are effective and they do not involve employee ownership.

Increasingly, firms are encouraging employees to acquire shares in the business. This technique achieves its goal without requiring employees to take a controlling position.

By citing these examples of different approaches to increasing employee involvement and thereby enterprise success, I merely wish to point out that the mechanism described in Bill C–327 is but one of many means to the same end. The fact that these other means are being used and are meeting with success and that they are doing so without tax assistance is important I believe.

Businesses and employees are re–examining their traditional relationships and are changing them. Different approaches seem to work best in different situations, but providing tax assistance for one approach and not for others may well discourage the very process we wish to promote, that is, establishing employee–employer co–operation in the fashion which best suits the particular situation and thereby achieving higher productivity and greater prosperity.

Bill C–327 might inadvertently place a strait–jacket on a dynamic, innovative search that is now going on in Canada to find a better way of doing things.

We all wish to ensure that the best business decisions are reached. When a business thrives Canadians benefit as employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders and simply by participating in a prosperous economy.

We should all agree therefore to avoid using our tax system in a manner that would lead to sub–optimal business decisions in the important field of employee–employer relations. A level tax–playing field is essential if we are interested in business success. This bill unfortunately would tilt the field.

I have talked at some length on the implications of this proposal for the employees and businesses involved. Let me now take a broader perspective and consider what is best for the taxpayers of Canada. There is no denying that a 50 per cent tax has a certain appeal if you belong to the select group that is to benefit from it. That is the employees of target companies and others who help finance the takeover. What if you are not fortunate enough to be in that group?

• (1740)

Most Canadians would not benefit from the provisions of this proposal. It excludes Canadians who are outside of the labour force, who are unemployed, self–employed or employed in the non–corporate sector. It excludes Canadians who lack the means of a desire to invest in their employers. It excludes most of us if those excluded would have to provide the extra taxes required to pay for this new tax deduction. Therefore, it is difficult to support the idea of asking a large majority of Canadians to pay higher taxes so that a select few can benefit from a 50 per cent tax deduction.

I hope I have made the position clear that I do not support this measure because it fails on the counts I have illustrated. It is not particularly or necessarily good for the employees. It is not necessarily good for business and it is not necessarily good for Canadian taxpayers. However, I think the member should be commended for bringing forward this proposal for discussion to be considered because at a time like this when we are going through difficult economic times, we want to look at all aspects in any proposals that may have appeal. I do not say that his proposal is without merit. I just wanted to highlight some of the things that you could take into consideration very carefully when it comes time to decide the fate of this proposal.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to participate in this private members' bill, Bill C–327, an act to assist employees to purchase a controlling shareholding in the corporation that employs them and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof.

I commend the member for Sault Ste. Marie for putting forward this private members' bill. I think he has shown a great deal of initiative. He has experienced the problem within his own area with regard to Algoma Steel, the problems that it faced and the procedures it had to follow.

I want to comment a little bit on what is happening in my riding of Kootenay East where Westar has gone into bankruptcy. It went into a bankruptcy situation on May 3. Not only was it going into bankruptcy, but it decided it was not going to pay the holiday pay or the severance pay, so it locked out its employees. That initially stopped the employee–workers of that mine from participating in the judge's comments, decision and procedures of the bankruptcy. The employees, 1,100 of them in a one–industry town, did not have the opportunity to participate in the bankruptcy decisions because they were locked out. They were unable to get unemployment insurance. This went on for four months.

During that bankruptcy discussion in the banks under the Creditors Arrangement Act, the creditors, the company, provincial governments and the various financial institutions had opportunities to discuss the bankruptcies. There is no mechanism in place for the employees to participate or to bring about the kind of a program such as the member for Sault Ste. Marie has put forward.

The bankruptcy took place on August 25. The court decided it had until September 26, a little over a month, at which time liquidation could start to take place. This is a profitable mine. This mine has second and third generation employees in a single-industry town. It has been profitable. It has long-lasting contracts with the Japanese markets. This is a very profitable mine. It has been admitted by the governments, the creditors and various others that it is a profitable mine. The employees wish to participate with a new buyer to try to bring about solutions, but I want to say they have until September 26. If liquidation starts to take place and some of that machinery starts to come out of that mine and is liquidated, what is the chance of that mine ever starting up again?

Here is an opportunity for a piece of legislation. The Americans have it in place.

I hate to use the American scheme as a project. The Japanese have employee contributions and employee programs in which they can participate. The United States has had legislation for 20 years that facilitates employee ownership. In fact almost one quarter of all American steel workers are involved in an employee share plan.

While I am speaking here in the House, those 11,000 workers and their representatives are meeting with a new buyer. They are pleading with me: Is there any federal help that can help us with regard to taxation benefits or some other types of benefits? I have had to tell them sadly there is not.

My colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, has put forward a piece of legislation that could facilitate that kind of thing. I heard the comments and the rattle that was made by one of the members from the government side, but I would urge the government to take a serious look at this piece of legislation.

Surely to goodness if that legislation is put in place the government in power can look at the feasibility along with the provincial governments, the community involved, and the workers involved. We are talking about a one-industry town that has been in this industry for over 100 years. There are second and third generations that have paid taxes to the Canadian public provincially and federally throughout these years. They were participating.

They know it is a profitable mine. It can contribute. It can continue. The markets are even there. The will must come from the governments. These workers are even prepared to participate in an employee-share benefit with new employers or with themselves if they have to.

All they are asking for is the same type of relief, the same kind of support that business gets when it wants to get into that kind of a situation. The very part that bothers me so much about it is that less than 10 years ago, I stood in this House when the Liberals were in government. They were putting as much as $1.5 billion into the development of northeast coal in direct conflict with southeast coal.

Now we come to a situation where southeast coal is in a financial problem and needs some assistance, whether it be through this type of legislation, whether it be direct participation between the federal and provincial governments, and the municipalities, and we are told that the employees are not smart enough to be able to participate in this kind of a structure.

I want to protect these employees. The member on the government side said: "We would like to protect these employees from destroying themselves". I want to say to him that those employees do not need protection. Those United Mine Workers and their representatives have been to Japan. They have met with the steel companies in Japan.

They have looked at the operations of the mines in Russia and in Japan where the markets are. They know that this is a viable mine. This is a mine that should be working. It should not be into bankruptcy. It was a planned bankruptcy. There is no question about it. Westar went to the banks less than two years ago and tried a restructuring and a refinancing of its companies. It separated west coast terminals.

Imagine the banks with $300 million of loans into this Westar Mining company coming back for a restructuring and saying: "We are going to take the west coast

terminals out of our proposal and we will put the rest up for security".

It was planned two years ago when it took its west coast terminals out and protected that portion of it. The profits from that mine, which is the Balmer Mine in Sparwood, belong to Westar. Westar was into many other types of facilities such as pulp mills, off-shore drilling, lumber mills. The profits from this very viable mine were going in all directions and not being put back into the mine.

The piece of legislation that the member from Sault Ste. Marie has put forward is one that this government should look at very, very seriously. The Japanese have allowed it and the Americans have put it in. If we are going to be into free trade agreements with other areas, let our people at least have the same kind of legislation here so they can benefit and try to bring it about. It is going to have to be in place so that workers and companies can use it.

• (1750)

September 26 will come along and if they have not found a solution to this situation in the Balmer Mine, then liquidation could take place and the chances of ever bringing that mine back on stream are probably going to be very, very limited.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious to most of us why the member for Sault Ste. Marie brought this Bill C-327 forward. I do not think too many of us would argue on the merits of why he wanted to do that. Obviously, that part of our country which is his riding is going through a very, very difficult time and they are looking for a solution to a problem. We have to give the member full credit for attempting to do something.

I will be addressing this bill from an economic point of view and from a tax revenue point of view It is a bill that is certainly worthy of debate. It is not a frivolous bill and it is one that we take very seriously.

When this government took office in 1984 that was one of the things we looked at as a government in terms of how we tax. We wanted to bring certain things into the taxation system that we thought were missing at the time. One was, of course, the ability of individuals to pay taxes. We wanted a system that was fair. We worked to achieve that. Another thing we took a look at was the plugging of loopholes.

The members opposite me, such as the member for Sault Ste. Marie and his counterpart who just spoke, have often been on their feet in this House of Commons suggesting ways in which we can plug those loopholes. Through Standing Order 31 they are famous for delivering the corporate welfare bum award of the week. They do it on occasion with a great deal of drama attached to it. Often, although I hate to admit it, they are absolutely right in some of their presentations. We have committed ourselves to plugging some of those loopholes which have been identified by their party. In doing that we are eliminating preferred tax treatment for some Canadians. That is something we are all sensitive to in the sense that we give tax breaks to certain Canadians, whether they are rich Canadians or corporate Canadians.

We have made a great effort to reduce those preferred tax incentives. In doing some of those things we have passed on those savings to individual Canadians in the form of lower personal taxes. Obviously, when we try to change the system again and move in the direction of Bill C-327, we have to be cognizant of the fact that there is going to be some revenue foregone and given up by the Government of Canada. We are not talking about a little bit of money, we are talking about a lot of money. It is millions and millions of dollars.

If you forego that revenue the question then becomes: "From what other source can we get it?" The only other source is the Canadian taxpayer. Therefore, we want a system that does not discriminate against individual Canadians. In a sense, Bill C-327 does that and I will go through the reasons why.

Let us take a careful look at the bill itself and exactly what it does. The purpose of the bill is to use federal funds delivered through generous tax deductions to encourage employees to take over corporations that employ them. Specifically it proposes to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a 50 per cent deduction from taxable income for employee and employer investments in tax vehicles known as employee share purchase plans, or ESPPs. It also proposes to give a tax break to banks and other financial institutions that would take part in these plans.

It runs somewhat contrary to the position of the party to which the member for Sault Ste. Marie belongs. I believe that the party to which he belongs is fundamentally opposed to creating tax breaks for banks and other financial institutions. That is exactly what it does.

In a case like his—and I guess this is where politics comes in. I am not arguing against what he is saying in a personal sense because, believe me, if that situation existed in my constituency I would be doing the same thing, although in this case it philosophically flies in the face of the party that he represents. Indeed, it would give a tax break to financial institutions, obviously including banks. I think that runs against the grain of most Canadians at this time, particularly at a time when bank profits are at an all-time high. We have been reminded in this House, particularly by those on the other side, how high those profits were. So I do not think that any of us want to see tax breaks for banks and financial institutions at this point.

I have mentioned the redistribution aspect. If revenue is lost from one source it must be made up from another source, and unfortunately that other source always comes down to the individual taxpayer.

The other aspect that we should take a look at is what we do, in terms of investment, to encourage individuals to invest in Canada. We do that at present and we do it in a number of ways. One of those ways is to tax investment income differently than earned income in the work force. One of those methods I am referring to is dividend income. It is taxed differently to encourage those Canadians who desire to invest in a corporation to do so. Dividends are taxed differently than simple interest income.

In other words, it is an incentive for people like ourselves to not just place money in stale bank accounts but to invest in Canadian corporations. When we do that we are given a little bit of a tax break. I do not think the tax break at this point is as lucrative as it should be or could be. In fact we have changed that law from time to time with the sense that it was maybe too lucrative.

That is one type of investment break for Canadians. The other one is the capital gains tax. Individual Canadians are allowed $100,000 in capital gains income before they are taxed. That simply means that if an individual has a choice to make in terms of what they want to do with their money, if they take a look at investing that money in stock or in a Canadian corporation in terms of achieving some capital gains on that investment they are going to be given a break, a $100,000 break.

That has been attacked again by the NDP and by the Liberal governments. They suggest that it is perhaps too lucrative. That $100,000 exemption is extended to $500,000 for investing in small Canadian corporations, because those are the corporations that need the funding and the capital. We have done that as a government, as well.

The point of the exercise is that we have a number of instruments out there at present that allow Canadians to invest in Canadian companies for the right reasons. Through the retirement funds, Registered Retirement Savings Plans, individuals can invest in companies they work for. They then receive a 100 per cent tax break on the dollars they invest in that corporation. The belief is that we invest now when we are working and can contribute and later on when we retire we can draw that money back out at a lower rate of taxation. That instrument is also readily available for employees who presently want to do that.

• (1800)

We could go through a raft of other vehicles that are available at this present time without having to move in the direction of Bill C-327.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

JUDGES

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, according to the National Judicial Institute 40 per cent of all federal and provincial judges have not taken advantage of the gender sensitization courses available to them.

The report of the Law Society of British Columbia's gender bias committee has concluded that gender inequality is pervasive in the legal and justice systems in B.C.

The committee also recognized that significant steps must be taken by all the actors involved—the government, the judiciary, the legal profession, and other service providers in the justice system—in order to eliminate such bias and to uphold Canadians' perception that their justice system is and at least can be a model of fairness.

For example, the study found that while judges are becoming more aware of gender bias some nonetheless continue to exhibit a lack of sensitivity toward victims of wife assault and sexual assault. There is also evidence that suggests that women are regarded as less credible witnesses than men and that stereotypical notions about women undermine the prosecution of such assault cases.

It is obvious from the above finding that voluntary gender sensitization only preaches to the already converted. Those judges who belittle the suffering of women at the hands of their spouses are those most in need of such courses, yet they are the ones who feel that training is not necessary.

The committee concluded that the existence of direct and systemic biases in the courtroom, the legal profession, and other areas requires that each sector of the justice system critically examine its role in perpetuating gender inequality. This could be accomplished if those who work in the system were educated about gender bias in their own beliefs and in the laws and how they are applied.

The recommendations are wide-ranging and include judicial education courses in family law, addressing spousal maintenance, and accurate information about the costs of child raising. Spousal maintenance is all too often insufficient, as anyone who has practised family law knows, because the courts underestimate the economic disadvantages borne primarily by women as a result of child rearing.

The second recommendation is regular training for judges by the Canadian Justice Institute designed to make them aware of the subtle and overt manifestations of gender bias directed toward women lawyers, witnesses, and litigants. Another recommendation is training for family court counsellors that includes a gender equity component. This training program should parallel the training received by judges and masters.

The final recommendation is judicial education programs providing information on how sex-based stereotypes about women and men affect decision-making in custody cases.

I could go on but there was a commercial once that talked about what happened if you did not fix your car. The mechanic said: "You can pay me now or you can pay me later". How much more relevant is this theory when we are talking about human lives. We can pay now to make judges and the judicial system more sensitive and the ramifications for families will be far better in the long run, or we can pay later in the broken lives that such decisions will engender.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I agree that gender equality is an objective and should be sought in our justice system. No one, male or female, should be in any doubt that he or she will be treated fairly and with dignity in our courts of law and other institutions of justice.

To this end ministers of justice and attorneys general have adopted a statement of principles aimed at ensuring equality of treatment in the Canadian system of justice, with special efforts being made to accommodate the needs of indigenous people and women from multicultural communities.

The judiciary has also recognized a need to address equality issues. The National Judicial Institute and the Western Judicial Education Centre, Canada's two leading institutions for judicial education, have created programs on gender issues at the request of judges themselves. These programs have been highly effective and well received. On the basis of their experience with these programs, both institutions have decided that all future judicial education programming will include components that place gender issues in context within the treatment of substantive law subjects.

There is some concern, however, that unprecedented attacks have been made upon the fairness and integrity of persons who have a very difficult and important job and who do extremely well. Isolated incidents have been seized upon as being indicative of the attitude of all judges, whether federally or provincially appointed, male or female. Individual judges have been tried in the public press on the basis of statements which have been taken out of context or sometimes misconstrued. Respective careers have been shattered and additional pressures added to the heavy burden of responsibility on the

judiciaries' already heavily-laden shoulders. A new disincentive may be added to the acceptance of judicial office.

Under these circumstances, in which the judiciary and governments are dealing effectively with gender equality issues, we should be aware of warnings issued by educators in the United States which suggest that mandatory gender sensitization training can be counter-productive and can undermine all of the good work that has been done so far. Certainly we should take an informed interest in judicial education, but equally we should trust to the good faith and good will of the men and women of the judiciary who have thus far shown themselves more than worthy of the confidence of their fellow Canadians.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr.Speaker, my particular constituency, Don Valley East, takes its name from the Don River. When I was a kid we used to swim in the Don River but no one would swim in it today. It is polluted with raw sewage and industrial waste.

Also according to the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board's report to the International Joint Commission, the Don River is polluted with toxic materials carried through the atmosphere from Latin America. According to the board's study 70 per cent of the lead in Lake Ontario, 80 per cent of the PCBs in Lake Erie, 90 per cent of the PCBs in Lake Superior, all travel through the atmosphere from Latin America thousands of miles away to pollute our Great Lakes.

Therefore, even if we clean up our own act, the Great Lakes and the Don River are still going to be polluted. The source of the pollution, according to this study, is some 11,000 tonnes of DDT used each year in Latin America.

One of those Latin American countries is Mexico and we just initialled a free trade agreement with Mexico, NAFTA. One of the things that concerns a great many Canadians about NAFTA is the environmental standards in Mexico.

Our government has told us not to worry about that because Mexico has good environmental laws, it just does not enforce them. It also tells us not to worry about that either because we have just provided Mexico with $1 million to help it enforce those good environmental laws, even though Mexico is not one of those countries that qualifies for this sort of assistance under the Canadian International Development Agency under normal circumstances. We also should not worry because we have an environmental co-operation agreement with Mexico that we signed back in 1990 and so everything is going to be all right.

Now that Mexico is enforcing its really strict environmental laws using Canadian money, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary tonight if he will give me and all Canadians answers to the following questions. First of all, when can we expect Mexico to stop using DDT? Second, if it does not stop using it immediately, can we use the dispute settlement mechanism in NAFTA to require it to stop? And third, when can I and my constituents start swimming in the Don River again?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I cannot, in all honesty, answer the last of my hon. friend's three questions because, as he knows, the clean-up of already polluted bodies of water is an extremely difficult and costly procedure.

• (1810)

Having said that, the important point is to ensure that we and other residents of North and South America work together to address international pollution problems as we are doing at the present time.

The hon. friend made reference to NAFTA. One of the key points about the NAFTA agreement is that it is the first time we have had such an assessment in a trade agreement. There is an environment assessment in the agreement itself and that will be made available to the public at the same time at which the legal text is made available.

I can also inform my hon. friend that later this very week, the Minister of the Environment from Canada will be meeting with his Mexican and American counterparts in Washington to talk about the way in which the three governments, the three ministers of the environment and their officials, can work together to make sure that common environmental problems are addressed effectively. I would anticipate that what will come out of the meeting is the establishment of some sort of trilateral

panel and the objective will be to address the very concerns which my hon. friend is raising.

[*Translation*]

LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, on April 8, 1992, I asked the Acting Prime Minister a question. It went something like this: Since the government had said that henceforth the provinces and territories would finance cases concerning language rights and equality rights, did the government consult the provinces and territories? Here is the answer that the Deputy Prime Minister gave me: This program could be funded by the private sector or by the provinces.

Of course, without meaning badly, it did not consult. It hoped that the provinces, territories and private sector would come to the defence of these groups, not only linguistic minorities but the other groups protected by this program. He did not really answer the question and that is why I am here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that there is now a new constitutional reality, containing new provisions, as we very well know. I want to emphasize that this program ends on September 30. Given these new realities and that the government did not consult the provinces to see whether they were prepared to continue the work, is the government now ready to resume, restore and reinstate the Court Challenges Program?

Mr. Speaker, I feel that you must know that the Committee on Humam Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons unanimously recommended—that is, with the consent of the representatives from the three main parties—to continue it in one form or another. So it is really time to do something.

This committee said that the program was essential. It is even more essential today than it was when it was cut. I believe that it should be continued. I will give you two brief examples: the disabled are unhappy with the constitutional proposals; they will no doubt have demands to make, but who will be able to help them? Women, especially a certain women's group, are not at all happy and they too will no doubt want to challenge it.

The last example: you certainly know that the French-speaking linguistic minorities, and maybe even the English-speaking, are debating the issue of "attachment" versus "commitment". I would prefer commitment, it is so clear. Jurists recognize it as a term with legal validity. Those are some questions that will have to be answered about this new constitutional reality.

So I ask the government to face up to its responsibilities.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from St. Boniface will certainly remember that the Court Challenges Program was set up by the federal government in 1978 to guarantee equality for linguistic minorities throughout the country.

In 1982 and again in 1985, the Court Challenges Program was extended to include the language rights and equality rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Since 1978, the Court Challenges Program has been financed solely by the federal government. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we did not consult our provincial colleagues about a decision affecting the federal budget.

The Court Challenges Program has proven useful in several important legal decisions that helped to clarify the Charter. In fact, many cases dealing with official languages and funded by the program have had a direct impact on the development and amendment of provincial legislation convering education in the official languages and linguistic minorities. The provinces were also influenced by the cases concerning equality heard by the courts. However, in a period of financial and economic difficulties and budget cuts, the government had to make some hard decisions. The Court Challenges Program was one of the programs that we had to abolish to achieve the objectives.

Mr. Speaker, in June, the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons tabled its report, "Paying Too Dearly", on the Court Challenges Program. The government is now considering this committee's report and will table its response to the recommendations in the House.

The government will continue to promote the right to equality for all citizens as it has committed itself to do. It also remains determined to promote the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in every possible way.

Adjournment Debate

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the subject matter is employment or the lack of it in this country.

On April 29, 1992 I informed the minister of employment that a comprehensive economic review of the Hamilton labour market released at McMaster University concluded that while 36 per cent of employees felt they would be laid off this year, an astounding 52 per cent of business owners and managers said they will be laying off employees this year.

Given that alarming fact, I asked the minister what concrete action he will take to ensure that employees in Hamilton and in other great cities across this great country will not become statistics? It is called Question Period, after all, and seldom if ever do we in the loyal opposition get any answers from a government in which Canadians have lost faith.

In the city of Hamilton the unemployment rate has hovered over 10 per cent for close to two years. Last month it was again at close to 11 per cent. Hamiltonians are coming to my constituency office demanding to know why they are losing the opportunity to re-enter the job market because their unemployment insurance benefits will run out before the completion of their job retraining courses.

That very question was asked again today of the minister of employment by my colleague, the member for Parkdale—High Park. He appealed to the minister to extend UI benefits where necessary. By skirting that direct question, the minister who represents this sorry government might as well have cut his answer to the quick and simply said no, the government will not extend UI benefits to those in need.

Speaking of jobs and the lack of, the government spends literally millions of taxpayers' dollars on a propaganda paper extolling the virtues of the North American free trade deal. Who will lose their jobs because of the deal? How many will need help? What programs will those working men and women displaced by NAFTA attain?

Permit me to quote from today's editorial in a Toronto newspaper. First it speaks briefly about how U.S. Labour Secretary Lynn Martin said outright that the Canada–U.S.–Mexico deal could cost up to 150,000 American jobs and that they were prepared to spend $750 million a year for five years to help workers who lose their jobs because of this NAFTA deal.

The editorial states:

> In Canada, the Tories have refused to help the victims of free trade, despite Brian Mulroney's 1988 election promise to provide "the finest programs anywhere". Since Ottawa still refuses to help those who suffer under free trade, it continues to pretend that they don't exist. And in trying to maintain that dishonest posture, it is indulging in propaganda warfare with Canadians.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Canadian workers are not looking for a handout. Canadian workers want a helping hand. Canadian workers want jobs, not welfare.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as you know very well, a vital part of job creation is retraining of those who require it in order to find their place in the work force.

I am pleased to be able to inform you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, Canadians, that indeed we are spending record amounts on such job, training at the moment. This is a very substantial increase over moneys made available in the past, including as recently as some two years ago.

For example, we are spending this year a record $1.95 billion to train 300,000 UI claimants. That is three times what was spent in the same area in 1990. In addition, we will spend $1.6 billion in skills training and employment assistance for unemployed Canadians this year.

This brings total employment and training assistance for Canadians in 1992 to $3.55 billion. That is $3.55 billion, not million. Close to 700,000 Canadians will get some help this year from EIC training and adjustment programs.

In a slightly different vein, I would also like to note that last year 190,000 UI claimants received training under section 26 of which 39,000 were fee payers. This year, it is expected that about 300,000, a substantial increase of UI claimants, will receive training under section 96 and 85,000 of these will be fee payers.

That is an increase of some 46,000 fee payers over the last year. The need is great, but I would also point out in response to my hon. friend that a financial commitment of some $3.55 billion to provide training to 700,000 Canadians this year is also a very, very significant contribution.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to be adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.22 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 16, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to invite Canadians to celebrate the first annual Women's History Month this October as declared earlier this year by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Throughout our history, women in Canada have shaped our society in countless ways: in the home, in the work place, as volunteers, reformers and leaders. However, all too often their contributions have been overlooked.

Coinciding with the annual commemoration of the women's rights victory know as the Persons case of October 1929, Women's History Month offers all Canadians a chance to explore women's lives and accomplishments, past and present.

This is an opportunity not to be missed, particularly for young Canadians. A knowledge of the strong and purposeful women in our lives broadens our visions of life's possibilities and inspires us to future action.

In this year of our 125th anniversary, women can continue to be nation builders. I urge women to participate in determining Canada's future by voting in the nation-wide referendum on constitutional renewal on October 26.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my congratulations to the International Hockey Hall of Fame located in Kingston as it has just been sanctioned as an official museum for international hockey by the International Ice Hockey Federation.

The Hall of Fame will now display items from all 40 member countries of the federation. It will also receive the rights to reproduce federation sports memorabilia for sale locally and internationally. Plans are in hand to develop world-wide tours to the museum and to create an archives and research centre.

The directors of the Hall of Fame are to be commended for their diligence and hard work over many years in achieving this distinction. I wish them every success. Their efforts will ensure that the international history of Canada's game will flourish. Canadians will always remember those immortal words of Foster Hewitt, so sweet to our ears, which were spoken 20 years ago this month: "Henderson has scored for Canada".

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to challenge the media to provide a balanced and qualified debate on the national referendum. To begin with there seems to be a trotting out before the media an onslaught of no experts. I ask the media: Are there not any yes experts?

Why are provincial premiers not forced into the spotlight of public debate with the same effort as the saviour of the Canadian women's movement, Judy Rebick? Why are members of Parliament not forced into debate with the same vigour as Deborah Coyne, whose claim to fame seems to come more from her social activities than her public achievements?

It is my opinion the media is either lazy or incompetent because I believe there are two sides to the coin of this debate. It is unfortunate that all we seem to get today is the tail side.

S. O. 31

OLDER WORKER ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise a government program, the older worker adjustment program, better known as POWA. This program provides permanently laid off older workers 70 per cent of their UI benefits from age 55 to 65; but there are problems with the program.

The economy is sour and the unemployment rate is at historically high levels. People can wait for two years before their applications are reviewed. Many of these people put their lives on hold, anticipating a positive response which may in fact not materialize.

The backlog in Ontario alone constitutes over 700 companies, affecting thousands of individuals. Current funding provisions address only about one-third of those laid off older workers.

Finally, the criterion that must be changed is the one that states the lay-off must be large relative to the size of the community. This discriminates against the smaller firms and their employees. Whether the lay-offs are 45 at a bakery, 20 at a dairy, 100 at a veneer mill, or 1,000 at a large industrial giant, all are laid off and should be eligible for POWA.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, the Canada round of constitutional talks has been a fair and open process in which every Canadian has had the chance to speak about their vision of Canada.

The last segment of this process will end on October 26, 1992, with a national referendum where all Canadians will have the opportunity to show their support.

The constitutional proposals reached in the Charlottetown agreement on August 28 serve as a reasonable compromise and as the basis for renewed federalism. No one present at these discussions left the table with everything they wanted. There were compromises made on all sides.

I feel these proposals represent the best possible solution to a very complicated and very serious issue. I am pleased that on Friday of this week the two provincial members of Parliament, the chief of the Chippewa band and the mayors of Sarnia, Point Edwards, Moore Township, and myself will be making a joint public statement of support for these proposals and a continued united Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is being stubborn and arrogant by refusing to co-operate and act on a request by the municipal council of Tracadie-Sheila that residents be able to address their mail so as to reflect the new municipality formed by merging the village of Sheila and the town of Tracadie.

In response to this legitimate and reasonable request, Canada Post insists that mail addressed to Tracadie-Sheila must be rejected. This attitude and this lack of sensitivity have increased the frustration and dissatisfaction of customers in my riding who see the closing of the Bas-Caraquet and Bertrand post offices as part of a strategy that is making dramatic inroads in the quality of service offered in the Acadian peninsula.

The Government of New Brunswick legislated the merger of the two municipalities of Tracadie and Sheila, and Canada Post should take steps to clear up the confusion it caused and observe the wishes of the residents of Tracadie-Sheila.

* * *

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, the first annual Women's History Month to be held this October was announced earlier this year by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and I now wish to pay tribute to a number of French Canadian women who helped build our country.

As nun and teacher, Marguerite Bourgeoys founded the Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal in 1671, to educate young girls. She was canonized in 1982. As the owner of a sawmill and administrator of real property in the 18th century, Louise de Ramezay was one of the first business women in New France.

• (1410)

At the beginning of this century Marie-Lacoste-Gérin-Lajoie worked hard to improve the legal status of married women in Quebec. She was also a co-founder of the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

Émilie Fortin-Tremblay was the first white woman to cross the Chilcoot Pass during the Klondike gold rush.

And Thérèse Casgrain led the struggle by Quebec women to obtain the franchise, which they did in 1940.

These are only a few examples of French Canadian women whose lives are an inspiration to us all. The women of Canada, whatever their ethnic origin, have made their mark in the past and they will continue to do so in a modern and prosperous Canada that is making its influence felt throughout the world.

* * *

[*English*]

JIM BODDEN

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, a very difficult situation has arisen involving a Canadian citizen who plays professional hockey in Italy. Jim Bodden was playing a regular season game on January 15 of this year in which a player from the other team died. The players were in front of the net, the other player punched Jim in the head and Jim reacted by shoving him away with his stick. Shortly thereafter the player died of a heart attack. The deceased player had suffered from epilepsy.

Jim is 29 years old and has played in Italy for the past 15 years. He is known to be a real gentleman on the ice. The Italian authorities are now saying that Jim will be charged with homicide. In that Jim and his family are Canadian citizens, I call upon the Secretary of State for External Affairs to contact our embassy in Italy to make certain that Jim Bodden's rights are being protected and that he is being treated fairly.

I would like to ensure that the Government of Canada's full resources are behind him and his family.

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING OF HOCKEY GAMES

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, the National Hockey League season begins in 23 days in Ottawa, but sports lovers on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River are very concerned about what seems to await them with the Ottawa Senators' threat to black out hockey on TVA and TQS during the week.

I have received many calls from sports fans in the Outaouais who ask me to intervene with the Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport. In a letter that I sent him today, I ask him to intervene with Molson Breweries and the Ottawa Senators so that the people of the Outaouais are not hostage to such a decision and deprived of the television coverage of some 50 games of the Montreal Canadiens and Quebec Nordiques. While pressure is being put on Molson's and the Senators, I trust that action by the minister will bring results.

In closing, we must keep in mind that not everyone can afford hockey tickets.

* * *

[*English*]

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, as the Atlantic salmon season in eastern Canada draws near a close, it is important to recognize the constructive conservation measures that have been achieved during 1992. To be sure, there will always be management challenges to face on behalf of this precious resource, but a firm foundation has now been laid for the regeneration of future salmon stocks in the years to come.

Foremost among the measures introduced this year was the minister's difficult and forthright decision to extend the closing of commercial fishing in the offshore waters of Newfoundland. This has dramatically amplified the impact of previous such closings in the maritime provinces and there was clear evidence of significantly increased salmon runs in almost all of the rivers on Canada's Atlantic seaboard in the past summer.

An equally difficult and comprehensive initiative has been the development of the aboriginal fishery strategy for Atlantic Canada which was announced just one week ago. This plan to fully involve native bands in management and guardianship of the resource as well as in the

rational economic exploitation of it should prove a most constructive approach in all respects. Not only does it point to improved sharing of the salmon harvest among all user groups, it emphasizes new harvesting directions to eventually eliminate gill-nets and to replace them with methods that are consistent with the catch and release conservation practices.

Along with these two major achievements, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans deserves the genuine appreciation of all Canadians for the spirit of environmental responsibility which he has demonstrated through the over-all policy of his department for its sound salmon management in Canadian rivers.

* * *

ERNST ZUNDEL

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, Ernst Zundel is a leading Nazi apologist and propagandist. He has promoted the lie that the Holocaust is a hoax, the gas chambers a matter of the imagination. Zundel was brought before Ontario's courts and was twice convicted for his pamphlet *Did Six Million Really Die*. He has been fined in his native Germany for hate crimes. When the Supreme Court struck down the Criminal Code section under which he was convicted, he hailed the decision as an affirmation of freedom of expression. We must ask: What sort of freedom and for what sort of expression?

The extreme right has already been aided and abetted by the decision. This week, on a new Klan hate line operating in Toronto, B'nai Brith human rights activist Ian Kagedan was denounced for stands taken in defence of human dignity.

For this and other racist fronts, freedom includes freedom to vilify and expression includes the dissemination of lies.

The message must come through loud and clear. We will not tolerate the promotion of hatred against any identifiable groups which will fray our social fabric. The cost of racism is incalculable. We must devote all our efforts and energies to eradicate this scourge.

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. salmon industry is in trouble.

Yesterday, the minister said that the disappearance of salmon from the Fraser River could have been due to the water being warmer than usual; warm but not warm enough to cook into oblivion 1.2 million sockeye salmon.

He said the count could have been wrong. His staff told me for three weeks they could have been 10 per cent or 15 per cent out, but to be 1.2 million out they would have to have been 80 per cent wrong. They denied any possibility of that.

This same minister said that B.C. salmon is not in trouble. The same person in a previous capacity three years ago said that the Atlantic cod was not in trouble. Look where we are today.

Three hundred fishing boats with hundreds of fishermen turned out yesterday to blockade B.C. harbours to prove that the minister is wrong and to draw attention to it. We need the committee to go out there and get a first-hand report. We need a judicial inquiry that will us what is wrong so that we can correct things for next year.

The B.C. salmon industry is in trouble.

* * *

CAMBODIA

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask that Canada turn its eyes to a small nation in southeast Asia, Cambodia.

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge came to power in Cambodia, and before they were ousted in 1979 by the Vietnamese they had killed one million of their own people.

The United Nations is now in the middle of a delicate negotiating dance with the four political factions which want to govern Cambodia, including the Khmer Rouge and the present Vietnamese backed government.

The UN is starting Cambodians down the long road to democracy. Nation-wide elections are supposed to take place next spring under the guidance of the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia. The Khmer

Rouge are once again threatening the life of this small nation by blocking the negotiations.

Canada must support the United Nations in its efforts and encourage Cambodians to resist the threats of the Khmer Rouge. The lives of seven million Cambodians hang in the balance. Canada can do no less.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise as a Canadian woman to voice my disagreement with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and its constitutional stance.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Clancy: We have looked at the Canada clause. We have examined the charter and we have consulted with some of the top constitutional lawyers in the country, lawyers who are, may I add, committed feminists.

The result? We fail to see just how the gloomy scenarios for women depicted by NAC will be the product of this reform. We do not see how the Canada clause will endanger women's equality as guaranteed in sections 15 and 28 of the charter. We do not believe that women will be losers in a renewed Canada.

With the greatest of respect for the legal skills and capabilities of those advising NAC, I and many Canadian women simply cannot subscribe to this theory.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister.

On Saturday I had the occasion to meet 500 employees of Canadian Airlines in Vancouver who are willing to make some sacrifices in order to make sure that they preserve their jobs, the company and at the same time help to maintain competition in the air in Canada.

I would like to know from the Prime Minister if this government has any policy to help them to maintain their company as other employees have succeeded in doing in the United States.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, several months ago, the two airlines had already begun to consider various proposals to ensure their survival. Canadian Airlines is now holding discussions with both Air Canada and American Airlines to see which of the two options would be more profitable and more likely to give the travelling public an efficient, competitive transportation system and at the same time to keep job losses in the aviation industry to a minimum.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question for the minister. I asked a question about the proposal from employees who are prepared to make sacrifices to keep their jobs.

• (1420)

In his reply the minister made no reference at all to the employees' proposal. Is the minister interested in the employees' proposal or is the government's policy already made, that there will no longer be two airlines in Canada but only one?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, since the proposed agreement between American and Canadian is based on the new proposal made by the employees, Canadian has stated publicly that it was still examining this position in order to keep job losses to a minimum. We have already shown our interest in this proposal by completing the purchase of three R-310 Airbuses as quickly as possible so that Canadian Airlines has the funds it needs to continue to negotiate, safe from any surprises.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the minister.

According to the employees that I met in Vancouver, the Governments of Alberta and Manitoba, were ready to put some money on the table but that the Government of British Columbia, the province where most of the jobs are, refused completely to help in the situation.

Was the minister in touch with the NDP Government of B.C. to do something for the 6,000 employees in British Columbia?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, in case the Leader of the Opposition did not hear, that when this proposal was originally presented to the various governments, the Government of Canada was the only one that agreed to invest in the purchase of three Airbuses, precisely to give Canadian Airlines all the breathing room and time it needs to examine all these options.

[*English*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Transport.

In 1991 the Conference Board of Canada produced a study entitled "The Tax Competitiveness of the Canadian Airline Industry". In that study it concluded:

> The principal reason for the uncompetitiveness of the Canadian airline system is the higher commodity sales tax on fuel.

How can the minister say that the government has done everything it can for a competitive airline industry when its own tax policies have undermined the ability of Air Canada and Canadian Airlines to compete?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is very well known that if the taxation level of Canadian corporations in Canada is at its present level, it is because of the huge deficit, the national debt that we have inherited from the previous Liberal government.

Last year we did in fact move in the taxation field by reducing the excise tax on fuel for the transportation industry from four cents to one cent on a temporary basis. We have changed the depreciation, the cost allowance configuration. This has helped the airline industry. We are continuing to examine the situation, not only for the airline but for the whole transportation industry.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, the minister is going to be examining the situation until there is no situation left to examine.

The Canadian Airline employees council has made major efforts to save its airline. It has proposed and been willing to accept sacrifices and concessions. Five of the six unions at Canadian Airlines have indicated that they are willing to help. Provincial governments have indicated that they are willing to help.

What is this minister willing to do for the thousands of Canadian Airline employees and Air Canada employees who are concerned about their jobs being lost?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to my hon. colleague that I did not say we were only studying. I said that we had already taken action to reduce the tax burden on airlines, as well as on all other transport companies, in particular by reducing the excise tax on gasoline and, among other things, by introducing the GST which has saved the airlines $250 million.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, all members of the House, and indeed all Canadians, will realize what a delicate and sensitive position our country is in at the moment.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister who will know that the three political parties of Canada have called a political cease-fire in their partisan activities in the best effort to work together for the yes campaign in an effort to keep our country together.

The Prime Minister will also know that NAFTA as a trade deal is divisive, is controversial, and has major political overtones. We already know that a major government advertising program is under way to promote NAFTA throughout the country.

In the best interest of ensuring a yes vote at this very critical time, would the Prime Minister be willing to pull the government's aggressive advertising campaign until after October 26 to allow the minimum amount of divisiveness and the minimum amount of political overtones attached to this and to allow us to get on with encouraging unity in our country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his question.

As I understand it, the ads in regard to NAFTA are largely explanatory. They are trying to set out the advantages that might flow from the new trade agreement.

My hon. friend knows that almost 80 per cent of Mexican products presently enter Canada duty-free. If this agreement is ratified by the three Parliaments it will not have a perceptible effect, for example, on Canada's trading relationship. It will however open a new export market to us in a very considerable way. For every—

Mr. Barrett: That is propaganda and that is where the problem is. You are making it worse.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says that it is propaganda. I was just about to say that for every billion dollars of exports Canada is able to realize 15,000—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor in answering a question. I know that hon. members would want to restrain their remarks.

Mr. Mulroney: I was going to make an observation before I was so rudely interrupted by my friend from Victoria. If my hon. friend would care to point out to me anything particularly objectionable or unacceptable, as I have not seen anything to which he refers, I would be happy to take a look at it.

Obviously, without trying to offend the great degree of unanimity that has been brought about in respect of the unity file, the operations of the Government and the Parliament of Canada continue to function within the normal constraints. However I would be happy to look at any objections my hon. friend has.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will know that the House is planning to recess to allow all members to participate full time in selling the yes campaign, or almost all members. He will also know from the transcript that was leaked a couple of days ago that the campaign is aggressively under way, a massive advertising campaign is under way. He will also know that the other day his House leader said: "In order to win the NAFTA campaign we have got to create enemies".

I ask the Prime Minister this: Is this the time—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Riis: Perhaps there were others as well who indicated the need to create enemies in order to win the NAFTA advertising campaign and convince people of the best interest of NAFTA.

In all seriousness, and to the Prime Minister, we know that as the days progress this gets to be a more challenging issue for the yes campaign. We also know—there is no question in this House—that the more we discuss NAFTA and the more the government forces NAFTA on to the front burner and on to the agenda there will be aggressive reaction across the country from those opposing it.

Surely the Prime Minister cannot believe that at this sensitive moment this is in the best interest of the unity file, as he refers to it. But for the future of our country will the Prime Minister pull back on his aggressive campaign to allow all members to work together, shoulder to shoulder to shoulder, in the best interests of our country?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working very closely with my hon. friend—I am going to British Columbia on Sunday and Monday—with regard to this great question of national unity.

My hon. friend made a statement I found quite startling, that our House leader said we had to create enemies. That is the one thing this government does not have to go out and create. I will have to talk to the House leader after this. That would be overkill.

I see the point my hon. friend is making and it is a serious point. A few weeks ago his leader said that when she undertook her national unity campaign she planned to campaign very actively against NAFTA and other things while she was giving her national unity message. I did not complain. If she chooses to do that, that is fine by me, but I do not plan to campaign in terms of national unity in favour of NAFTA or anything else. I am just going to campaign in favour of Canada and I will look forward to doing that in British Columbia with my hon. friend who has campaigned very hard on behalf of national unity in the past.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I say to my hon. friend, the Prime Minister, that there is a world of difference between political leaders articulating their parties' views on critical trade issues and the government

launching a massive, aggressive, brutal campaign and using taxpayers' money on a divisive issue.

I know the Prime Minister will be out there promoting this unity campaign. Across the street there is a whole organization that is out there now contacting companies across the country, aggressively encouraging them to support this divisive trade deal.

If the Prime Minister really believes that we must work co-operatively, if he really believes that all parties must set aside their political differences, create a political cease-fire until October 26—

Mr. Speaker: I think the question has been put.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my friend referred to a massive, aggressive and brutal campaign. I think I can give my hon. friend the assurance that there will be no brutal campaign. There will be no aggressive campaign. There will be no massive campaign. There will be a campaign designed to provide the Canadian people with some basic information regarding this deal.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister should be aware that just this morning the Canadian steel industry had to initiate yet another anti-dumping action against the United States because this government has failed to protect Canadian steel workers.

In fact the Canadian vice-president of Dofasco said yesterday:

> If NAFTA does not improve, and in fact weakens, what we got under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, we would be deceiving ourselves by supporting it.

Why has this government failed to protect Canadian steel workers and agreed to a deal which ignores the concerns of Canadian steel companies in anti-dumping and unfair pricing?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister of trade I will reply to the question that was posed.

First, the comments the hon. member raises are not accurate. We still have provisions in chapter nineteen to provide for a continuation of our consultations with the United States on the steel issue. More important, in addition, under the new agreement we have a new provision which will allow work to take place on the issue of replacing the anti-dumping laws with competition laws. That is exactly what the steel industry has been after for a long period of time.

We are answering their concerns. I might also say that anti-dumping charges are in fact brought by industries, not by government. It was the right of the steel industry to bring that charge.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, in fact it is the Canadian steel industry that is saying this.

Not only Dofasco has criticized the deal. Stelco said:

> NAFTA essentially abandoned the commitment that was made under the free trade agreement. We're very concerned that the negotiators have overlooked something that is very important.

I want to ask the Prime Minister again: Why has the government agreed to a deal with the U.S. and Mexico that leaves tens of thousands of Canadian steel workers out to dry?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said. We have not. We have in fact responded to the steel industry's concerns in this agreement. It is there and the objectives are exactly the same as they were in the free trade agreement which it supported. It wanted change from anti-dumping law to competition law. Those clauses are contained in the NAFTA agreement.

We are doing what the steel industry has requested, exactly. I might add that we also have worked very hard in the multilateral trade negotiations in changing from an anti-dumping law to a competition law as well. We are very active in those negotiations as well.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister for International Trade to table all the impact studies the government has prepared on the North American free trade agreement. What the

minister tabled yesterday is certainly not that. It is little more than propaganda financed by the taxpayer.

How can the government make its blanket assertions about the North American free trade agreement, the benefits to Canada, let alone design the adjustment assistance programs that Canadians badly need if what was tabled yesterday constitutes all the impact studies this government has prepared?

My question is a simple one. Is what was tabled yesterday the full extent of the government's impact studies of the North American free trade agreement? Yes or no.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, with the hon. member's permission, I am sure he will understand that I cannot respond to that.

The Minister for International Trade is away on government business today but will be back in the House later this week and will be able to answer that question specifically.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, that answer seems to me quite unsatisfactory because the minister knows whether he is the minister of trade or not.

The minister will recall that earlier this year, as a result of the utilization of the Freedom of Information Act, copies of preliminary impact studies, prepared for example by the Department of Agriculture, Investment Canada and Energy, Mines and Resources, were obtained.

Why does the government not table its final impact studies? Is the government saying in the answer from the minister: I cannot table anything; I do not know whether there is anything?

He knows there are impact studies. He knows he can table them or, in refusing to do so, is he merely leaving the Canadian people to utilize once again the Freedom of Information Act to obtain basic information, as the Prime Minister says, about the North American free trade agreement?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is accusing me of something, I believe unfairly. The hon. member has been around here a very long period of time and understands that a question that specific should be directed to the minister responsible and not asked when he is out of the House.

* * *

CHILD BENEFITS

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for whoever is answering on behalf of the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Today in St. John's he said he wishes he could increase child benefits to $1,000 a month, but he said the government does not have the resources to do so.

Yesterday information obtained under the Access to Information Act shows that the government has spent $50,000 for a logo for the *Brighter Futures* program for children at risk. That is just one part of the $8 million budget for advertising and public relations for this program.

If the government is really serious about improving benefits for poor children, would it not be better to stop wasting taxpayers' money on logos and propaganda and start spending the $8 million on children instead? Why not stop feeding advertisers and start feeding children?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in this House would want to have more money to spend on children.

One thing we are debating today in the House is a bill on the child benefit package which was announced last February. It puts $2.1 billion of new money into child benefit programs.

• (1440)

We are putting a monthly cheque that is non-taxable—and this is the first time that a child benefit program has been non-taxable—into the hands of parents. The money is targeted for those that really need it, and I think the hon. member should be very pleased.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, first the parliamentary secretary did not answer the question about the waste on advertising instead of putting money into government programs.

Just to put this into perspective, the $50,000 for this logo would feed 2,000 people at the Saskatoon Food

Bank, 56 per cent of whom would be children, for a year. Maybe that is a priority the government should put first.

My supplementary question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The minister will know that the Canadian Child Day Care Advocacy Association was denied $23,000 under the women's program of the Secretary of State for a national child care conference, part of $300,000 of worth-while projects turned down this summer.

I wonder if the minister would not agree that Canadian women and children would be better served if funds were allocated to supporting worth-while projects instead of using taxpayers' dollars to promote the government's re-election program.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is aware, the women's program comes under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State, who is not here today.

I would like to remind my hon. colleague that under the women's program there are many applications for excellent projects. The program, while it has had increased funding over the past several years, is not able to fund them all and decisions on priorities must be made. Priorities have been established to provide particular focus on women who are especially disadvantaged and those are the major projects that are being funded this year.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

In Quebec today more than 400,000 people are unemployed, more than 423,000 are on welfare and nearly 350,000 people who live alone are poor. It seems 53 per cent of Quebecers are afraid of losing their jobs, and meanwhile this government refuses to launch an economic recovery program.

How will the Prime Minister explain to millions of Canadians who are suffering as a result of his erroneous policies that he has no money for a program to modernize infrastructures, as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, but can afford to spend million of dollars on selling free trade which is losing us jobs?

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that in the February budget the Minister of Finance spelled out very clearly that he was prepared to discuss with the provinces a program to improve the national highway system. Those discussions are ongoing.

The ministers of transport of the provinces and of Canada will be discussing how that might be carried out at a meeting, I believe, within the next few days.

Talks are going on to improve our national highway system and also to provide employment.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition proposed modernization of the infrastructure of the country in January. It is now the middle of September and time the government stopped discussions and started acting. People want jobs. They want to work today, not in two months.

When will the government announce a program for Canadians to work? Do we have to wait another six months?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange that when the Government of Canada announces programs which will create employment, such as purchasing helicopters for the armed forces, purchasing armoured cars, purchasing trucks from the west which preserve and create employment. They object to them.

Those purchases create employment in this country and it is the taxpayers' dollars being spent to create employment. It is billions of dollars. They object to that, and yet they want a make work project that will only provide jobs for a short period of time. What we are trying to do is create meaningful employment on the long term.

* * *

ATLANTIC FISHERMEN

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of fisheries. On June 2 the minister announced the northern cod moratorium response package which would look after roughly 19,000 plant workers and fishermen. Yesterday

the minister said that since June 2 he has looked after 19,223 fishermen and plant workers.

I find that very strange because in the first week of September alone, my office responded to 1,000 calls and the records show that in fact on the toll free line, 10,485 calls came through. This is quite a discrepancy.

I would ask the minister to explain this discrepancy and perhaps tell the House what he plans to do about it.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I am not functioning properly today, but I fail to see where there is any discrepancy.

There are 19,200-odd persons, fishermen and plant workers, in the northern cod area in Newfoundland and Labrador who are receiving assistance at the present time under the northern cod program. I cannot remember the exact figures, but there are a number of hundreds in Quebec who will be eligible, 1,000 or thereabouts in Nova Scotia and a certain number in New Brunswick as well.

There are at least a thousand cases in a grey area that we do not think are eligible but who will probably go through an appeal process. There are two appeal boards set up. They are staffed and ready to go to hear appeals from people who feel that they are eligible and who have been refused.

I do not know where the discrepancy is. There are 19,000 and several hundred people on the program at the moment.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The minister knows there are trucking companies and smaller fish buying companies that are directly affected by the northern cod moratorium. In addition, there are vessel owners who have invested tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars in the fishing industry this year, in the belief that there would be one, who are really out of pocket. I do believe, as most others, that they deserve special compensation.

Could the minister respond and tell me if he is giving special consideration for more compensation for the vessel owners and consideration for the fish buying plants and the trucking companies to be considered under this program?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, it should always be remembered—and sometimes it is difficult to remember it—that there is a provincial government in Newfoundland and that government has full authority to contribute to assist people who are in poor economic straits as well as the federal government.

With respect to processing plants, the responsibility for the fish processing industry is clearly with the province of Newfoundland and Labrador which licenses fish processing plants. Under the property and civil rights section of the Constitution there is just no question as to who has the responsibility for fish processing plants. The people that license them to operate do.

With respect, there are some grey areas the hon. gentleman mentioned, such as what I would call fish handlers, who are not employed in the fish processing plant. I am looking at that now as a matter of fact and I hope to have a decision in the next few days because there are some persons there who I think might well be included.

Generally speaking, we can only look after those who are directly engaged as fishermen or fish processing plant workers.

* * *

INTEREST RATES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the finance minister, I will put my question to the Prime Minister.

Credit card expenditures represent over $40 billion a year in Canada. The Bank of Canada rate now stands at 5.14 per cent and the average current credit card interest rate is 17 per cent, a spread of 250 per cent.

The Minister of Finance has repeatedly stated that the fundamentals are right and that consumers will get the economy out of the recession. Today Stats Canada data show that department store sales are down by 3 per cent. Clearly consumers do not think that the fundamentals are right.

Will the Prime Minister explain how this government can expect consumers to open their wallets and rescue the economy when they are being gouged by usurious interest rates on their credit cards?

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the hon. member raise this matter again. The vast majority of credit card holders in Canada pay their credit card bills on time and do not pay interest. I think we should remember that.

People who are unable to pay on the due date have other options which were pointed out not long ago by the media. I remember a report on CTV, wherein they said it was important to shop around. If one buys a set of bedroom furniture, for instance, instead of using a credit card it would be better to go to a bank or credit union and borrow at rates which, as the hon. member just said, are the lowest they have been in 30 years. These are the best rates that have been available to Canadian consumers in 30 years, including personal loans and mortgages.

I think if the hon. member considers all the facts involved he will realize it does not make sense to interfere with credit card rates.

[*English*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Yes, I am back with the same question and I will keep coming back with the same question again and again as long as consumers are allowed to be gouged by banks.

The minister pointed out that 50 per cent of those that carry credit cards pay off their balances every month, but that leaves $11 billion to $12 billion a year that are carried on payments. These consumers are unable to go down to the bank and get a loan to pay off their credit card debt. These are the ones that are being gouged.

I want to point out to the minister that the Consumers Association of Canada has made exactly this point; that consumers are loaded with debt and the rates are too high.

Is the minister prepared to call in the heads of all the financial institutions in this country and explain to them that he expects some action with respect to reducing those usurious rates?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that, as I mentioned before, I personally met the Canadian Bankers' Association and those responsible for other areas of the financial sector, and the fact remains that credit card rates have dropped to their lowest levels in years.

The hon. member knows perfectly well it is his duty and mine to tell consumers that they have various options for borrowing money. I know that the New Democratic Party makes a specialty of borrowing money. They are always after the government and everybody else to borrow. However, we must make sure that consumers are able to borrow at the best possible rates, and we owe it to consumers to inform them properly. I suggest the hon. member follow my example.

* * *

[*English*]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I direct my question to the Prime Minister.

While the referendum is a vital issue in this country, the lack of jobs is dominating the lives of Canadians. There are 1.6 million Canadians looking for work. Many Canadians are losing hope. In August, 85,000 Canadians gave up even looking for a job.

Why will the government not come forward with a new economic plan, as it is obvious the present policy is not working?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for a very important question. We have a serious problem of unemployment that all governments, provincial and federal, are working on it.

In light of her interest, she would be encouraged by a report out today which says the International Monetary

Fund is giving the Prime Minister's economic policies the thumbs up sign. The IMF predicts the Canadian economy will grow 4.5 per cent next year.

More important, I think it is probably worth while, given the significance of my hon. friend's question, that the International Monetary Fund, which is generally accepted as the leading international analyst, says: "For real GDP growth, of the G–7 countries, Canada will lead the G–7 in 1993". Our employment growth is scheduled to be 2.9 per cent, which again is number one in the industrialized world and inflation rates will be at 2 per cent, which is the lowest in the industrialized world.

These three factors should inspire confidence in my hon. friend so that we can work together to bring down the unemployment rate which remains unacceptably high.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can read all kinds of statistics but the fact is that the growth in the second quarter has remained stagnant. With lower than expected growth in the United States, Canada will require a domestic push to get us out of this recession.

Why has this government not come forward with an infrastructure program that could give Canadian businesses and consumers a boost of confidence? Why does the government refuse to take effective action to get Canadians back to work?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend may have missed the comment made a few moments ago by the minister of state when he indicated that governments had been coming together to devise an impressive national highway development plan which is an important contribution to our national infrastructure.

My hon. friend should know of the very productive conversations between the premier of Prince Edward Island and myself in regard to the fixed link, which is a tremendous contribution to infrastructure development in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, in particular.

This, I think, will probably arrest her attention in a significant way. We have been doing all of these things while maintaining inflation at the lowest rate in the industrialized world. That combination is very encouraging for durable economic recovery in the future without the burden of further debts on our children and grandchildren.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIRLINES

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

If the Canadian airline companies merge, will the federal government take the necessary steps to ensure that the cost of a ticket to fly between Val-d'Or or Rouyn-Noranda and Montreal or Quebec will not increase? Indeed the residents of our region are already paying too much for the services provided by Air Alliance and Air Canada.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to inform my colleague that the issue of prices and competition in the field of transport has already been referred some time ago to the Competition Bureau. If a transaction takes place between Canadian Airlines and Air Canada, the Competition Tribunal will complete its work and make sure—in fact this is one the main reasons of its existence, if not the only reason—that there exists a fair competition between the companies.

* * *

[*English*]

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

I have an article here which shows that youth summer employment in the summer of 1992 was the worst ever. It costs roughly between $9,000 and $11,000 a year for a student to have a year of post-secondary education away from home.

Given the fact that most students either had no jobs or very few low paying jobs this summer, what is this minister going to do to make sure that these young men and women can get back to and stay in school?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member looked at what Canada and the provinces do for education, to keep Canadian youth in schools, in community colleges and universities, he would find out that we are surpassed

by no other country in the world except maybe by the Americans on a per capita basis.

What he is saying about the employment situation is true. It has been difficult because of the world-wide recession and the economic impact it has had. Last summer, during the usual period that these young students can work, the government spent the same amount of money it did last year, notwithstanding the fact that the over-all budget of my department was reduced by some $200 million, which shows the dedication we have to students in Canada.

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Secretary of State.

For several months the Secretary of State promised to bring about changes to the program to help students. He has received recommendations from a number of sources, including the Canadian Association of Students, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, as well as from myself.

Given the problems experienced by our young people in trying to find work this summer, and given the fact that very few jobs were available, and these often did not pay well, when will the government make changes to its programs, so that our young people can go back to college and university and prepare their future?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, since the Secretary of State is out of town today, I will bring the hon. member's question to his attention and I am sure that the Secretary of State will provide an answer at the earliest opportunity.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responding for the Minister of Justice.

At midnight on October 1, just two weeks from now, the new gun legislation imposes registration requirements on many Canadian gun owners which if missed for any reason will place them in default of the law and will result in prosecution, seizure and destruction of their firearms.

It was a commitment of the Department of Justice that a comprehensive public information campaign would be conducted to inform and remind Canadians of this important legal deadline. I understand that such a household mailing has been prepared but not yet released. In the time remaining it is clear that many Canadians will not receive that mailing until after the critical date for registration.

Is it possible to provide an extended period of grace for the registration of these firearms until the public information program has been released or, alternatively, will the minister ask his colleague to consider an expeditious method of serving that public notice through other means?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the deadline of October 1 for registering converted machine guns was fixed by an act of Parliament that was passed in this House last December. It could not be changed unless we passed another amending act through Parliament to change it. The deadline date has been widely publicized since the proclamation of the gun control legislation last December. The minister has no authority to extend any deadline established in the law.

There has been widespread publicity. I think 40,000 copies of the communications materials in support of the gun control package have been distributed since July 27. This coming weekend ll million copies of a tabloid explaining the entire legislative and regulatory package are going to be delivered to every home in Canada. I should think that the information will be widespread and that those who have converted machine guns will be in a position to know just what they must do.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I also wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Swedish Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Insurance and Immigration.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

* * *

PRIVILEGE

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, as you surely know, there is an issue which yesterday in the province of Quebec brought an injunction by the Superior Court. I am referring to statements presumably made by the deputy minister for intergovernmental affairs of the province of Quebec, Mrs. Wilhelmy.

Following the threat made by a Quebec radio station to air the comments made by the deputy minister, an injunction was granted. The injunction prohibits all the media—

Mr. Speaker: I am reluctant to interrupt the hon. member but this is clearly not a question of privilege. He may raise a point of order, but this is clearly not a question of privilege.

Mr. Guérin: I was coming to my question of privilege. I realized this morning that the Library of Parliament, which comes under this Parliament's jurisdiction, published on pages 2 and 3 an article which was banned by the Quebec Superior Court.

An hon. member: We are in Ontario.

Mr. Guérin: In that case why not say that Canada is not Quebec?

Anyway this article was published—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is complaining that the Parliament of Canada has published some report. If that is, and I am not saying that it is, some breach of civil or other law it is not a question on which I can intervene.

Point of Order

Coming back to the hon. member's point of privilege, it is very difficult to see how, whether the Parliament of Canada publishes this report or not, it has made it more difficult for any single member of this House to carry on his or her duties, which is the test of privilege.

It would also seem to me that if it is pursued as a point of order I do not have any particular capacity to intervene. I have to ask the hon. member to accept the suggestion of the Chair that I cannot go further on the matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member on a question of privilege.

M. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, it is a question of privilege since my privileges as a member from Quebec are not—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I made a ruling on the question of privilege raised by the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead. After all, according to the Standing Orders, the Speaker of the House must be given due notice, which was done. I was given due notice and I made a ruling. It is obvious that the matter is closed.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period I believe the Leader of the Opposition inadvertently provided information to this House that was not correct. In his question to the Minister of Transport he indicated—

Mr. Speaker: I have been receiving some assistance from members. It would seem that it is a question of debate, and perhaps it should be pursued in that respect.

Mr. Angus: Is it not the tradition in this House that if a member imparts information that is not correct—and I

am not talking about opinion; I am talking about correctness of information— this House has a responsibility to ensure that it does not remain on the record?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member raises a matter of some interest. There is a great deal of exchange in this House on a continual basis, on both sides of the House, that is challenged as incorrect, not accurate, or sometimes worse by other members. That is a matter of debate and is not a matter of a question of order.

I am sure the hon. member would want to accept my response to his question. There are other ways the hon. member can pursue the matter.

[*Translation*]

PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know why the Library of Parliament is allowed to publish a text which the members from Quebec cannot comment on outside of this Chamber because it was banned from publication, while the other members could do so.

• (1510)

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is raising a matter that is not in the jurisdiction of the Chair to interfere with. It is maybe a question for the courts, but it is not a question that can be resolved in this Chamber.

I listened to the complaint. I will certainly pass on the intervention to the Library. It is clearly not a matter on which I have any jurisdiction to interfere.

IMMIGRATION ACT

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I gave the Chair notice of this point of order, and I also gave notice to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Subsection 65(2) of the Immigration Act imposes on the Minister of Employment and Immigration a legal duty to table in both Houses of Parliament a copy of any rules made by the chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board within 15 sitting days after their approval by the Governor in Council.

I am informed that the minister has failed to comply with that legal obligation with respect to two items.

They are the rules approved by Order in Council 89.151 on February 5, 1989 and the immigration appeal division rules approved on October 25, 1990.

Officers of the *Journals* branch of this House have confirmed that there is no record of these rules having been tabled in this or the last session.

The minister's failure to table these rules means that members of this House have yet to be officially informed of their adoption. More important, it means that the committee of this House to which they would stand ordinarily referred, in accordance with Standing Order 32, has been and continues to be denied the procedural opportunity to examine these rules and to report thereon to the House.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that I previously submitted that a failure to abide by statutory tabling requirements involves a contempt of the House. This minister has been in default for three years in one case, and almost two years in the other case. It is a default that perhaps borders on negligence.

In any event, if the minister does not promptly fulfil his obligation to table these rules, I am prepared to restate that claim in regard to the present default.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for having raised this matter with me yesterday.

I have brought this to the attention of officials in my department. I can undertake to this House that either later this afternoon or tomorrow I should be able to comply with the statutory requirement that the hon. member refers to.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDERS IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): 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 committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 three petitions.

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

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

DEDICATION OF PEACEKEEPING MONUMENT

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, it is a special honour for me to inform the House today of the plans for dedicating Canada's peacekeeping monument. It will take place in Ottawa on October 8.

As many hon. members know, Canada's servicemen and servicewomen have a distinguished record in peacekeeping, spanning 45 years. In fact, Canada has participated in every peacekeeping mission mounted by the United Nations, and in seven non-UN missions as well.

That is a record unsurpassed by any other nation. Almost 90,000 Canadians have served in these missions over the years.

[*Translation*]

There are now more than 2,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces involved in peacekeeping activities in 14 regions around the world, not to mention the 750 military we promised to send to Somalia and the 1,200 peacekeepers we offered to post in Yugoslavia.

[*English*]

Peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations have made such a profound mark on the world that in 1988 all UN peacekeepers were honoured with the award of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize.

From this great tribute came the inspiration for a national monument in Ottawa to honour the contributions of Canadian Forces to peacekeeping. A national design competition under the auspices of the Department of National Defence and the National Capital Commission was held, and an independent jury comprised of prominent Canadians was appointed to make the final selection.

The jury received eight excellent submissions, and I am told that any one of them would have served the cause well. It is with some pride that I note that the winning design team is from British Columbia.

"The Reconciliation" is a most appropriate name for this winning entry, which was submitted by sculptor Jack Harman, urban designer Richard Henriquez and landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

The monument, which is now almost completed on Confederation Boulevard in front of the National Gallery, consists of two converging limestone walls—representative of opposing factions. The debris of war lies between these walls. Three cast bronze figures, representing the peacekeepers, will stand on an elevated wall.

The first of these, a communication servicewoman, recognizes a key role that Canadians often play in peacekeeping missions. The second figure, an officer wearing the traditional blue beret, portrays a United Nations military observer. The third bronze figure is of a sentry carrying a rifle, illustrating that peacekeeping is often a precarious and difficult job.

Just beyond the walls is a grove of 12 oak trees, a reminder that our peacekeepers come from all 10 provinces and our two territories. The grove will also serve as a symbol of our future and of our hope for peace.

On October 24 the whole world celebrates United Nations Day. What better month to be unveiling this

unique Canadian monument to our peacekeepers? I hope that this year all Canadians will join in celebrating our own very special national peacekeeping day when we unveil our peacekeeping monument on October 8.

Beginning on October 1 all Canadian forces members who have served on United Nations peacekeeping duties at any time will begin wearing their blue berets. They will do so up to and including National Peacekeeping Day on October 8. This will serve as a positive sign to all members of the forces, and to all Canadians, that peacekeeping is an important facet of our defence policy and of Canada's commitment to world peace.

I am sure that the peacekeeping monument, located on Confederation Boulevard with such landmarks as the Parliament Buildings, the Supreme Court, the National War Memorial and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, will soon be recognized as a national symbol of Canada's dedication to peace.

Canada is the first country to dedicate such a monument to this important cause. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you will agree that our peacekeepers should be first in our hearts and minds not only on October 8, but every day throughout the year.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, it is a special honour for me today to rise on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada to respond to the fine address given by my colleague, the hon. Associate Minister of National Defence, giving tribute to peacekeepers and informing the House of the details of the peacekeeping monument that will be dedicated on October 8.

In my remarks I would like to reflect a little on what peacekeeping has meant and means. Despite the end of superpower rivalry the world remains a very dangerous place, and Canadians must, and should be, ever aware of this.

• (1520)

One of the pillars of our way of life is that we be secure. Total security involves not just military defence, but the social, economic, environmental and other factors for a secure and stress-free life.

Today Canada's primary concerns with defence involve not just sovereignty. They include concerns with the defence of the values, the institutions and the processes that define free societies. These now more than ever demand vigorous protection.

An ideal world that abolishes famine, disease, poverty, the environmental degradation that we see every day in less fortunate countries and nuclear weapons and war can only be achieved through enforceable international co-operation and agreement.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Christ declared: "Blessed are the peacekeepers". Today the Canadian forces are among the most blessed people on earth as they prepare to undertake yet another peacekeeping operation, this time in Somalia.

Over the past 45 years more than 85,000 of our young men and women in uniform have participated in each of the peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations, Canada being the only country in the world to do so. In addition, as the hon. minister said, we have participated in seven non-UN missions.

As an aside, while traditionally our forces stationed in Europe for 40 years were not there as peacekeepers in the traditional sense, they were in reality our front line peacekeepers, unheralded and often questioned over their presence there. They helped preserve peace for 40 years until the iron curtain disintegrated and the Soviet empire vanished.

Today there are more than 2,000 Canadian peacekeepers serving in Cyprus, Syria, the Sinai, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, the western Sahara, Angola, El Salvador, Cambodia, Yugoslavia and soon Somalia. They also have other ongoing UN commitments in India, Pakistan and the Middle East.

The word peacekeeping does not appear in the United Nations charter. In the previous 45 years the UN has undertaken 25 such missions at the cost of more than 800 lives. In the past three years alone the UN has undertaken 10 new peacekeeping operations. In the previous 32 years it undertook 15; the trend is obvious.

Given world instability, ambitious nationalism, growing tribalism and a seemingly endless supply of weapons in the hands of even the most modest of nations, the likelihood for a coalition of like-minded nations to combine to use force in the interest of peace is growing, not diminishing.

Many of these new missions involve much more than simply placing the UN blue helmets between combatants. In the post-cold war world national sovereignty is no longer considered an absolute. Certainly it will not take priority over the right of the starving and the suffering people in a battle zone to food or medicine, even if there is no cease fire, even if the collapse of

government authority makes it impossible to obtain clear consent.

In Cambodia the United Nations will technically run the country until elections can be held in 1993. In Iraq and Kuwait it is mopping up after Operation Desert Storm. In Somalia there is effectively no government. Its job is to ensure that food gets through. In Yugoslavia the job is to keep the peace where there is no peace to keep.

I would like to remind the House and my colleagues that it was in Yugoslavia that a young soldier who happened to be from my riding, Master Corporal Dennis Reid, lost his foot in a land mine and shortly thereafter Sergeant Michael Ralph from St. John's lost his life.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry, but time is running out. The minister spoke for four minutes and the member has spoken for six minutes. I ask for your co-operation, please.

Mr. Mifflin: I will wrap up. I appreciate your indulgence.

There are those who say that we are spreading our forces too thin. This is not the time to address that. The important thing for us to do as politicians is ensure that when we are asked to participate in a mission our men and women are properly trained and equipped to undertake it. Otherwise, we should not promise to participate.

I consider it a distinct honour and privilege today to be asked by my party to speak in tribute of Canadian peacekeepers. Peacekeeping and peacemakers are a part of Canadian history of which all Canadians can be very proud. This magnificent monument will serve as a lasting and poignant reminder.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus I would like to welcome the minister's remarks and welcome the dedication of this peacekeeping monument in Ottawa on October 8. Certainly peacekeeping has always been a dimension of Canadian foreign policy and for that matter Canadian defence policy on which there has been a great deal of tripartisan and partisan agreement is something we have all taken a great deal of pride in regardless of our political persuasion.

The minister mentioned in her remarks that over 90,000 Canadian military personnel have served in these missions over the years. It is incredible when you think about how many Canadians have had this experience and the benefits and the insight that experience brings to their participation in Canadian life and the formation of Canadian policy.

I also noticed recently that Canadian peacekeepers are going to be forming an association, analogous to a veterans association and I certainly wish them well in that because I think they could also play a useful role in days to come.

I intended to mention, as the member who spoke before did, how dangerous peacekeeping can be. The member referred to the death of Sergeant Ralph and the injury of Master Corporal Reid. One of the things we might look at in the future would be in some way or another, in the way we have recognized those who have lost their lives in war, to recognize in an individual or collective way those who have lost their lives in the course of peacekeeping. Surely no less than others who lost their lives in various conflicts, these people have put their lives on the line, not only for Canada but for the peace of the world. We should find some way to acknowledge that.

By way of political comment, I want to say two things. As we get more involved in peacekeeping and as we find ourselves sending troops to Somalia and Yugoslavia, we need to find a better mechanism for involving Parliament in those decisions so that we do not get more and more into a kind of executive order regime for the dispensing of Canadian peacekeeping capabilities.

Although I do not disagree with anything the government has done in this respect, there could have been ways to involve Parliament, either by way of some kind of debate or whatever, not to hold things up but to provide an opportunity for Parliament, as a representative of the people, to reflect on just what Canadians are being asked to do.

Finally, as people who have an international reputation as peacekeepers, we have to reflect on our own responsibility to keep the peace here in Canada. God forbid that we who have been involved in all these peacekeeping operations should arrive at a point in our

own political future at which we would be faced with walls and we would be faced with conflict and somebody might have to send peacekeepers here. I say that with respect to the possible division of the country which is being advocated by certain people.

• (1530)

To those who are peacekeepers everywhere else, let us keep that in mind and let us do our very best to reconcile differences among ourselves and make sure we are able to keep the peace here at home.

I welcome the announcement and I look forward to being able to look with other Canadians at the monument when it is finally dedicated.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

PRESENTATION OF FIRST REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE ON ARMS EXPORT

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the first report of the subcommittee on arms export of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

Pursuant to the mandate established by Standing Order 108(2), the subcommittee considered the future of Canadian military equipment production and export. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that government table a comprehensive response to that report.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

EIGHTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. This report deals with the requirement of Health and Welfare Canada to table in the House of Commons an annual report on the Canada Assistance Plan.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report. I would also give notice in order that this report be debated and concurred to in the House.

[*Translation*]

PRESENTATION OF NINTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present to the House the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The report deals with letters of intent issued by the Department of Finance.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that government table a comprehensive response to that report. I will also have a notice published in order that a debate be held on that report and that it be adopted by the House.

[*Editor's note: See today's Votes and Proceedings for the above reports.*]

* * *

[*English*]

AIR SPACE OVER NIAGARA FALLS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-361, an act respecting the air space over Niagara Falls.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Nicholson: I am pleased to introduce an act respecting airspace over Niagara Falls. This bill is designed to make the airspace over Niagara Falls a restricted zone. It means that helicopters, planes, blimps or any other apparatus wishing to fly in the restricted zone will require a permit from the federal government. This act is to control congestion, noise pollution and to protect the aesthetic qualities of Niagara Falls.

I have had many residents of Niagara Falls recommend the Government of Canada take control of the airspace over Niagara Falls. I agree with them completely. I trust members of all parties will support me in this initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Nicholson moves that the bill now be read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-362, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act (approval and reporting of salaries).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to require prior approval by shareholders of salaries paid to officers of corporations and also it provides for their disclosure. This would also include the golden parachutes that officers of companies set up for themselves and in effect democratize the operation of a corporation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Rodriguez moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

EXCISE TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-363, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act (Limitation on rebate).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, as a way of explanation, when the Government of Canada in 1990 cancelled the manufacturers sales tax, provision was made that during 1991 all businesses would be eligible to apply for a rebate of that sales tax in their inventories. My bill would extend that rebate period into and including all of 1992 to make provision for those companies in Canada that for one reason or another missed the filing deadline to have another year in which to file, which is this year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Soetens moves that the bill be now read a first time and be printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

AUTHORIZATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)moved:

> That, in relation to their study of the economic integration of disabled persons, eight members and nine staff persons of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons be authorized to travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia for three days in November.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the hon. government House leader.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for that introduction as the government House leader. I think it is a little bit premature. However I appreciate the offer.

My colleague from Manitoba was wondering if there was a disposition within the House to have unanimous consent to revert to Private Members' Business because he has a bill that he would like to have introduced and read for the first time today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the suggestion of the motion tabled by the hon. opposition House leader. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

ECONOMIC CONVERSION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–364, an act to provide for the conversion to civilian uses of technologies and skills used in the defence industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your courtesy and the courtesy of the members of the House to give me unanimous consent.

This bill is being introduced at an appropriate time because today we tabled the report of the subcommittee on arms exports. It has been a matter of major agreement among all three parties that we have to move into the whole area of looking to convert our industries from defence purposes into peaceful civilian products and technologies.

This bill puts forward a number of proposals building upon that report, particularly the whole idea of a conversion commission that would help our private sector to develop these skills and to get some assistance in using its base of high technology to start developing civilian products and to start looking at how we can develop products that would be particularly appropriate for many of the peacekeeping, peacemaking activities that our Armed Forces are now engaged in. I recommend this bill and again I thank members for their courtesy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

• (1540)

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on behalf of the Canadian Vietnamese community to present a petition in this House concerning the situation in Vietnam.

The Canadian Vietnamese community is calling upon Parliament to use diplomatic means to demand that (1) the Vietnamese government abandon its inhumane policy and restore civil and human rights in Vietnam; (2) all Vietnamese regulations, codes and constitutional provisions prohibiting free expression or denying the freedom of association or religious worship be eliminated; (3) that the Vietnamese government make a formal commitment to permit free and fair elections under international supervision so that the citizens of the country may determine the future leadership and orientation of their government.

LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): I have two petitions to present today. The first one is from a number of petitioners in Ontario and Quebec which notes that the people of the Stoney Point Indian Reserve near Sarnia, Ontario had their homes seized under the War Measures Act back in 1942 for the efficient prosecution of the war.

Half a century after the end of the war, the Chippewas of Kettle and Stoney Point are still demanding that Parliament return their homeland to them. Their claim is supported by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development but unfortunately the Minister of National Defence still refuses to do the right thing.

The undersigned, your petitioners, therefore call on Parliament to fulfill its responsibilities to the Stoney Point First Nation by returning the land at Stoney Point to its aboriginal inhabitants and their descendants.

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): This second petition is from a number of people engaged in the

automotive industry who petition that they are faced with an unjust tax system which prevents them from deducting the costs of purchasing, maintaining and insuring the tools and equipment essential to their employment.

They note that the Income Tax Act allows self-employed professionals and business people to deduct the cost of entertainment, including food, liquor and even prostitutes, as business entertainment expenses and yet these people cannot even deduct the cost of the tools they need to do their job.

The petitioners therefore call on Parliament to request that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Revenue take action to amend the Income Tax Act to allow Canadian automotive workers deductions for purchasing, maintaining and insuring the tools and equipment required in the course of their employment.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): I have three petitions here, all on the same subject, signed collectively by approximately 150 senior citizens of my riding. These petitions were prompted by the 37 cent increase in the Old Age Security pension in April which they found to be not only insulting but embarrassing.

The petitioners therefore pray that the government be called upon to ensure that Canadian Old Age Security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

THREE GORGES DAM

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by a number of Albertans, most of whom are resident in my riding, wishing to draw to the attention of the House the fact that the Three Gorges Dam on China's Yangtze River will displace over a million people from their homes, will destroy the existing river system upon which millions of people depend for subsistence, as do several rare and endangered species of animals, and will increase the risk of catastrophic floods for millions of people currently not at risk when less expensive and environmentally ruinous alternatives for electricity, navigation and flood control exist.

Therefore the petitioners call on this House to refuse to participate in or provide technical assistance, loans, grants, guarantees or subsidies in any form for any aspect to the Three Gorges Dam project from this day forward.

EDUCATION

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition, duly certified by the clerk, concerning education.

This petition is signed by 50 Canadians who are concerned that Canada should have a skilled labour force to participate internationally in competition and they are asking Parliament to urge the government to promote and encourage the institution of a national education standard in consultation with the provincial governments, education professionals, industry and labour and all those involved in education.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have two petitions to file. The first petition is from a large number of people in British Columbia who point out that family class and assisted relative immigrants have historically been an important part of Canadian immigration. They also point out that the government's present proposals for immigration will make it more difficult for family class and assisted relatives to obtain immigration visas.

The petitioners ask that this government give first priority to all immigration, to family class and to assisted relatives.

The second petition is again signed by a large number of British Columbians, mostly from my own riding.

These petitioners point out that about 75 per cent of all visitor and immigration cases in New Delhi, India come from the Punjab. They point out that the centralized services in New Delhi are increasingly overburdened and that it is difficult for people to travel from the Punjab to New Delhi.

The petitioners ask that the government immediately open a consulate service for immigration and visitor visas in the Punjab.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston, Ontario, who are concerned about the goods and services tax. They like you, Mr. Speaker, and thousands of other Canadians are appalled that the government introduced this tax and

decided in the course of it to tax books, magazines and newspapers.

Of course we in the opposition fought this tax valiantly. We objected specifically to the inclusion of the tax on these products at the time the goods and services tax measure was introduced in the House. We continue to oppose it. The government has ignored all pleas that have been filed hitherto to remove this iniquitous tax.

I know that the parliamentary secretary probably received similar petitions and probably wishes he could file them in the House to object.

I am pleased to present this petition today objecting to this tax and supporting these people who have filed this petition with me saying this tax is wrong and should be withdrawn.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 356 and 361.

[*Text*]

Question No. 356—**Mr. Whittaker:**

Since January 1, 1992 has the National Transportation Agency disbursed any amounts for travel undertaken by its chairman and, if so, on what dates, between what locations, and for what purpose?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): The National Transportation Agency of Canada advises as follows:

Yes, see attached annex.

Settlement made on January 3 and 6, January 1992 for travel between Ottawa and Kamloops, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Squamish, Port Moody, New Westminster, Roberts Bank, Victoria, B.C., Seattle and Tacoma in the state of Washington for the purpose of meeting with government and industry officials.

Settlement made on February 3 and February 7, 1992 for travel between Ottawa and Kauai for the purpose of attending an International Conference on System Sciences.

Settlement made on March 18, 1992 for travel between Ottawa and Vancouver and Whitehorse for the purpose of attending meetings at regional offices.

Settlement made on April 1, 1992 for travel between Ottawa and St. John's, Newfoundland for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Settlement made on April 24, 1992 for travel between Ottawa and Victoria for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in Victoria, B.C.

Settlement made on April 30, 1992 for travel while in Vancouver for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in Vancouver, B.C. and to attend the international conference closing the, decade of the disabled, independence 92.

Settlement made on May 14, 1992 for travel between Vancouver and Winnipeg for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Settlement made on June 3, 1992 for travel between Winnipeg and Regina for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Settlement made on June 3, 1992 for travel between Regina and Ottawa to attend an agency meeting.

Settlement made on June 4, 1992 for travel between Regina and Calgary and Edmonton for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearings in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta.

Settlement made on June 5, 1992 for travel between Edmonton and Whitehorse for the purpose of chairing the Road to Accessibility hearing in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Question No. 361—Mr. Angus:

With respect to the Canada 125 Gold song competition and related activities (*a*) what was the total cost of this program (*b*) what was the cost of producing and distributing the recordings related to this program (*c*) how many free copies of the recordings were distributed and to whom (*d*) what is the cost of the launch ceremony scheduled for June 18, 1992 (*e*) what companies or individuals received contracts in relation to this ceremony and for how much (*f*) what other costs were incurred regarding this competition?

Mr. James Stewart Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am informed by the Depart-

ment of Communications and the Secretary of State of Canada as follows:

(a) DOC cost for this project to date is $164,142. Once final invoices are received projected total costs should not exceed $177,000.

(b) DOC cost for producing and distributing the recordings related to this project is $38,036.

(c) Free copies of the recordings were distributed to the following persons:

—all members of Parliament and the Senate	=394
—station managers of all CRTC licensed radio and television stations in Canada	=951
—Factor Musicaction Canada (FMC)	=150
—Canada 125 Corporation	= 75
—DOC headquarters and regional offices	=100
—Launch	=200
—Miscellaneous requests from media, et cetera	= 50

(d) The Canada 125 Corporation contributed some $8,000 toward the launch ceremony including the travel costs of the winnig artists.

(e) The sole DOC contract was to First Satellite Communications ($4,500) to broadcast the launch and music video.

(f) Other DOC costs that were incurred regarding this competition not included in (b) are as follows:

—prizes to contest winners	=$10,000
—prizes to semi-finalists (nine @ $500)	= 4,500
—production of two music videos	= 89,570
—administration and legal costs for FMC	= 22,036

Also the Canada 125 Corporation contributed $3,400 toward the artwork for the CD cover.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I have a Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers on the Order Paper asking for details of costs of a trip undertaken by the Prime Minister some time ago. This request has been outstanding since May. The parliamentary secretary has undertaken on about four occasions to look into the matter. Last week was one occasion and at least once before that in last June. It is now September and we are going to adjourn, certainly before next Wednesday, for an extended period. I fail to understand why the government cannot deal with this request in an expeditious way.

I can only say that it appears to me to smack of cover-up. The option open to me, just so it is clear, is to transfer this for debate and then it goes on a list of hundreds of items where my chances of getting drawn is likened to finding a needle in a hay stack. The parliamentary secretary knows that. He is hoping, I am sure, that I will transfer it for debate to avoid the embarrassment of having these documents produced.

I have to protest this outrage. The government is under an obligation to deal with these requests in an expeditious manner and either refuse the information or give it to the House. I think it is unfair for the parliamentary secretary to keep asking week after week that this matter stand over.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the hortatory and jussive nature of the rhetoric of my hon. friend, but I can assure him that, as I gave him an undertaking last Wednesday to look into these matters, I looked into these matters. I can report to him that his Notice of Motion P-17 is being acted upon and we ought to have that information shortly.

• (1550)

There is a second one standing in his name, and I will take the liberty of responding even though he did not ask about it. He did ask last week, I believe. That is motion P-20. I can assure him that it is within sight. It is in the process of being translated from the original and should be ready shortly. I gave an undertaking I discharged the undertaking; and I will stay with it until we satisfy the requests of my hon. friend.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall all motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I am requesting leave under section 52 of the Standing Orders for the adjournment of the House to deal with the crisis in the airline industry.

As we have already had allusions today, it is expected I suppose by all of us that the House will not be sitting much longer with the upcoming referendum. In view of the fact that this crisis which has been ongoing through much of this year and has been coming to a point of culmination will likely arise during the adjournment during the referendum campaign, I would urge Your Honour to consider the fact that items of transportation policy, competition policy and jobs in many parts of Canada are at stake in this important industry and that members of the House of Commons should have an opportunity to debate it before we go on any extended leave.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The matter raised by the hon. member for Ottawa South is a very important one, but upon consultation and considering the particular constraints of our Standing Orders, the Chair regrets it cannot comply today with the hon. member's request.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(*b*), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(8)(*c*) the total number of allotted days in the supply period ending December 10, 1992 shall be increased by one day.

Consequently the total number of allotted days in this supply period will now be six.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John McDermid (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C–80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the members of this House about Bill C–80, legislation which I believe represents a very important step in social policy for families in Canada.

In September 1990 the Prime Minister joined with leaders of over 70 nations to sign a declaration calling for national plans of action on behalf of children. Last December, with the support of all of the provinces, the Prime Minister ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These were fundamental building blocks for this government's agenda for Canada's children, the *Brighter Futures* initiatives which the Minister of National Health and Welfare had the great pleasure to announce in May of this year.

Together with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, there are three major elements of *Brighter Futures*.

The first element is the proposed child tax benefit which is before us today, a new, simpler approach to children's benefits which provides additional financial support to families with very modest incomes.

The second element is a long–term action plan for Canadian children, describing where we are today and outlining the challenges that the future holds.

The third element is a child development initiative designed to address the conditions that place some Canadian children at risk, especially in their early years. This is a multi–faceted program supported by a five–year allocation of $500 million and ongoing funding after that of $170 million annually.

[*Translation*]

I believe, —and I am sure all members will agree— that we build the future daily through our children. We are aware of the pressures on parents, and the government believes it is important to support them.

[*English*]

This was one of the underlying principles in developing the proposed child tax benefit program. It increases child benefits by $2.1 billion over five years and better directs benefits according to need. Furthermore—and this is something I intend to come back to because I think its real importance has not been fully appreciated —the child tax benefit provides innovative support to low income working families.

I do not think that it is necessary at this point to reiterate the details of the proposed new child tax benefit. However, I do think it would be valuable to look, at least briefly, at the shortcomings of the current system and how this child tax benefit will overcome them.

First, the existing system provides inadequate support to lower income families, especially low income working families. Under the child tax benefit, families with incomes below $50,000 will receive an additional $250 a year in child benefits on average. Moreover, low income working families will receive up to $500 a year in additional benefits through the new earned income supplement.

Second, even though the present system directs more benefits to low income families than to high income families, more can be done to better direct child benefits where they are most needed. There are two aspects of this particular problem.

First, family allowances are directed on the basis of individual income instead of family income. As a result, families with similar total incomes may receive different levels of child benefits. There is no question that family income is a more equitable basis for directing assistance to children.

Second, high income families continue to receive child benefits even though they have relatively little need. I have been told many times in my constituency by a myriad of people: "For heaven's sake, do not send me these these family allowances cheques, we do not need them in our family. Redirect them where they are most needed". We believe it is more responsible to target benefits to low and modest income families than to continue to make payments to all families.

The child tax benefit will be based on family income. Accordingly, it will be more effectively directed on the basis of need. It will better target assistance to low and modest income families by enriching over-all benefits and redirecting existing benefits from wealthy families to more modest income families.

Delays in the delivery of child benefits under the current system has also been identified as a current problem. I remember, for a considerable amount of time, debating in this House both when we were discussing income tax matters and during Question Period, individuals who had to, in order to get their child tax credit, go to tax discounters to get their money immediately. This was causing great problems for some families. The refundable child tax credit, which I am talking about now, represents more than half of a family's federal child benefit. However, it often fails to meet the needs of the child as they occur. They have to assess the tax returns before they can pay the credit.

• (1600)

This delay can be difficult for many families. They have to pay for the children's needs as they arise, but have to wait for more than a year to receive a full credit.

Delays in the delivery of benefits have forced low income families, as I have mentioned, to resort to the tax discounters for earlier payments of their benefits. Tax discounter's fees average about $80, which represents a substantial amount of money for a low income family.

The child tax benefit, with up-front monthly payments, will provide assistance as it is needed to help with the care of children. Two million families with incomes below $50,000 will receive higher monthly payments and I am very pleased to say that low income families will no longer have to resort to the tax discounters.

Finally, the changes to child benefits over the years have gradually led to the present inconvenient patchwork system. Benefits are now delivered to families in different ways and with differing eligibility criteria. For example, family allowances are based on individual income, while the refundable child tax credit is based on family income. In addition, many higher income families question the cumbersome process of receiving family allowances only to have them taxed back at year's end.

The child tax benefit will simplify the current system. How often have members had people in their constituencies say: "For heaven's sake, try to simplify that tax form". This will do it. As I mentioned, three sets of eligibility criteria and delivery systems will be replaced by one benefit delivered in tax–free monthly payments. The new benefit will be calculated automatically for parents. The tax return will be shorter and simpler and high income parents will no longer have to repay benefits at year's end and figure out on the tax form what they owe.

I think we all agree that while the current child benefit system has much to recommend it, a number of problems have crept in over the years and it is time for a fundamental improvement. Too often we in Parliament create programs and let them run *ad infinitum* without taking a look to see if in fact they are truly effective, if they are doing the job that we intended them to do, or should they be changed. It is time for this major change to come because a number of problems have crepted in over the years and the child tax benefit is that fundamental improvement which we are debating today at third reading.

I want to take a few minutes now to address some of the myths which have developed during the debate and the discussion of the child tax benefit. I read with some dismay some of the headlines in the papers and some of the stories that give part of the story but not the entire story. Today, with my colleagues' permission, I would like to present some facts as they stand to dispel some of these myths.

Some critics have suggested or hinted that the child tax benefit is cutting back on our assistance to children. There is some vague suggestion that benefits for most families are reduced or eliminated in order to provide credits to a few working families. This is absolutely wrong. The child tax benefit will increase assistance for our children by $2.1 billion. That is with a *b* and a lot of zeros behind.

While the new benefit is better targeted, 3.1 million families in Canada will receive benefits. That is 85 per cent of all families in Canada with children. Furthermore, all families with incomes below $50,000 will receive either increased benefits or the same level of benefits as under current programs. On average, these families will receive an additional $250 a year in child benefits. It is absolutely clear that this new program is a major enrichment of child benefits for Canadian families.

My colleague over there smiles when I talk about $2.1 billion. I want to emphasize again that it is new money. We talk about old money and new money around here. I am not quite sure that the people who watch us on television are quite sure what we are talking about but they know it is their money and their tax dollars that we are talking about. However, this is new money being injected into this program to help the children of Canada. The increase will be over and above the benefits that would be provided if the current programs were to remain in place. Furthermore, as it has done with the child tax credit, the government is committed to reviewing the level of payments over time and to increase them as fiscal conditions permit.

I would like to remind hon. members that this government has a strong record of increasing child benefits. It is one that I am very proud of and I will stand up on any platform on this country and talk about it. Since 1985 this government has increased the refundable child tax credit four times. We have also introduced a supplement of $213 for children under seven where child care expenses are not claimed. These enrichments have ensured that the average level of federal child benefits paid to low income families has more than kept up with inflation.

Another myth I am hearing is that the child tax benefit leaves social assistance recipients worse off. As a matter of fact, I spoke to a young woman yesterday at the Owen Sound campus of Georgian College. She is a single parent who is receiving social assistance and is back at Georgian College taking courses and trying to get herself off the social assistance roll and back into the work force. She had heard the rumour that because she was receiving social assistance that this new system was going to make her worse off. The suggestion is false. I explained

to her that social assistance recipients will be better off under the child tax benefit in three very important ways.

First, since their child benefits will be consolidated and paid on a monthly basis, families on social assistance will see their monthly payments increase from $35 per child to at least $85 starting January 1993.

Second, those families on social assistance with three or more children and more than $3,750 in earnings will also receive extra benefits.

[*Translation*]

Third, welfare recipients will no longer have to resort to tax discounters to receive their benefits in advance. They will no longer have to wait a whole year to get all their child benefits, as was the case under the present system. These long waits will now be history.

[*English*]

Also important is the fact that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has met with his provincial counterparts and has urged them to ensure that no social assistance recipients are worse off as a result of the new child tax benefit program. All governments recognize the importance of providing for children. All the provincial governments together with the federal government, as I mentioned earlier, signed the United Nations agreement for children. I am confident that the provinces will not take any action which might be harmful to social assistance recipients.

• (1610)

Some people have erroneously viewed the earned income supplement as unfair by providing benefits to those in low wage jobs that are unavailable to those on social assistance. Low income workers often support their families while receiving thousands of dollars less in total government assistance than families on social assistance. How many times have you heard that it is more beneficial for people to be on social assistance than to be out working. They can get more money that way. There is no incentive really to get them off the social welfare roll and into the work force.

In fact families now moving from social assistance to the work force in many instances end up worse off because of employment related expenses and of course the loss of the social assistance.

That is why we brought in the earned income supplement because that helps offset some of these losses that are incurred on moving from social assistance into the work force. By helping these low income working families that often fall through the cracks of existing social programs, this earned income supplement is a first step. I do not say it is the only answer and I admit that. It is not the entire answer but it is the first step in dismantling the welfare trap that so many people find themselves in.

There has also been some suggestion that the new benefit system will not respond to sudden or unexpected changes in family needs as well as the current system does. First let me say that other government programs, such as unemployment insurance and provincial social assistance, respond immediately to changes in family income which occur during a year.

The fact is that the proposed child tax benefit is more responsive than the current system. This is again another advantage for these changes. For example, with the new monthly child tax benefit, payments will respond immediately to the birth of a child, a change in custody and a permanent drop in family income due marriage breakdown or the death of a spouse.

I would like to remind hon. members that in spite of these misunderstandings about the child tax benefit there has been support for it. There has been very good support. There are a lot of questions about it out there, but when those questions are answered, the support is there. I am finding that people are generally supporting these changes because they like to see governments assess programs, streamline them and bring them into the modern day. It makes it more of a rifle approach than a shotgun approach to these benefits.

Some witnesses before the legislative committee pointed out advantages to the new system. First, it is fair since it is based on family income as opposed to individual income. Second, the earned income supplement is a significant advance in social policy. Third, consolidating three benefits into one makes it a simpler system.

Fourth, it concentrates benefits on low and modest-income families.

Over all what we are looking at today is a better child benefit system because of those advantages and also because it will provide benefits on a timely basis and the assistance will be more on target. It also enriches the child benefit system by $2.1 billion over five years with 80 per cent of this new money going to families with incomes below $40,000.

As members know, the proposed date of implementation is January 1, 1993, which is just a few months away. It does not seem possible that 1993 is just a few months away. In the interim, as I am sure you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, we must prepare for the substantial task of switching over to the new program. We must also ensure that Canadians know what the new child tax benefit entails for them. To that end we will need the co-operation of my colleagues on all sides of this House.

In closing, I am confident that this is a program which will benefit Canadian families with children. It is a program which will be supported by Canadians. Over the past several years, Canadians have indicated that they are increasingly in favour of targeting social spending and they have clearly stated that increased family income supplementation is one of the most important social policy issues facing the government.

This program will put money where it is needed most, which is in the hands of families to support them in caring for their children.

The new child tax benefit is one of the four key elements of the *Brighter Futures* initiative for children. It represents new resources delivered in a new way to meet the changing conditions of Canada and Canadian families. It is a significant investment in the future, our children, their parents and our country. I recommend this bill to all in this House.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks let me through you express to the minister first my appreciation for the help given by his officials at any time they are asked by the opposition. The briefings provided to us are greatly appreciated.

Second, we appreciate his participation in this debate in which he has again clearly outlined a reasoned response to the criticisms made on this side of the House. Although we share different perspectives, we certainly share the same purpose of doing more for children in this country.

I would like to use this opportunity to summarize the criticisms made by this caucus on this piece of legislation. This has been a hastily held debate and in many cases many members in the national Liberal caucus have not had an opportunity to speak. The list of speakers is long and many people have expressed concern about not being able to speak.

On behalf of the House, I would again like to register my complaint to the government for not allowing a full debate. Though it has a deadline it would like to meet, Canadians have an objective to make sure children are helped in the best possible way. We are not at all convinced that the use of time allocation at each stage of the debate was of any help to Canadians in understanding the fundamental changes taking place.

As is so often the case when one is faced with a major debate and a major shift in public policy, one goes back to the roots in trying to understand what it is that has been attempted in the past and where we should be going from here.

As you well know, the Liberal Party of Canada is very proud of its tradition in social policy that began in the 1930s and carried right through almost uninterrupted to 1984. There were several stages of progressive legislation that did more and more for the average Canadian.

I would like to speak of the late and wonderful Senator Croll. He used to admonish us in caucus by saying: "Never forget the working man. Never forget why you were elected. Speak out for those who are paying the bills of this country". Surely Senator Croll's last comments in caucus, before he passed away, were exactly along those lines.

As I stand here today I am reminded of the lives given to this country by people who felt this commitment.

In many ways, the basis of the modern state for social policy can be traced back to 1943, almost 50 years ago. As the minister said, 1993 is just around the corner. That will mark 50 years since a royal commission was chaired by Professor Leonard Marsh from the University of British Columbia on social security for Canadians and the requirement for post-war planning.

It is very interesting that at the very time the Liberal government of Mackenzie King was fighting the Second World War it also had to plan exactly what should be done during the reconstruction period.

Marsh set out the conditions which drove many of the programs that came after the war in the reconstruction. He concluded his royal commission with the following statement that I think should be read into the record and serve as a benchmark as to what we try to do as Canadians to this day. Some things we do have to be reminded of.

He concluded:

> Finally, the obvious but vital point must be made that social security payments are not money lost. The social insurances, and even some straightforward disbursements like children's allowances, are investments in morale and health, in greater family stability and from both material and psychological viewpoints, in human productive efficiency. They demand personal and community responsibilities; but in the eyes of most of the people who are beneficiaries, give a more evident meaning to the ideas of common effort and national solidarity. It has yet to be proved that any democracy which underwrites the social minimum for its citizens is any the weaker or less wealthy for doing so.

• (1620)

It was research such as this and thoughtfulness such as this that led to the establishment of universality and the treatment of every Canadian as being equal, whether they became unemployed, sick, or needy. It led to dozens of programs which, I agree with the minister, have become very confusing in some Canadians' minds but nevertheless have fundamental principles that have to be plucked out, defended, and reinforced.

This week is not only a time to think of Senator Croll as we go through changes in social policy but also the Hon. Paul Martin, whose funeral is tomorrow. It will be attended by many people on all sides of this House who have a fond memory of him.

I was reading through his autobiography, *A Very Public Life*, in which he discussed what it was like to be involved with these programs. His reference point was the Marsh commission:

> Marsh called for planning to reconvert industry, to maintain jobs and to retrain the work force. Public employment schemes and a well-financed works program would counteract the expected post-war recession. The report went on to recommend a national health program based on universal health insurance and with levels of assistance that depended on individual income—the Marsh report also recommended both children's allowances and a universal, contributory old age pension of $45 a month for married couples—as a clear part of the policy of providing a national minimum standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, if you think that we are broke today can you imagine the reaction of a cabinet coming out of the Second World War. I will continue reading what the hon. Paul Martin wrote:

> The cost of these changes disturbed some in the cabinet, including C. D. Howe and the conscientious keeper of the public purse, Jim Ilsley. Ilsley's objection was that the report, having been released prematurely, did not carry the official sanction of government and therefore could not be accepted as the basis for legislation. While Ilsley might have based his official objections to the proposals on these grounds, I knew that philosophically he did not favour spending the government's money in this manner. One night he and I talked long into the wee hours arguing the pros and cons of state measures for social security. He honestly felt that the government could not afford these measures and that some of them should be undertaken by the family, the church or the provinces. Ilsley kept asking me: "Why do you want to saddle us with these things?" My answer was: "Because of my liberalism".

That is the benchmark from that side of the House to this side of the House. Governments are always without money. Governments are always concerned about deficits. We share those concerns. It is also the responsibility of governments, one generation after another, to move ahead and provide for a more secure society.

Last night I was watching television and there was a discussion about rising crime rates in the Ottawa region. An academic from the University of Ottawa was on. He said: "What do you expect? You have done absolutely everything possible on the public side to increase crime rates. Why are you surprised? If people do not think you care about them, as a government, why should they care about their neighbours, why should they care about their communities? Why should they not be crime ridden? What is there in the way you are treating them that would cause them in return to feel part of a state system that was looking after them?"

The situation is obviously more complicated than that but within those words he had the truth of our responsibility as a government to people in our society. From the time of Paul Martin in the mid-forties straight through to 1984 there was a series of measures that reinforced universality and reinforced the commitment of the national government to all regions of the country whether they be individuals or families and whether they be young or old. I count among the accomplishments of

these years the Canada Assistance Plan, regional development and medicare.

Since 1984 there have been a number of measures that have begun to achieve just the opposite effect and have undermined the foundations that we set out to put together in this country. There are many examples, but I include here as highlights of these measures: Bills C-20, C-32 and C-69.

During his remarks the minister looked at me when I had a bemused look on my face as he was talking about the accomplishment of finding $2.1 billion in the system. What he failed to mention in the course of those remarks was that the government had taken $3.5 billion out of the system previous to that. As responsible politicians and members of Parliament we must take that $2.1 billion into account.

However, it is obvious to everyone that the undermining of the system has been so fundamental and I would say —I do not use this word frivolously —terrorizing to people that they need to see the government make a greater and greater commitment to the children.

We come now, after these negative changes in the system of Canada from 1984 to 1991-92, to the budget of 1992 in which the government presented us with Bill C-80, an act to amend the family allowances and related legislation dealing with payments to children.

Our caucus has opposed this at every opportunity it has had, which as I mentioned has not been very many. The purpose of this legislation is to move away from the concept of universality and look at the children of the country with a more targeted approach. The defence of this has been at various times: "The poorest of the poor are now looked after and that there is sufficient support now for middle income families that the payments will look after their children better than they were before".

As the minister has pointed out, there has been some cutting of corners in this debate and I would suggest to him that the cutting of corners has been as much on the government's side as on the opposition side. The gains, where they are, are minimal. Most families earning between $30,000 to $50,000 a year will make perhaps as little as $4 a month more for their children.

At first the sums will appear to be very generous because of the wide-ranging tax changes not fully understood by Canadians. Many families do not realize the impact of reporting family income, and I agree with the government that this is a fair system. The impact of changing the reporting of income from as an individual to as a family and the fact that the average Canadian income is slightly less than $53,000 means that many people will receive fewer benefits than they are anticipating.

In other words, the defence of the legislation is that the poorest of the poor will be better off, but the government has not yet explained how the absence of increases for social assistance families will in any way help the poorest of the poor.

Second, by defining families between $30,000 and $50,000 as being not in need of much extra money how does the government explain, particularly to families in urban Canada, how they should be able to look after their children just fine in these economic times, leaving aside the more than 30 tax increases that have taken place since this government was formed?

The average Canadian in this income level has been taxed again and again and again in small ways and big ways. Suddenly, at the end of this whole taxation process they are offered an extra $4 a month for their family, and the government describes this as a major step forward.

I beg to differ and I think that the average Canadian family would beg to differ that they will see major improvements in their way.

I would like to go into more detail about our criticisms on two fronts. First, I would like to deal with process. Today we finish up the debate in third reading in the House under time allocation. The government has done all it can to fast-track the bill and limit public debate.

Bill C-80 was debated for the first time on June 1. The government forced a closure motion on the bill on the second day of debate on June 9. The bill was then referred to a legislative committee under the Finance envelope. Few witnesses were able to appear due to time constraints imposed by government members.

Of the witnesses who did appear, all but one presenter, a junior academic brought in from British Columbia, expressed serious concerns over the many shortcomings

of the bill. Most witnesses were also critical of the process used by the government to try to force the bill through Parliament.

I want to read a letter into the public record that was sent by one of the witnesses, Barbara Blouin from Halifax. She wrote: "The whole experience was most disheartening. I am beginning to understand increasingly that democratic process under the Mulroney government is nothing but a sham, a charade, when virtually all the witnesses called for Bill C-80 criticized it. I had already read about it in *The Globe and Mail*. Nevertheless the bill was rammed through the committee process by the majority of its Tory members.

• (1630)

There can be no other conclusion than this. They do not listen, they do not respond, they are not answerable to the people. They will do what they want because they have the power to do so.

I have not felt so powerless in all my life. To actually have an opportunity to speak to some of Canada's leaders, to have worked very hard to write a brief and then to realize that it meant nothing and even that I and others were being used to uphold the propaganda that this is a democratic process, is hard to swallow".

This is a very severe criticism. I must tell the House that it is from someone I only met at the committee and I have no idea of her background or whether she is involved with politics or not. It is simply that she is a very serious researcher.

In the meantime, the government is busy on its so-called communications strategy. The minister alluded to the fact it was to make Canadians more aware. One of my associates in Manitoba wrote to me. He has a letter that he received from a F. D. Kealey, program manager, child tax benefit, dated August 27 so he received it before the House came back.

"Dear respondent, due to a very high response we have not yet processed all the coupons we have received for information on the proposed child tax benefit. In the meantime, please find enclosed two brochures which will give you some background on these issues".

The interesting thing is that this friend never sent in a coupon. This letter came to his law office and he has no children under the age of 21.

We should ask ourselves: "What is the mailing list? What are you doing? How much money do you have to waste? Did you write to every lawyer in the country, every law firm? Did you write to every business on Broadway Avenue in Winnipeg? What is it that you have to communicate seriously when you use form letters, mail that has no relationship to the people receiving it". It also has nothing to do with the child benefits program but in fact *Brighter Futures* which is another propaganda program.

The government may argue its need to communicate but it must do it more honestly, with less waste of government funds and more directly to the point of what the real, modest benefits to any family will be under this program.

I do hope the House leaders for the government will instruct the leaders of the Senate to have full and open hearings and that the January 1 deadline is manufactured. We learned through the constitutional process that manufactured deadlines are deadly. There is nothing magical about January 1. People want a real program and they want their money spent wisely.

All those witnesses which had no opportunity to appear before the House of Commons committee should be given every opportunity to appear before the Senate committee.

In addition to objections about process, we have several objections to the substance of this legislation. I would like to outline them quickly.

First, assistance to the poorest families, namely those on social assistance, will not increase.

Second, the partial deindexation of a benefit and complete lack of indexation of the threshold amounts will result in the gradual erosion of the benefit amount as well as lessen the number of families eligible for the benefit. This is a crucial fact. The 3 per cent solution this government has stuck into the legislation and after defeating the motions moved yesterday, means an erosion of up to 30 per cent in the next decade. With the threshold not being properly indexed, people will also lose real income opportunities.

Third, the lack of a proper mechanism to ensure that dramatic changes in family income are reflected in the monthly benefit amount. As it now stands, it could take up to 18 months for the benefit to be adjusted.

Fourth, the lack of a federal-provincial arrangement could result in the provinces capping welfare payments.

Fifth, the estimated $2.1 billion increase over five years to the child benefits system must be measured against the $3.5 billion already taken out of the child benefit system between 1986 and 1991. On that point, several witnesses were incensed about the reality of how little new money was actually going to be put into this program. When I was willing to concede with a couple of witnesses that perhaps the government's $2.1 million was the correct figure, they were even willing to challenge me on that and in fact presented documents to the committee that were ignored by the government members showing that the $2.1 million figure was not real.

The long-awaited and promised child care strategy, which is a significant deterrent to child poverty, has been completely abandoned, creating additional financial hardship on low and middle income families, especially single parent families.

In addition, this government has brought forward several initiatives which negatively affect poor families, such as cutbacks in funding for social housing, the cancellation of funding for co-op housing, the cap on the Canadian Assistance Plan and changes to UI. There has been no increase in the federal minimum wage since 1986, one of the fundamentals for guaranteeing family income.

The bill signifies the end of universality and the recognition of the higher expenses parents incur. Some women in abusive relationships will lose their only form of income, however modest it is, the family allowance. This was mentioned explicitly by witnesses, including a woman from New Brunswick who was very eloquent on the need to protect women in abusive relationships by giving them at least a monthly allowance.

There was lack of consultation both before and after the release of the white paper. The Conservative government is trying to drive this legislation through Parliament totally unamended. As a matter of fact the Minister of National Health and Welfare, with the exception of his brief intervention yesterday, did not appear before the committee to defend this proposal which supports a disturbing trend by the Conservative government of transferring social policy to the financial envelope.

The question we have is: who is making social policy for this government? Is it the Finance department or is it the health and welfare department?

I go back to the commentary of Paul Martin, remembering his life, when he said that it is the role of the Minister of National Health and Welfare to promote the need of the average person. It was the role of the Minister of Finance to protect the public budget. That was a necessary and natural conflict in a cabinet, but you do not blend the two roles together because you need an advocate for people.

During this whole debate, the silence of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who is supposed to be an advocate on behalf of people in need, is absolutely amazing. The government is treating this bill as one of its major initiatives, yet we have not heard from the department which is most responsible for seeing it through.

There is also the regressive nature of the increased child care deduction. In the same bill there is the emergence of the RRSP tax deduction which will cost the government millions in unclaimed revenue and could be of assistance to people in need for programs such as this.

We also have other problems. It is not only ourselves who have raised these concerns, but people as diverse as Ken Battle from the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, a representative from the End Legislated Poverty group, the Minister of Social Services from British Columbia, Professor Shelley Phipps from Dalhousie University, the Citizens for Public Justice, the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto and the Child Poverty Action group, Lise Corbeil from National Anti-Poverty Organization, Trevor Williams from the Family Services Canada, Michael Goldberg from the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, Terrence Hunsley from Queen's University, Martha Friendly from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Dr. Robert Glossop from the Vanier Institute of the Family, Richard Shillington, co-author of *The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty*, Marcelle Dolment a *Réseau d'action et information pour les femmes* and Patrick Johnson from the Canadian Council on Social Development. These are some of the witnesses who came forward and consistently pointed out the problems of this legislation and this

government, in return, consistently refused to acknowledge them.

Earlier this year Queen's University hosted a conference in its public policy forum on the February 1992 budget at the John Deutsch Institute for the Study of Economic Policy. I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands who mentioned this report in the House in the middle of the debate on the report stage and asked me to bring it to the attention of the House in more detail.

• (1640)

During that conference Martin Browning of McMaster University presented a paper on the child benefit package. He asked the question: "Do the new proposals move us significantly closer to the goal of eliminating child poverty?" His answer: "The above analysis suggests not; indeed, taking into account the fact that the benefits are only partially indexed, it is probable that unless there is some new initiative in the next eight years, poverty among families with children will be even higher in the year 2000".

This government is not only presenting us with a new initiative, but in fact it is presenting us with the foundations of worse conditions in the future.

Mr. Browning also addressed directly the question of the earned income supplement. Again he asked the question: "What, then, are the likely incentive effects? First, I am sceptical that most unemployment is a matter of choice so that policies that make full pay work even more attractive are likely to lead to increased frustration rather than higher participation rates. In knowing this, my guess is that the new EIS will not make much difference".

There is one academic interpretation of the much touted $500 earned income supplement in this program.

As a result of our criticism of this program, the Liberal caucus introduced four amendments earlier this week as part of our package of 72 ways that the government could have changed this legislation and made it better. We first asked for the deletion of the entire bill. Second, we asked for the full indexation of the benefit and of the threshold amounts.

The government should always remember what happened in the fight with the pensioners when they tried to index the pensions, with the famous scene on television across this country of the pensioner from Montreal saying "Goodbye, Charlie Brown". If the children of this country could have the same understanding of their rights and of the obligations of this government as the elderly have, we would see a children's crusade coming into this Chamber saying, "Do you not understand how fundamentally you are moving away from a program of helping all children?"

Children do not make the distinction as to whether they are rich or poor, or whether their dad is working or their mum is working; children only know whether or not people care for them. When legislation is passed saying that we in this House only have to care about certain types of children because the family will look after the rest, or the church will look after the rest, or the province will look after them, or somebody will feed them at the schools, as soon as that is said as a principle, as soon as that is recognized, as soon as it is stated in public that some people who are two years old should be able to look after themselves because their mum or dad makes a lot of money, then there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what happens in family life in this country.

I think this government is going to pay a price for that. I know that I cannot wait to stand up on any platform with anybody from this government who thinks that you can make the distinction between rich kids and ordinary kids, and say: "You have to look after yourself as soon as you are born and if your family makes a mistake, so be it, we are not concerned".

Once you move away from the principle of universality it does not matter where the lines are. It does not matter where the margins are at first. It does not matter whether you are looking after 85 per cent at first. The point is that you have made a decision that 15 per cent does not count. Therefore, someone else like your buddies in the Reform Party can come along and say: "It should not be 15 per cent, maybe it should be 30 per cent", and someone else says: "Maybe it should be 35 per cent" and then someone else in 10 years says: "Maybe we cannot help any of them because we do not have any money".

What happens when you go home to your family and you say: "I am really sorry we do not have enough money; we are going to skip on the kids this month". Can you imagine a conversation like that? That is what this government has just said through the minister: "We do

not have the money; we are going to skip on 15 per cent of the kids next month". Nice.

Will the next Minister of Finance stand up and say that he is going to skip on 30 per cent? You did not mind the first 15 per cent? Do you mind the next 15 per cent?

That is why this party has fought this measure every single step of the way. We will continue the struggle in the Senate and we will make sure that Canadians understand that the principle behind this legislation is terrible, is destructive and is contrary to every principle of fairness that we have here.

We also asked in our third amendment for the inclusion of a mechanism, possibly a child benefits adjustment board, to deal with a responsiveness problem. As the bill now stands, if you have a significant loss of income, it can be up to 18 months before the government will change the amount of money you receive for your children.

I used the example earlier in debate which I think is a worth-while one. It is entirely possible in some of our industries for an engineer in the petrochemical industry earning $70,000 a year, for example, to be part of a wide spread lay-off of 2,000 or 3,000 people, which is happening in Calgary, and find himself on UI receiving $22,000 and then on to social assistance. It is not until July of the next year that he can pick up money for his children.

In the meantime, instead of making it available for, say, three children, $273 a month which they parade out here as being so responsive and so fundamental, that which would provide food for these children, they turn around and say: "It is too difficult to make these adjustments. This is so flexible already. We cannot possibly consider this".

If you are serious about poverty, you must know the literature on poverty. You must know the reality is thousands and thousands of people pass through temporary poverty. It is at that moment in which their family is facing a crisis that you have to help. It is not 18 months later. Most families come and go in this cycle. We are in a terrible terrible cycle in this recession and it is time we designed programs and helped people adjust to it.

The Minister for International Trade totally denies the reality that he has no adjustment programs, the government has no adjustment programs, for free trade. On social policy they are committing the same error. There are no adjustment policies for people who need help when they get laid off and when they have to provide food.

Your mortgage payments do not stop for 18 months. You still have to maintain a house. There are stories, for example, in Calgary of people having to re mortgage their house upward to get cash to buy food for their children. Yet this government says under this new program it can provide lots of cash for families in need. That is substantially wrong. The way the government designed this legislation it should be embarrassed for (a) introducing it (b) not amending it and (c) standing up here at third reading and denying it. It is not responsive and for that reason alone it should be defeated.

Last, we are very anxious that this government in a more public fashion commit the provinces to not changing the levels of social assistance if this program is enhanced. Several speakers have stood up and shared the view that with the new monthly payments many social assistance families in poorer provinces are going to be made vulnerable as to what their total income is, based on these calculations.

We have been assured privately and informally by the ministers of the Crown that this is nothing to worry about. They have assurances from the provinces. Put it in writing. Make sure we have agreements on this new program to ensure that nobody will be hurt from social assistance.

There are thousands and thousands of Canadians who never thought before they would be on social assistance. It is a very tough life. It is a very cruel relationship with government. Do not make it any worse by people sitting there and staring at you and saying I know you have more money. You have this child benefits package and let us take a look at your total income package. Those who know the social assistance program understand this very clearly.

By way of conclusion, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a former Canadian still proud of being a Canadian originally, John Kenneth Galbraith, who in his *Culture of Contentment* wants us to understand just how dangerous this situation is across North America.

Let me read a couple of paragraphs: "The present and devastated position of the socially assisted under-class has been identified as the most serious social problem of the time as it is also the greatest threat to long run peace and civility. Life in the great cities in general could be improved and only will be improved by public action, by better schools with better paid teachers, by strong well financed welfare services, by counselling on drug addiction, by employment training, by public investment in the housing that no industrial country has provided for the poor, by private enterprise, by adequately supporting health care recreation facilities, libraries and police. The question once again, much accommodating rhetoric to the contrary is not what can be done but what will be paid".

Although Mr. Galbraith is writing more directly about the United States, his comments apply to this country and we wait and we wait at great risk.

• (1650)

It is not just one program. A whole number of things have to be set in motion again. If this government does not understand it, it will be replaced by a government that does.

On a very final note, there is a relationship between what we do for children and the Constitution. In the rhetoric associated with the Constitution and this Charlottetown agreement, there is a social and economic union. The Constitution would contain a statement of key social and economic policy objectives shared by all the governments in the federation.

The social policy objectives would include comprehensive, universal, portable, accessible, publicly administered health care, adequate social services and benefits, education, and so forth. I want to stop there.

Adequate social services and benefits: Does this legislation stand the test of being the first piece of legislation introduced in the country under the new Constitution? Is it adequate? Does it provide for the well-being of all Canadians? Does it provide for the well-being of all families? Does it provide for the well-being of all children?

By the very tests that this government has agreed to in this accord, the first step forward is maintenance, contrary to all the principles that it has been boasting about. I would suggest to the government in good will that this piece of legislation be removed, that this House recommit itself to fighting child poverty by the year 2000, our original recommendation and agreed upon by all parties of the House two years ago, that we stake out the turf and honestly admit to each other that this is not sufficient, that we begin again and produce a better piece of legislation for all of Canada's children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): As indicated in the Order Paper, the first two speakers have 40 minutes maximum. There are no questions or comments. There are after the third speaker.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion in our country lately on family values and family issues.

The right wing in this country has attempted to hijack the word family and give it an elitist and twisted definition. New Democrats do not try to exclude people from the definition of family. Families come in all shapes and sizes. People will always define their own family groupings: Dual career families, what is considered by some the traditional family with a male breadwinner and a mother at home, single-parent families, same sex couples with or without children, or middle-aged people looking after elderly parents.

Who is to declare that a middle-aged woman or man caring for aging parents cannot define themselves as a family? The Conservatives have a family caucus which believes that the family is deteriorating, and they set themselves up as the judge of Canadian families.

They want to decide who is in a family and who is not, who is deserving of family benefits and who is not. This so-called family caucus is made up of mainly middle-aged men and, not surprisingly, the idea of family that they have come up with fits them exactly.

I will quote a family caucus member, the hon. member for Mississauga South. This is a direct quote:

It—

Meaning all federal legislation.

—should define a family as a male and a female living together to raise children and that is the only kind of family that ought to be defined.

Therefore, widows with children, orphans, children of divorced parents, children who live with parents of the same sex, these children according to that family caucus model are to be excluded from family benefits and have no rights to family services under Canadian law.

This is a horrifying and unacceptable view of Canadian families. Canadians in fact will be shocked to know that we have our own Dan Quayle in Parliament. They have elected people who do not understand what Canadian families are about today and who want to reach into a past that in fact never really existed.

The proportion of single-parent families has not risen significantly over the last 50 years although the cause of single parenthood has changed. In the past widowhood, primarily after each war, was the primary cause of single parenthood. Today it is divorce. Thirteen per cent of Canadian families are single parent families. A happy life for children with one parent can often be better than an unhappy or an abused life with two parents.

One in ten Canadian families is headed by a common law couple. Sixty-two per cent of all husband and wife families are dual earner families. In fact, only a minority of Canadian families are comprised of a husband bread-winner, wife at home, and children.

These families deserve to be protected, but so do other families. A discussion of the family caucus is, in fact, very relevant here because its chair has taken credit for the bill that we are discussing today, the elimination of the family allowance.

I want to point out how anti-family that family caucus is, and how it is made up mainly of people who are catering to their own special interest group. Although I will be talking about family policy, I also want to remind members of this House that 23 per cent of all households in Canada are made up of people who live alone, and they are important too.

NDP policy on families is geared to helping all families survive economically and emotionally. It involves measures to fight poverty. One in six Canadian children is living in poverty, while government policies on social assistance and child support exacerbate the situation.

For example, the bill before us today, Bill C-80, eliminates the universality of family allowance. This bill will give family benefits only to the eligible poor. It will set up two classes of poor. This bill is an attempt by this government to identify the deserving poor and the undeserving poor, and in fact is a back to the future kind of bill, back to the Victorian times when people were classed according to whether they were deserving of help or not deserving of help.

The new family benefit will give more money to those already earning an income in the paid work force than it will give to families in which the adults have been laid off during this recession, whose jobs have disappeared because of the trade deal, and who are not trained for any industry where there are jobs available now; people who are having problems finding a job with an unemployment rate in this country of 11 per cent; homemakers who are finding it necessary but difficult to reintegrate themselves into the paid work force; all of those who are on unemployment insurance, social assistance or are receiving no help at all.

The people who are made to suffer the most through this bill are the children in those families. The children who need the money most will get less of it. The children who are going to school hungry and relying on food banks will get less money for food and clothing than children of those parents who are in the paid work force.

The government is saying that some children deserve food and clothing more than other children. I think that is a horrible legacy of poverty and disrespect to put on to the backs of children.

Children who go to school hungry do less well at school. They are hyperactive and they cannot concentrate. There are long-term physical, emotional and intellectual consequences to growing up without adequate nutrition. These problems start in pregnancy with poor women who do not have enough nutritious food. When one child suffers from poverty and abuse, all of society suffers in the long run with a work force that is uneducated and ill-equipped for the types of employment available, with health problems and with an increase in crime.

Child poverty and abuse is a problem for all Canadians, and this bill does nothing to solve it. In fact, it may even exacerbate it. Bill C-80 was discredited by almost every witness who came to speak before the committee that examined the bill. One witness to the committee, Professor Phipps, compared Canada's treatment of poor families with that of other countries and he said, and I will quote from his testimony: "Canadian public transfers leave families with poor kids still 15 per cent below the poverty line, whereas in lots of other countries such as Norway, Germany, the U.K., public transfers raise them to at least the poverty line". Actually in Sweden,

they were raised to substantially higher than poverty income levels.

• (1700)

Witnesses to the committee pointed out that the proposed child benefits available to low-income families are exactly the same as those available in the current system. They are just juggled about so that it appears that one is getting more in the mail but one also pays more in taxes. What is eliminated is the family allowance which had been given to everyone regardless of family income. If the family income was high, the family allowance was taxed back. However, at least the family allowance came and it was in mother's name.

In some families, even high income families, this was the only money that some women received in their own name. This is particularly important to the women who are battered both physically and emotionally by the men with whom they live. That income, as small as it was, could make the difference between being able to get out of an abusive relationship and having to endure it because there is nowhere to go and no funds with which to leave.

This proposed child benefit is not indexed to inflation so it is going to be worth less and less and less every year. The bill also enhances the deduction for child care expenses which puts far more money into the hands of upper income families than middle and low income families. In other words, those who are well off get a tax break because of this bill and this tax approach to child care is really ludicrous and ineffective.

We live in a country now where 1.3 million Canadian children need child care because both parents, or their only parent, are in the paid work force. Perhaps they are at university and are studying full time. Licensed care is only available for one quarter of these children.

This government has already limited funding for child care through its spending limits on the Canada Assistance Plan for British Columbia, Ontario and for Alberta. If the federal government was serious about child care it would have brought in a national child care program which it has been promising, promising and promising for almost a decade now. Tax measures do not create child care spaces.

Contrary to the twisted justifications of the family caucus of the Conservative party, this bill provides no choice to parents in terms of raising their children. The benefit is so little that it does not allow women or men to stay home to raise the kids. It cuts off all help to middle-income women who do wish to be full-time homemakers. It does not create the necessary child care spaces for those who wish to use child care outside the home.

There is no choice in this bill for parents or for Canadians who, despite the protestations against the bill, are being forced to swallow bad legislation. The bill proposes a complex child benefit system to replace what was the simple and straightforward family allowance program. Under this new system, parents must almost be accountants to figure out how much the government owes them. It increases the likelihood that mistakes and underpayments will go unnoticed.

The proposed benefit means more bureaucracy because each individual family will have to be looked at every year in order to determine its eligibility. More bureaucrats will be hired to deal with this at a time when this government talks on and on and on about downsizing government. It increases the chances of delays in getting cheques because it is individualized and not automatic.

The child benefit does not even come close to the actual cost of raising a child and it is about time that the government recognized how much Canadian families are subsidizing tax breaks to profit making corporations through their own personal taxes. Canadian families are overtaxed and the work of mothers in raising children is neither respected nor recognized.

The family allowance was a recognition of the contribution that all Canadian parents make to Canadian society by raising children. That recognition will now be gone. It is replaced by a benefit which amounts to an ever decreasing scrap to the poor. A witness from the social planning council of metro Toronto pointed out that evidence from European countries shows that the countries with universal programs have the lowest child poverty rate. Services and benefits directed to the poor become poorer programs because the middle class no longer sees itself as having a stake in the program and in defending it. How long will middle income earners

continue to pay taxes to support benefits which they will no longer receive?

The Conservative government has invoked closure on this bill to eliminate the family allowance which means that it has undemocratically limited debate on it. This is in order to pass it as soon as possible and according to its own agenda and not that of the Canadian people.

This bill is a major shift in Canadian social policy. It is an Americanization, if you will, of Canadian social policy. The Tories wanted to pass it in one day but we did not co-operate and we have stretched out the debate as long as possible to give groups and concerned Canadians an opportunity to talk sense to this government.

Another shift is that social policy has been commandeered now by the Department of Finance which obviously does not understand anything about children or their needs. Social policy should be developed in consultation with Canadians and community groups and be handled by those with a deep understanding and commitment to the well-being of children and Canadian families.

Thanks to successive Liberal and Conservative governments, the Canadian record on family and child poverty is dismal. In Canada, 75 per cent of men default on their child support payments. This leaves single parent families with the worst poverty rate of any Canadian family. Of all single mother families, 57 per cent live in poverty and this figure has not changed since 1974. In Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Germany there are guaranteed minimum child support payments.

Families need financial and emotional support in order to be strong. New Democrat policies include effective anti-poverty measures such as fair taxation, raising the minimum wage and adequate pensions. Our policy includes family support measures such as child care and parental leave, the valuing of women's work in the home and the valuing of women's work in the paid work force through pay equity and employment equity.

Our policy is to establish a national program of non-profit child care which is accessible, affordable, flexible, of high quality, culturally sensitive and developed with community input. We believe that aboriginal child care should be run by aboriginal communities.

There are other policies that could be put into place. Maternity and parental leave must be part of a comprehensive child care system. Our parental leave system lags far behind that of most European countries. They have grasped that most workers are also parents and have personal needs as parents. In the short term, parental leave should be extended to 26 weeks. In the long term, we should be aiming for a system of 9 months for paid parental leave. Ten days of paid leave should be available to workers to tend to their family responsibilities.

There are examples in Canada of governments that, even in this recessionary time, have put an emphasis on these kinds of policies. The Ontario New Democratic government has refined its pay equity system and it is now the most advanced in North America. My British Columbia New Democratic colleagues are also introducing pay equity in my province. Pay equity is an important family issue because many women must work outside the home in order to support their families. Unattached older women are more likely than their male counterparts to live in poverty. This situation will continue as long as women are not paid their worth on the job and have less of an opportunity than men to build up a pension in their own name. Employment equity is also necessary to ensure that women and their families are getting a fair deal.

Women do paid work outside the home in 71 per cent of families in which there are children under the age of six. It is an absolute crime that we have no child care program in this country. Policies should include family support services to help families and the individuals who comprise them when faced with problems of abuse, alcoholism or ill health.

• (1710)

What this government is not telling us is that programs to eliminate violence in the family and to heal those who have survived it is an essential part of any family policy. An accessible, high quality health care system is also an

essential party of family policy to ensure the health of families and future generations.

All families are deserving of respect and support regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or class. White, middle class families deserve to be healthy and happy and to have every chance in life as do aboriginal families, black families, mixed families, same sex couple families, poor families and all of the families that make up our country. Human rights protection is an important part of family policy.

We need a Court Challenges Program to ensure that the rights of all Canadians are defined and enforced.

I went on the radio with a family caucus member the other day on CBC to talk about family values. He said that some families should be favoured over others because: "It is a matter of priorities". I agree, family issues are a matter of priorities. His government priorities include spending $4.5 billion on 50 submarine-hunting helicopters, more than $1 billion on a low-level defence system to protect troops in Europe against a Soviet attack now that the Soviet Union no longer exists, $250 million to purchase anti-tank guns and $1 billion in tax breaks to the rich through an expected trust legislation. It goes on and on.

There was a $25 million cut in affordable housing and a $200 million cut in training for workers who need to train for jobs to support their families. Support for families and child care through the Canada Assistance Plan has been cut. There is the scrapping of plans for a national child care program and now the elimination of family allowance. Obviously these people do not have their priorities straight.

Family policy is more than the narrow and restrictive vision that this government presents. It attempts to glorify the family while cutting almost every service that helps our families to stay strong.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am appalled after listening to the opposition members talking in this House for the last couple of days about how dreadful this piece of legislation is. They make it sound as if we are cutting money out of the budget. This is totally false. There is more money going into families from this piece of legislation than is provided now.

We are consolidating three different programs. We are adding $2.1 billion over the next five years in additional moneys to go into these various programs. We know that over 80 per cent of all families receive these benefits. Eighty per cent of the increase will go to families below the $40,000 mark in their income. All families with incomes below $50,000 have either increased benefits or will be at the same level. On average, families with incomes below $50,000 will receive an additional $250 in benefits.

I have never heard any of the opposition members ever giving out this factual information. I can tell you that the people will have to judge for themselves in the new year when the benefits start going to them when they see just how beneficial this will be for them. It is a simpler form of getting the money to the people who need it. This is not something that we are trying save money from.

The earned income supplement of up to $500 provides extra help to low income working families. This is a group, by the way, that has often fallen between the cracks. The monthly payments are tax free. They no longer have to report this income on their tax returns. I did not hear the hon. member opposite telling people this. She was doing nothing but condemning this.

The tax return in the future will be shorter and simpler because of this very important ingredient that has been put in this. This is money that goes to individuals and they do not have to report it.

I would ask the hon. member opposite if she does not think that this is a benefit for the people of Canada and for the families that we want to target money to.

Ms. Black As I said in my remarks, this legislation is creating two classes of poor. This is not a new and forward looking type of legislation. This is an old Victorian idea of there being the deserving poor and the undeserving poor.

What I said very clearly today is that the children who live in those families should not be penalized because folks on that side of the House figure that the children of the working poor deserve a bit more, but those children

whose parents are on assistance or on no kind of government support are not deserving of assistance.

This program is not indexed to the cost of living. It is the beginning of the end because you have broken faith. You have broken faith with the Canadian people on the universality of the family allowance.

The Prime Minister said in 1984 that universal social programs were a sacred trust not to be touched by his government. I would ask the Prime Minister to live up to that pledge he made to the Canadian people and stand up with the members on this side of the House and vote no to Bill C-80.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment that I was quite simply appalled, in a sense insulted, by the attempt of the hon. member from the New Democratic Party who tried to mischaracterize in her opening remarks the family caucus in our party.

I want to make a few comments about the family caucus, how it is composed and how it works. In the House we do not usually hear or speak about the workings of caucus. It is very important for all members and the public to understand that this is not a group in any way designing against the interests of families.

The members of this caucus committee consist of men and women, individual members of Parliament, mothers, wives, grandmothers, single mothers, widows, men who are fathers and husbands, divorced parents, widowers and single parents; people with complex personal interest in families, who sit together at a table and try to look at laws that are in existence in this country or are being proposed. They try to develop better ways of supporting and helping families.

An hon. member: Men and women.

Mr. Johnson: I am particularly incensed that the hon. member would suggest that because the majority of the members of this committee are men, it somehow denigrates the work of this committee. It is as if to suggest that because the majority of members of this House are men, it denigrates all the work of this House.

I am appalled and insulted by those remarks.

Mr. Milliken: She says that too.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, she may say that too and I would not be the least surprised.

I would also like to comment on some of the remarks she has made about this bill's setting up two classes of poor, the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. This is totally wrong. What the bill does is say that those people who are on assistance and are trying to get off assistance should be given some additional support. Those families need that kind of support. They are the ones losing their medicare. For example, when they are off welfare they are losing their dental care, their bus passes for the children. These are significant losses as they try to move into the work force.

This bill has in it a small effort. I am sorry that it is so small but we all know the problem of the availability of money right now. Up to $500 a year is given to those families to assist in that transition. This is certainly not the creation of two classes of poor.

Ms. Black: Obviously my comments hit home. I can quote the MP for Calgary North who said "as for national day care we did not kill it. It was done in by a $420 billion debt that resulted from rampant overspending previous to 1984".

This government has set out its priorities very clearly for all Canadians to see. Its priorities continue to be $4.5 billion for 50 Soviet sub-hunting helicopters. Does it not know its geography and recent history? The Soviet Union no longer exists.

• (1720)

It is a matter of priorities. On that I think the member and I agree. It is a matter of priorities and a national child care program which was flaunted as one of the government's major promises to Canadian families for almost a decade now has been scrapped in favour of 50 helicopters. That says it all quite clearly.

In terms of the other comments that he made, there is a lot of evidence on the record of exactly what the family caucus of the Conservative caucus has had to say about women and families. I will quote the member from Delta, British Columbia: "With the rise of special interest groups and their influence in Ottawa, the last people being considered were the families. You have the feminists, the gays and lesbians and all the alternate lifestyles that are demanding attention. We feel that the family is a basic cornerstone of Canadian life".

There are a lot of feminists in this country who will be surprised to know that they are not considered part of their own families. There are a lot of gay people who will be surprised to know that according to the Conservative

family caucus, they are not part of their own families. My children will be surprised to know that somehow I am not part of my own family because I am a feminist and proud to be one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to speak in the House on Bill C-80. In particular, I wish to reaffirm the advantages of the integrated child tax benefit over our present family support system. I also wish to refute some erroneous criticism made by opposition members and statements circulating in this Chamber and in the media.

Canada's social programs are something our country and its people are very proud of. They are one of the things that put Canada ahead of other countries and are envied throughout the world. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid the fact that the present family benefits system has serious problems that can and must be solved.

As was pointed out to us in this debate on Bill C-80, the integrated child tax benefit will significantly increase the aid given to families and improve the mechanism for delivering this assistance. The new benefit will strengthen the existing programs, better meet the needs of Canadian families and better respond to changes in their situation. That is why we must ensure that this bill passes. Given the difficulties with the present regime, our constituents, especially low income families, would suffer if we did not pass it.

Let me present these problems succinctly. Clearly, the present benefits do not provide enough support for low-income families to raise their children properly. Furthermore, these benefits are provided separately through three different mechanisms and at different times of the year. Each of these programs has different eligibility criteria, which are confusing to many Canadians.

In addition, the benefits are not well targeted. Families with similar incomes can receive different levels of support, since the benefits are taxable and reclaimed on the basis of individual income.

Furthermore, the system fails to provide adequate support for families who get off welfare to join the ranks of the labour force. These families are often penalized financially when they decide to go back to work, because of unforeseen job-related expenses and the loss of welfare payments.

Benefit mechanisms may also be a source of problems for many low-income families. As my colleagues have pointed out, the refundable tax credit always comes after the fact, which means the cheque does not reach recipients at a time when they really need it. As a result, money that was supposed to help families goes to tax discounters who are prepared to pay these benefits in advance in return for a certain percentage of the cheque when it is cashed.

The government is not making this up to justify introducing the integrated tax child benefit. Hon. members opposite preferred to ignore these problems in this debate, but they are a major part of the concerns raised by a large number of Canadians and national interest groups. These Canadians want solutions and the integrated child tax benefit is the solution.

During the next five years, the integrated child tax benefit will provide an additional $2.1 billion in support, as well as the current benefits enjoyed by families in Canada. Opposition members should welcome this development.

The integrated child tax benefit will also ensure that these improved benefits are paid to the families who need them most. For instance, 80 per cent of this new money will be paid to families with an annual income of less than $40,000. The new benefit will include an earned income supplement of up to $500.

This new supplement will help ease the transition for low income families who are getting off welfare to enter the labour market. At the present time many families that enter the labour market are often faced with financial problems caused by job related expenses and a potential reduction in their welfare payments.

Furthermore, there will be no more delays in child benefit payments. The integrated child tax benefit will take the form of a monthly payment, thus providing a more practical response to the needs of Canadian children and their parents, and tax discounters will no longer pocket a percentage of these benefits because parents are desperate for cash.

Furthermore, the integrated child tax credit will better reflect changes that occur within the family. Monthly payments will take into consideration any changes in the

family such as the birth of a child or permanent loss of income as a result of marriage break-up.

• (1730)

The integrated child tax benefit will treat all families equally. Benefits will be targeted on the basis of family income rather than individual income. Accordingly, families with similar incomes will receive similar benefits.

Finally, the confusion caused by the present system will be eliminated. The integrated child tax benefit will be delivered by a single mechanism, instead of by three as for the previous one, and only one eligibility criterion will apply, compared to three before. The benefit will be paid in a single monthly non-taxable cheque. The government will automatically calculate the amount of benefits on the basis of income and family situation. To receive benefits, parents will no longer have to do special calculations on their income tax return. And parents with higher income will no longer receive benefits that they will have to pay back when they complete their income tax return. As a result, the income tax return will be shorter and less confusing.

In summary, the integrated child tax benefit is the answer to the changes that interest groups and individuals have been demanding from the government. For example, Canadians have been calling for a simpler tax system, and that is just what the integrated child tax benefit does. They have also been asking for a streamlining of government aid for families and a substantial increase in the amount of this assistance; the integrated child tax benefit meets these objectives.

That is why I have trouble understanding why my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House do not give this bill unanimous support. It makes me think that some of their criticisms are more politically motivated than real objections to the bill.

On universality, in particular, I cannot see how they can object to redirecting benefits from higher income families to those with low and modest incomes, since these families are in greater need. Is that not the real purpose of redistributing wealth? We must keep in mind that 3.1 million families, or 84 per cent of all families with children, will continue to receive benefits. All families with incomes under $50,000 will receive the same level of benefits or more than they do now. On average, these families will receive $250 more a year per child.

Opposition members were also quick to criticize the indexing of the integrated child tax benefit, because like all other components of the tax system, indexing will be limited to price increases above 3 per cent. They claim that for this reason families will receive less and less aid from year to year.

In making such statements my colleagues on the other side of the House have decided to ignore the facts. In particular, they say that this government has cut $3.5 billion from the Canadian family support system since 1986 as a result of partial deindexation. That is incorrect and misleading. They deliberately fail to mention that this government increased the refundable child tax credit on four occasions since 1985. Such tax breaks have ensured that the benefits intended for all low income families increased at the same rate as inflation. Add to that the $213 supplement for children under seven years of age for whom no child care expense deduction is claimed, and the rate of increase of low income families' benefits actually was higher than that of inflation.

In closing, I urge all the members of this House to support this bill. We should not allow political considerations to foil any plan to try and ensure that every child in Canada can lead a healthy, productive and satisfying life.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for the many positive comments he made about this important piece of legislation.

I want the House and those who are watching us to know that our government has great concern about the whole area of human resource development in our country. This ranges from the health condition of the pregnant mother to children to education that is carried on through to retraining and that whole area. Children are of great concern and are greatly studied by our government.

Reflecting on the patchwork of child allowances and tax credits and so on, we have great concern with all of that. This is certainly so with lower income people who had to fill out tax forms to receive those moneys. Some were subjected to tax discounters. That is sad and inappropriate. They should not have had to resort to that. It was a result of needing those moneys on a monthly basis and not some time later after filling out complicated forms. Again, they went for this to the tax discounters.

People have come to me, as they probably have to my colleague who is the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who just spoke. They asked: "Why are we receiving child allowances when they should go to people who are more in need".

I want to make those comments and ask him if he would relate some of the conversations he had with his constituents. I know that that is where it is coming from. I feel very confident, as I know he does, with this legislation. It is something Canadians want.

I guess the opposition will always take exception to whatever legislation is brought in. That is the adversarial political system we have in Canada and it is something that has always been there and will continue.

I know we are all here today to make sure that accurate statements and information about this bill is brought forward.

I just make those comments to my honoured colleague and ask for his thoughts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Koury: Mr. Speaker, I have a comment to make. I have been working with the public for a number of years and discussions were reported to me on several occasions by industrials, lawyers, solicitors, all that crowd. I keep in touch with them and recently they were telling me how insane it would be for people of their standing to receive that kind of money. They would rather that it went to the low and middle income families.

• (1740)

This confirms what people have been telling me all along. The main thing is for Bill C-80 to go through as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate at the outset that I shall be sharing my time with my colleague who is the member for Davenport.

I want to make a couple of corrections, though. I know my colleague had no intention of not recognizing this. There is co-operation on occasion in the House. It just so happens that when we feel there is legislation that has not been presented in a forthright kind of way, we feel an obligation to correct the facts. The most recent event, of course, is the co-operation that was displayed with the constitutional proposals.

My colleague also mentions human resources development. I want to talk about that during the few minutes that I have at my disposal. Let us look at the financial facts of this particular bill.

The government continues to refuse to admit that it has reduced child care benefits by $3.5 billion over time. It is now returning, it is true, $400 million. However, that is roughly 12 per cent of what it has removed.

Look at it this way. Supposing I hired you for $100 a day and for a number of reasons I reduced that to $50. You would probably be somewhat unhappy as are some of the people here. Lo and behold, three months, six months or perhaps a year later I come back and say: "I want to give you a 12 per cent raise". Using the figures that I have just utilized that would be $6.

I could claim that I am really a great guy, a great employer and generous. I have just given you a 12 per cent raise. I forgot to remind myself that I had already cut your salary by a substantial amount.

This is the kind of game that is going on over here and that is why some of us are upset. Let us look at the process as well. There were a few hearings. When were they held? During the summer. When is the legislation being presented to the House? It is at this particular point in time and with time allocation. We are being limited in terms of time today.

It is being pushed through at a time when Canadians are really quite concerned about the economic health of this nation, about keeping a job, about the future for themselves and their children and about our great

constitutional crisis. The propaganda machine has much more opportunity to function.

The government has had some success in making people believe that there is more money. That is what really angers me a great deal. It is also an election strategy. Anyone who does not see it that way should really go to an optometrist or some other person to check out their insides. This is an election strategy.

The government is pretending that there is a lot more than there really is. There is a lot more. It is stacking the money at roughly election time because the system currently in place will continue and then the new system will come in. It will give the illusion that all of a sudden you have a lot more money than you had.

By the time one realizes the reality. Zap. It will be a little bit like the Canada–U.S. agreement. Hey, everybody was going to be better off and richer. It was going to be great. One can talk to those 1.6 million Canadians and ask them how great that was.

There is the goods and services tax. It was going to make us more competitive. It was going to do wonderful things for us. One can talk to Canadians and ask them what kinds of wonderful things it has done for them.

The government is creating an impression of more when there is not any more. There is actually less. It is trying to create an impression that it cares. I have no doubt that there are members who care. I do not want to suggest that that is not so.

I have no doubt that most care. In fact, I have no doubt that most of my colleagues on the government side do not understand this legislation. That is why they are getting up there with so much enthusiasm and being so upset when we criticise it.

If one doubts what I am saying, let me just remind my colleagues about a few broken promises. Child care was promised. It is no longer promised. It is gone. There are cuts to education. It was the Prime Minister himself who said he would not tamper with the transfer formula. He did not tamper with it. He smashed it with a 2 per cent reduction, a 1 per cent reduction, and a freeze. In over 10 years that will mean 10 billion fewer dollars for education. By the way, that same tampering with that formula will produce 20 billion fewer dollars for health during that period of time. It seems to me that health and education are a couple of crucial, critical, fundamental programs of our country.

Not only has the government reduced these benefits that we are talking about in Bill C–80. It has reduced the funding for education by $10 billion over 10 years and reduced the funding for health by $20 billion over 10 years.

What about youth employment? I have talked about youth employment today. This summer was the worst summer we ever had with 17.9 per cent of youth unemployed. There were few jobs. Those who got jobs, and there were many who did not get any, got short–term jobs and they poorly remunerated jobs.

Turning to the GST on books and reading materials, most of the people I know who are paying GST on books for educational purposes are children and youth, young men and women. What does that say about the government's sensitivity toward young people, toward human resource and development?

What about student aid? I have not talked about student aid yet, have I? There is a 3 per cent tax on the people who need to borrow because they are poor. That is quite a record, is it not, and another six months' interest? We were promised that with the six months' interest the 3 per cent tax would be removed, but lo and behold the 3 per cent tax is still there.

The government became a little nervous and thought it had better not start fooling around with six months more of interest until it had removed that 3 per cent tax. It also forgot to tell us—and that is my own estimates and of course no one would deny them when I raised them—that six months more of interest would produce roughly twice as much money as the 3 per cent tax did. What a game.

I can see all those colleagues who are business people on the other side really coming forward and appreciating the significance of their business acumen when they start giving us those kinds of things.

The government says it is attempting to control the deficit and the debt. The deficit this year is over $30 billion and the debt is roughly $425 billion. The government loves to say that it was the Liberals who did it. A former finance minister, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre, told me—I have a letter in writing—that it was $167.8 billion at the end of 1984. Now if we take the interest from that time to now we find there is no way

that it becomes $425 billion. Another smoke and mirror scheme. It offloads to provinces and tries to tell us that it controls its expenditures.

Let us look at this. I have $100,000 worth of debt. I walk into my family and say to my wife that I have $10,000 for her and $10,000 each for my three daughters. I am now down to $60,000. I give my brothers each $10,000 and all of a sudden I have $10,000 worth of debt and I say: "I am a great manager. What business acumen I have. What tremendous insight I possess".

This is what is happening here. The government talks about controlling expenditures. It has controlled them, but off the backs of whom? The children, the students, the health care system and the educational system. That is what has happened.

We talk about the deficit and the debt that are out of control. I have many other things I wanted to mention.

[*Translation*]

I wanted to talk about the Canadian tax system which penalizes the poor. I wanted to talk about how the rich benefit from it. There are still quite a few profitable corporations that do. That is most unfortunate. I did not get to talk about the unemployed, the social assistance recipients and the food bank users.

[*English*]

I want to close with a plea. It is in a letter from the Canadian Federation of Students. It refers to Bill C–80 and reads as follows:

> This legislation will seriously affect student parents, especially those who are also users of the Canada Student Loans Program.
>
> Under the current situation, student parents receive family allowance which counts as income when they apply for a Canada student loan. They also receive child tax credits, either in the form of a prepayment in November, or in the spring after submitting their income tax form. The proposed new program will hurt student parents in two ways.
>
> First, instead of receiving the two types of assistance described above, student parents will receive one monthly cheque only.

It continues:

> For student parents, the timing of the prepayment provided necessary funds for the period of time between the end of the first term and the beginning of the second term, and very necessary funds for the Christmas season. Timing is also a serious concern for those student parents who currently receive their child tax benefits during the summer.
>
> This time of the year is also one in which many students find themselves crucially short of funds. This situation is especially problematic in times such as these when student unemployment rates are at record highs.

• (1750)

They make a plea for a full examination of this program because they realize, as I do, that it will hurt many Canadians in spite of claims to the contrary from government. In spite of the claims to the contrary, it will hurt many individuals.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have a rather simple question but I think it is important to get some clarification. The opposition has said many times that because of deindexation $3.5 billion has been cut from child benefits. However it ignores all the enrichments to the child tax credit over the last seven years.

Since 1985 the government has increased the refundable child tax credit four times and has introduced a supplement of $213 for children under seven years where child care expenses are not claimed. These enrichments have ensured that the average level of federal child benefits paid to low income families has more than kept pace with inflation.

The child tax credit will increase child assistance by $2.1 billion over five years. This increase will be over and above the benefits that would have been provided if the current programs had remained in place.

In addition to this $2.1 billion increase in benefits, the government is committed to review the level of payments over time and increase them as fiscal conditions permit as it has done with the refundable child tax credit.

I wonder if the hon. member would not be a little more forthcoming and honest with the Canadian public and not compare apples to oranges. He is taking numbers spread over many years and comparing with one year and shuffling the deck on people. If he wants to criticize what the government has been doing, would he give a clear and precise accounting of what he is saying?

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I believe that I am forthright and honest. Actually I do not believe that anything I have said here was misleading.

I would like Canadians to decide whose figures they trust more. I indicated that not only was $3.5 billion taken out and $400 million reinstated. I talked about their supposed reformed tax system that is not helping the poor. I also talked about the reductions to health and education. It will be $30 billion.

If my colleague wants to talk numbers, let us look at the totality of it. Let us look at what has been added and what has been taken out. I assure my colleague that if I am wrong I will apologize publicly in his home town before the largest audience he can find for me. At the most critical time possible for him, even if it was on his nomination night or his election night I shall displace myself to be with him.

I wanted to make another point. Let us look at the totality of what has been removed in health, education and other programs and let us look at what has been put in because I know there has been a serious reduction. Let us also look at the need today.

Depending upon whose figures, and they vary, from four million to five million Canadians are at the level of poverty or below. That is what we have currently today. I will go with four million; frankly it makes me feel better. There are one million among those four million or five million who are children.

We have to look at the need. The need is greater today than it has ever been. We cannot simply look at resourcing in a vacuum. We need to look at it from a need perspective.

If we look at food banks today, as I mentioned before over two million Canadians will be fed at food banks this year. I believe and I stand to be corrected, and I want to be corrected if I am wrong, that 40 per cent of those are young people and children.

Just to summarize, I know my colleague is well intentioned and I know that he believes a lot in what is being done here. The reduction in the number of the programs is a positive one. The targeting has some merits. I acknowledge that. Where we have some difficulties and some differences of opinion is in the amount of funding that has been removed for health, education and child benefits over time. I did not even talk about the capping on social assistance and the impact it would have.

If my colleague wants to challenge me to a public debate I will go to his riding and I will talk about these reductions. I will do so with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, let me at the outset thank my colleague from St. Boniface for his generosity and congratulate him on his impassioned speech. I also congratulate our critic, the member for Winnipeg North Centre, on his very fine intervention earlier this afternoon.

We as Liberals have a very long and fine tradition of focusing our attention and speaking up for the cause of the poor, of the unemployed and of the defenceless. We have done that over the decades under several prime ministers and in opposition.

Therefore the House will understand why in this debate in the last three days we have focused particularly on that part of the bill which abandons and overlooks the situation of poverty as experienced by children and their parents. There is no doubt that is the weak point of this particular legislation.

This is not just a partisan consideration. May I draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, the view expressed by Dr. Ken Battle of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy when he said: "The federal government's proposal to change child benefits is seriously flawed. It does little in the short term and virtually nothing over the long term to make a dent in child poverty. Clearly this is pre-election reform since the larger monthly payments will come onstream during the election year. The new child benefit and earned income supplement will be paid monthly and so will look much bigger than the present system since the current refundable child credit is paid annually or for poor families twice a year".

This is a statement from someone who has no particular axe to grind, so to speak.

In addition to Dr. Battle, at committee stage the minister of social services for British Columbia, Joan Smallwood, spoke in a very critical manner of this bill. So did the Citizens for Public Justice from my own city of Toronto, the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, the Child Poverty Action Group, and Trevor Williams from Family Services Canada.

We definitely have here a serious shortcoming which we in the Liberal Party, with our tradition, must and will continue to address.

What strikes a listener to this debate is the fact that the present emerging phenomenon of child poverty in this country is attributable to two major factors. One is unemployment among youth and the other one is the fact that wealth is not redistributed the way it should be distributed in our society. Therefore there is a need to look at tax reform that would better achieve distribution of wealth among the Canadian population.

At the present time it is extremely disturbing to learn that in metro Toronto, Ontario, and I suspect in other parts of the country, youth unemployment is around 19 per cent to 20 per cent. This is an historical high, unfortunately, and it is a figure that ought to send a shiver down the collective spine of this government in terms of a profound preoccupation with a phenomenon that ought to be dealt with on the basis of an urgent matter that requires urgent action. Instead, we have seen a reduction in job creation programs for youth over the last two summers. We have seen a sense of indifference to various demands being made from the opposition benches to improve the employment situation, particularly in the summer months for the unemployed youth from coast to coast.

• (1800)

Bill C–80 somehow inevitably prods us to raise these factors or these questions because in a way child poverty is related, as I mentioned a moment ago, both to the fact that employment is so hard to be found and that we have reached a point, through tax measures introduced over the last eight years by the Progressive Conservative government, in which the taxation system considerably favours high income earners and disfavours the lower income earners. In that respect we find the plight of those who are struggling with poverty, and particularly our younger people.

It is interesting to note that in this House of Commons, and the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso reminded us of that two days ago, a resolution was passed in 1989 calling for the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000. Therefore it is understandable that we should be asking the government why it did not take advantage of this measure, Bill C–80 before us, to introduce or include the elements that would permit moving toward the elimination of child poverty. Obviously this would have been and is the natural vehicle to tackle that particular social issue.

The goal of the elimination of child poverty cannot be resolved only by way of benefits. We are the first ones to recognize it. However, certainly it is a very important instrument in the arsenal of measures and programs that the federal government can develop to tackle this particular problem.

In reviewing the way that this measure was received one might also want to add, as some of my colleagues have already done, the fact that of the witnesses who appeared before the committee in studying this legislation only 1 out of 25 was in a position to speak in support, and in favourable terms, of the measure itself. Does that not say something? Is that not indicative of something that does not meet the requirements of Canadians at large who are preoccupied with the problem of child poverty? Obviously it is an indicator that something is missing from this particular legislation.

I believe very profoundly that the absence of measures that would address child poverty is a reflection of a lack of political will. This measure has been drafted by civil servants, but on instructions from their political masters. If the political masters had indicated very clearly from the outset that the question of child poverty in Canada ought to be addressed through Bill C–80 we would not be today debating its shortcomings in this respect.

We are now heading for a winter. We are heading for not only seasonal high unemployment but by all forecasts for high unemployment that will unfortunately last for a year or two. This bill offers us, once again, the opportunity to raise in this House the damage caused to the social fibre by high youth unemployment and by the fact that we are in a way borrowing from the future at their expense, and the necessity to once again and further press the government to introduce the necessary measures to specifically deal with youth unemployment if it wants to gets to the roots of the question of child poverty.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): I listened with interest to my friend from Davenport, who I have a great deal of respect for, and I was wondering why he would support avoiding this bill. After all, the bill eliminates the family allowance, which is $36 a month, and the small $65 deduction people get off their income tax toward supporting a child and amalgamates it all in a new child tax credit system in one payment that comes to people every month. It gives them spending money every

month, and it is not the kind of spending money that can be taken away by a tax discounter.

This is obviously a far better bill than the current present system. Is he saying that he and his party want to defend the current system, or are they not prepared to look at a new system that puts more money in the hands of people with kiddies? This bill puts $400 million next year and $2.1 billion over five years into the hands of people with kids in Canada. Why would they not want to do that? Why would they object to that?

I agree that there is child poverty and we should possibly do more. Why would the member criticize what we are doing? Why would he not vote for what we are doing and say do more? Why would he want to throw it all away? Would he rather have the existing system and forget it all?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga South is usually very incisive and provocative in his interventions, and I welcome them.

Time did not permit me to deal with the second reason that we find this bill objectionable. That reason is that this bill begins to erode, if not eliminate, the concept of universality. The concept of universality is one which the Liberal Party of Canada introduced and still cherishes today because it is the better approach. It treats everybody in the same manner at the moment of distribution of wealth but it then retrieves the funds that have been given to those who are more fortunate in society through the income tax system.

The income tax system, as the member for Mississauga South would confirm, because he knows it probably better than most in this House, has over the recent years lost its capacity to redistribute wealth as it used to. As a result of that, people who have continued to do well and improve their standing in society and people who are at the lower end of the income scale find their positions slipping and losing ground at the rate which is the source of profound preoccupation. Therefore, if we want social stability I would be inclined to think that any party worth its salt should raise a very strong voice in this Chamber to say that a measure for child benefit that leaves out Canadians at the low end of the income scale is not a good measure. A measure which does away with universality is also not a good measure.

• (1810)

As the member for Winnipeg North Centre outlined earlier, we have in society these days unexpected lay-offs, sudden economic changes where people find themselves from one year to the next in dire economic straits. Under this bill, they would have to wait a considerable length of time before they can be covered under the new system in a manner that protects the income of their children.

I am grateful to the member for Mississauga South for having allowed me, in a sense, to outline the second line of reasoning as to why we find this bill lacking and not deserving support.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the Children's Special Allowances Act. I did have the opportunity a little earlier to make some observations and I will attempt to make some more.

What we have today with the family allowances, the child credits and the refundable child tax credit has been a response from governments past and present to address assistance to the children of our country.

Through the years it has become somewhat complicated because of all the different programs. It has ended up being, as I said earlier, a patchwork of benefits and has certain complexities to it, especially when you are addressing lower middle income and low income families where income tax forms and calculations and so on need to be done to receive the benefits.

As I mentioned earlier, they become subject to tax discounters. That is very unfortunate in the situation we have today. It certainly shows all the reasons to change the system, but it is one that does have some problems.

What we want to do is increase the amount of money that can be directed to those in need. We are now giving children's allowances to high income people. It is something that I have been constantly receiving representation on. It is wrong and improper for persons making

$250,000 a year to be receiving children's allowances and then going through the process of taxing it back.

Certainly individual income versus family income is one that needed to be changed. It has been done with this change to the Children's Special Allowances Act.

Under the Children's Special Allowances Act we want those earning $50,000 a year and less in family income to receive more. On average, families will receive $250 a year more than they receive currently under the system we have today.

As I said earlier, those up-front monthly payments are really important so that people can set their budgets and know the amount of money that is coming in with this new regime. The opportunity to receive those moneys and not be taxed is also an important part of this legislation.

I have to say that I think our government has long been committed to human resource development in totality and certainly the area of children who are under the custody and care of their parents. We need to do everything we can to direct moneys so that they have adequate clothing, food and so on. That is an important part of the study that has gone on for some period of time by this government to look at modernizing children's benefits.

I would like to take the opportunity to address one specific and very positive aspect of the bill. I believe it has not received the attention of the press or the opposition that it truly deserves, and that is the children's special allowances portion. I may have missed some of the speeches. I do not think it has been mentioned although a lot of people have spoken.

Too often we forget in talking about the need of families that there are some children in Canada who may not have a family and they must look to foster parents and institutions to provide their care. The existing legislation under the Family Allowances Act does provide some support for these children by paying a benefit of $52.03 a month. That is a bit more than the family allowance, but it is actually less than the support provided to children in low income families when the value of the tax credits is taken into account and these children are not eligible for these credits.

I do not know if it was noted, but I am delighted to see that under this legislation the benefits for these children will be raised to $85 a month, an increase of some 60 per cent or so. This is giving them the same support that is available under the basic child tax credit for a family with one child.

This will materially improve the lives of more than 30,000 children in foster homes and institutions. It also demonstrates that the government meant what it said in talking about fairer and more generous payments and benefits being the intent of this legislation. If it has not been talked of before, it is important that this be brought to the attention of all Canadians who are watching and to the House.

Some members in speaking have criticized the way the child tax benefit adjusts to fluctuations in family income. I would like to comment on this issue because it seems to me that these criticisms appear to be based on a misunderstanding of the child tax benefit and how it works.

Some members have suggested that the child tax benefit is flawed because it does not adjust to fluctuations in family income. It is very important to remember that dealing with sudden income fluctuations is really the role of other social programs, not child benefits. For example, unemployment insurance and social assistance are major social programs that have been explicitly designed to provide support to families who experience sudden changes and declines in income. I think when people have talked about trying to include it all into this they are forgetting that there are other programs.

The new child tax benefit is not designed and should not take over the role of using unemployment insurance or social assistance in buffering families from income fluctuations. However, hon. members should note that the new benefit is significantly more responsive to changing family circumstances than the current system.

The current system also forces parents to deal with delays up to one year or more, as I mentioned before, to receive their full refundable child tax credit. When they must still meet the day-to-day needs of their families, then this is particularly difficult for low income families. I think it is probably one of the most significant and important parts of this bill because they need it now. They do not need it some time in the future and so they need it on a monthly basis.

• (1820)

Since the child tax credit is more than half of their entire federal child benefits, it is important that it be delivered in another way. As a result, many low income parents are forced to forfeit their child benefits by resorting to tax discounters for that often needed cash because they are strapped and they need it. Tax discounters charge a fairly exorbitant fee for advancing moneys and this will hopefully cut a lot of that out.

A similar problem exists when there is a new child, either from birth or from adoption or a change in custody. Under the current system a family could wait for up to a year before it receives full child benefits. The child tax benefit will eliminate these current delays in the delivery of child benefits and markedly improve the responsiveness of federal child benefits.

With the up-front monthly payments, parents will receive benefits as they are needed to help with daily needs. With this timely response of delivery of benefits, low income families are going to benefit and we cannot but emphasize that more and more and we should be emphasizing that more and more.

Finally, the child tax benefit is also more responsive to the needs of new single parents after a spouse dies and/or there is a marriage breakdown. For example, after a marriage breakdown the mother often finds that she has much less income to support her children and that is a real problem. Under the current system she may have to wait more than a year before she receives increased child benefits because of her lower income.

In contrast, under the child tax benefit this mother can receive a full increase in her child tax benefit payments as a result of her lower income shortly after separation, much quicker. The child tax benefit can respond to her more difficult financial situation in a much quicker and responsive way.

It is important to bring out some of these facts that maybe had not been discussed at length before or at all. They are important pluses and improvements to the delivery of moneys to low and lower middle and lower income families. We should be directing our financial help to these people, making it more responsive to their needs. There has been a lot of direction in having the kind of payments that should be directed to lower income families where they are properly needed.

This government spends somewhere in the area of over $42 billion a year in human resource development which covers a broad base from the area of health and welfare and the unborn to anti-drug and smoking programs to children's benefits and education and retraining and so on.

The direction toward the children of our country is a very important part of that total dollar spending of the billions of dollars that this government directs to the social side of our social agenda. I am pleased that we have been able to modernize the direction of funding to the children of our country who are most in need. This legislation goes a long way toward doing that.

I thank the House and my colleagues for the opportunity to speak today on this very important piece of legislation.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my comments time during the debate this evening to pay tribute to a very esteemed constituent of mine, Mr. Bruce Hutchison who died on Monday. What he stood for is pertinent to this debate. He was a journalist with an international reputation. He was an eloquent writer. Pertinent to this debate, he had analytical skills that called on governments and politicians to live up to what they said. He believed that it was not just what a politician or a government says, but more important what that politician or government does in support of what they say.

I quote from a 1984 newswire when the Prime Minister said: "Our position is simple and straight forward. We are in favour of universality of social programs and it shall not be touched". One wonders what Bruce Hutchison would have said today when we are here debating the end of universality of social programs. I do not have to wonder very deeply. He was an insightful, eloquent man. He believed his duties as a journalist were not just to criticize but to make a positive contribution to this country. He was not just throwing darts at those of us in public life. He was making a contribution, showing us the way. I think that the fifth estate today may have lost the way.

Bruce Hutchison died on Monday at the age of 91. Even 91 long and fruitful years do not seem long enough for those of us who admired him.

Since he was my constituent, I want to say in this debate tonight how proud I am to have been his member of Parliament and how much he will be missed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate on Bill C-80 and some pretty sensible points were made. I can only imagine how much better we could have made the system if an agreement could have been reached between the governments of Quebec and Canada, for instance. As we know, Quebec has its own system that it administers by itself. Now Ottawa will have, and we may not find the level of commonality, this osmosis we would have hoped for. Families in both Quebec and Canada will not receive as much as they could have had an agreement been reached. This leads me to the constitutional debate. We in the Bloc Quebecois, were hoping for an agreement which would have eliminated these double jurisdictions. Unfortunately we ended up with one that does not, neither in this area nor in others.

The Bloc Quebecois members, also referred to as Pequists and Separatists, are not the only ones criticizing this deal, but that does not address the substance of the debate. I have here a statement from a person who was deputy minister of governmental affairs in Quebec until today as far as I know. She said:

[*English*]

> It is a national disgrace, we should have left. Mr. Bourassa should have taken a plane home right away. What a humiliation to arrive at such a point.
>
> As premier of Quebec, with all of Quebec's historical demands, and with all the pressure he had on him here at home, he could have said: "All right, no way".

[*Translation*]

She described how Mr. Bourassa, among others, came to agree to this constitutional deal, this draft deal, as follows:

[*English*]

> We are walking on our knees, you know. I think they have holes in them.

Some hon. members: Order, order.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am having a hard time seeing the connection between what the hon. member is saying and the bill presently being debated, Bill C-80. I would therefore appreciate that the hon. member speak to the point, especially as I have to allow the previous speaker to respond to this.

• (1830)

Mr. Gérin: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to tell you that the comments I just told you about were those of the deputy minister of the Intergovernmental Affairs of Quebec, Mrs. Wilhelmy, as they appear in today's edition of *the Globe and Mail*, as well as other excerpts that give us an idea of what took place at the negotiating table between Mr. Bourassa, the Prime Minister and the others.

[*English*]

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I certainly will keep my comments and questions on the subject of Bill C-80, the child benefit package, which most of know was introduced in the budget this past February. I have to say it simplifies, streamlines and targets those families most in need.

One thing that has obviously become quite apparent during the last few weeks is many people claim that we are doing away with family allowance and I wonder if that could be one of my questions to my colleague.

The other area has to do with the fact we are cutting back. As I recall, this is new money, $2.1 billion over the next five years. I would like my colleague to comment. Is it new money? Is it $2.1 billion over five years?

The most important thing in streamlining and putting these three child benefit proposals together in one package is the fact that we are hitting the people who need it. We are streamlining and targeting it.

What happens to the upper income? Should people over $75,000 or $85,000 a year be getting this? I really wonder. I think if you look at the true purpose with regard to the bill, and my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton could explain, who does it target, is it new money and is it more responsive? What we want to do is get money out to the people who need it in time.

Mr. James: Mr. Speaker, I certainly could not dispute the member from Calgary Southwest. She asks if it is more responsive. It is and it is more money directed to children who need it and that is what is so very important.

Our government took the children's allowance, the patchwork that was going on, the direction of moneys to the families of the children that needed it, and said this needs to be updated.

There was reference made earlier by my colleague opposite to one of our great authors and writers, alluding to the fact that maybe he would not have agreed. I think certainly Hutchison was also a futurist and looked at how we should look to the future and change things and modernize them. I think we have to constantly and continually do that. To keep on funnelling money to those making $70,000 and $200,000 for children's allowances is archaic in the best of terms.

Certainly now this legislation directs more efficiently, more timely and with more money, over an average of $250, for families of $50,000 and under. It does all those things.

Someone else mentioned earlier it was a campaign plank. It must be pretty positive stuff out there if the Conservatives are using it as some lead up to an election. You do not want to come up with things that are negative. This one must be very positive in the minds of Canadians. In my mind it is and certainly any input I have received from the people I have talked to indicates it is a very positive piece of legislation.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak on this bill today because it calls to attention the entire social structure the government is putting upon Canadian people. I will be sharing my time on a 10 minute and 5 minute basis with the member for Burin—St. George's.

What we have to look at in the implementation of this Bill C-80, the child benefit legislation, is not so much the streamlining of the system as is being proposed here or the fact that there will be some additional money provided over the next five years, but the over-all context in which most Canadians find themselves today. Although there will be some additional payments made over the next five years under this revised child assistance program, if you look back over the last five years you see that almost $2 has been removed from benefits for low income families for every additional $1 that is going to be paid over the next five years. Therefore families today are suffering because of the cutbacks that have been made.

These cutbacks have taken place in many ways. The capping of the Canada Assistance Plan was one way. I know in my own district of Algoma that municipalities are in a desperate situation. They are meeting with their municipal associations and are calling on the provincial government for assistance. At one stage the Canada Assistance Plan was dollar for dollar with the federal government. I have heard reports in the media that in fact today the federal share in many instances has dropped to 25 per cent of those benefits. The Ontario government, of course, loaned some 20 per cent of the charges on local municipalities. Therefore, with the cutbacks on unemployment insurance and the benefits there and the massive welfare load because of the 1.6 million who are unemployed, and probably another 400,000 who have given up and have stopped looking for work, those are all loaded on to the local taxpayers. The provinces are also suffering because the government has capped the assistance under the Canada Assistance Plan.

A major item in the constitutional agreement that the provincial premiers wrung out of the Prime Minister was that there would be no unilateral cutbacks in the assistance of statutory programs like the Canada Assistance Plan.

Other programs which have caused the reduction of $3.5 billion assistance for families in low income include the cancelling of the government's commitment to national child care, the reduced UIC benefits, cuts in retraining and job creation programs. This is clearly not a government that is concerned about families with the cutbacks in all of these programs.

In my own constituency, in the communities of Elliot Lake and the north shore, we have lost some 3,400 jobs in the last two and a half years. Last year the government provided a $2.5 million commitment for training, retraining, upgrading and so on. This year it has chopped that to about one-quarter, $600,000. For a community where you had people in upgrading programs and pre-vocational training and now wanting to get skill courses, the well is dry. The funding available for training has been cut dramatically.

At the same time we have some 1,000 people who were laid off last spring at Denison Mines coming on to UI this fall and wanting to take the training programs, but the training support and assistance has been chopped back dramatically this year and the assistance is simply not there. This is portrayed as an anti-poverty program. Yet if we read the comments of various experts in the field of social development, they clearly give it a thumbs down on the range of benefits that are being provided. For instance, Ken Battle of the Caledon Social Policy Institute said: "The federal government proposal to change child benefits is seriously flawed. The proposal does little in the short term and virtually nothing over the long term to make a dent in child poverty. We cannot support this particular proposal".

• (1840)

Sam Snoblelen of the End Legislative Poverty group said this to the committee: "To us it is clear the so-called 'child benefit' will be a detriment to the entire country, especially to children, and eventually to seniors. Therefore Bill C-80 should be thrown in the garbage can, not passed".

I was very interested in the comments of the president of the Canada Council on Social Development because we have heard members across the way saying how this proposal will be beneficial to low income families and families facing poverty. The president of the Canadian Council on Social Development went on to say that the proposal would have very little benefit for single parent families who are generally the group in the lowest income brackets. He said that 62.9 per cent of single parents will receive nothing under the program. Imagine, this is the lowest income group in the country; 62.9 per cent of them will receive nothing under the program.

He went on to say that the income supplement is so modest that it will not make a dent in child poverty. An average family of four will receive something like 34 cents per day under the income supplement proposal. He went on to say that the new program will lift only .7, that is seven-tenths of 1 per cent, of those below the poverty line in single parent families above the poverty line. He went on to say that only 1.6 per cent of low income couples with children will be lifted above the poverty line.

This proposal is designed to have an overlap January 1 so that there will be a special cheque coming out under the old system and a special payment under the new system in January and a tax credit from the income tax for the previous year. It is designed to look quite good to the recipients in January or February when they are filing their income tax and so on. If we look back at the cutbacks that have taken place of $3.5 billion over the last five years and the benefits that are going to flow over the next five years, we see that the average family, if we compare those two five-year periods, has lost practically $2 for every $1 that it will gain under this program.

It certainly is not a very generous program when we combine it will all of the other cutbacks in the capping of the welfare system, which is putting a tremendous load on every province but certainly Ontario with its $10 billion deficit. If we combine it with the cutbacks in training at a time when literally 1.6 million Canadians are out of work and looking for work, who are drawing UIC benefits but there are no training funds available, it does not make a very happy picture either for those people who are laid off or for those family units, those single-parent families, often a woman with one or two young children. These benefits are not very significant and certainly do not make a very large dent in the problem of poverty which faces so many Canadians today. For these reasons our party has called on the government to come forward with better, more effective programs that provide benefits to Canadians, especially those in the extremely low income sector.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for Algoma as he criticized the government's child support bill. I wonder if the hon. member would admit that the program and the arguments in favour of it, as we heard for example represented by the member from Sarnia—Lambton, have a certain simplistic appeal.

First of all, those commercial tax people will not be able to exploit the poor. They will receive the money quickly. There are some nice things there, among which is a little bit more money. I wonder if it is not possible at this juncture to perhaps enlighten the other side about the significant impact of abandonment of universality. I wonder if the hon. member might want to refer to the United States where universality for its social programs has not been the characteristic of their delivery and that

has had a certain impact. I wonder if the hon. member might want to address that.

I wonder if the hon. member might want to address the fact that those of the very poorest are hardly going to benefit at all. I wonder if the hon. member would like to address the fact that because the program is only partially indexed, the benefits will slide away. I am not so sure that those watching this debate are going to be altogether familiar with that fact. I wonder if the hon. member might make reference that he did slightly but a little more abundantly to the fact that those people who are going to benefit the least, that is the non-working poor, have been multiplied by this government.

There are more on welfare, not working, than there were before. Surely that has to be taken into account in analysing this program as well as the fact that as a result of income tax changes since this government has come into power, those who are very wealthy and the upper levels of income are doing very well, while those who are supposed to benefit from this program have experienced it in some instances as much as $3,000 in increases in taxes over that period of time as a result of the regressive GST. The cost of everything has gone up for them.

I just want to know from the hon. member whether all taken there is any net benefit at all to the very poor to be achieved by the abandonment of universality the night before the funeral of that man from my town who originated it in this house.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the hon. member from Windsor. I think he did an excellent job of capsulizing practically all the flaws of this agreement in a two or three minute address to the House.

Clearly this scheme, as Ken Battle said in his statement to the group, is designed for maximum political advantage. It sends out money early in January 1993 and still the bang for the buck is there. What low income Canadians are losing in this they have been losing for the last five years with cutbacks in programs, the capping of the Canada Assistance Plan which is one of those programs that was supported by the hon. member whose funeral was held today, Paul Martin, Senior, and all of those social programs that he either was instrumental in putting in place or supported dramatically. Those programs are being abandoned this year. In the past five years the government has cut out some $3.5 billion of social assistance to low income families.

The hon. member has talked about the poorest of the poor getting practically nothing out of this legislation and he is right.

• (1850)

I quoted the president of the Canadian Council on Social Development. He pointed out that 62.9 per cent of single parent families will receive nothing from this proposal. Less than 1 per cent will be lifted above the poverty line.

The hon. member clearly has spelled out many—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time for questions and comments has now expired.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, this bill about which I spoke a few days ago is, as my friend from Mississauga South has just said, a great bill if you have his kind of paycheque. I will demonstrate that in a moment.

This bill is the big lie. The Tories as they stand in the House say in some words or others: "We are going to help the poor". Until you scrutinize the provisions of the bill, you find there is not one red cent of additional money there for people on welfare.

These are not only my words. This is not just my discovery. The gentleman from Calgary North discovered that one day last February just after he had put out his press release lauding all the provisions to help the poor in this bill. Then somebody in the press got to him and he muttered, unwittingly perhaps, out loud for the press to hear and quote him: "I would have thought there would be an increased benefit for welfare families".

Even a Tory can hear the truth sometimes, I say to the Minister of Supply and Services. The Minister of Supply and Services does not like this particular debate because he knows that we are exposing him and his colleagues for the big lie that the government is trying to spread across this country.

I have in my riding many communities, 158 of them altogether. There are 158. I want to direct your attention to just a very small group of communities within that riding and apply the litmus test of this bill to those communities. I am thinking of what is known locally as

the Bay d'Espoir area. It has seven communities: St. Alban's, St. Joseph's, St. Veronica's, Head of Bay d'Espoir, Milltown, Morrisville and Conne River.

Conne River is geographically somewhat apart, and it is also a native reserve. In that respect, it accesses certain funding but all the communities including Conne River, all seven that I have mentioned form what is known locally as the Bay d'Espoir area.

When this government came to power in 1984, that part of Newfoundland, that part of Canada was on its knees economically then. It had many years before lost what had been its mainstay, the logging operation, exporting wood to England for use as pit props in the mine. It lost this industry long before this government came to office and I do not lay the blame for that event on the shoulders of this government.

This government came to power in 1984, and its candidate in that area made promises on behalf of the government commitments as to what would be done to provide some economic uplift for the Bay d'Espoir area, for those seven communities.

What has happened in the eight years since? Only yesterday I talked to one of the community leaders in that particular area. He was lamenting how terribly bad the situation is, how it has degenerated, how the unemployment rate now is fully 60 per cent in that area and how they have not been able to avail themselves of the normal programs that had been in place until a few years ago.

For example, there was a very aggressive silviculture program that had been co-sponsored by the federal and provincial governments which was wiped out by this administration. It had provided many hundreds of jobs drawing on the local skills in that particular area.

The government changed the job creation program guidelines which this area had come to rely on somewhat as a bridge to get it to better economic opportunities. Therefore, the unemployment rate which was 25 per cent when this government took over is now twice that and then some.

How does this bill help those people? Some of them, because they have run out of other options, are actually on welfare, not because they are lazy, not because they will not go to work, but because there is no work to go to in Bay d'Espoir.

What does this bill do for those people? What it tries is to hoodwink them. It tries to be cynical with that. But what does it put in their pockets? Many of them are on welfare through no fault of their own.

The bill is very explicit. It says in effect not one additional red cent for those persons who are on welfare. Whatever reason they may be on welfare is beside the point. There is not one additional red cent.

How does this bill help the people of Bay d'Espoir, of St. Alban's, St. Joseph's, St. Veronica's, the head of Bay d'Espoir, Milltow and Morrisville and Conne River? How does it help them insofar as another provision is concerned?

This bill has a provision for child care expenses. To be fair, this bill increases the amount for child care expenses from $5,000 to $6,000. I put it to you, Sir. There are 6,000 or 7,000 people in Bay d'Espoir. Given what I just told the House, how many would you guess of those people would have a sufficient level of income which would allow them to qualify for that increased exemption from $5,000 to $6,000? Of course the answer is nobody or, if any, very precious few. Who does that benefit? Does that increased benefit help the poor who this government has said repeatedly they are trying to help with this bill? No. The same old story. This government has a two-step approach to almost every initiative it takes.

One, it says: "Here is what we are going to do". Then it rushes out and does the complete opposite, hoping it has distracted the people by what it said it was going to do.

In this bill, it says: "We are going to help the poor". Then it rushes out to do what it does very well and it helps the rich. It gives an increased child care benefit for who? People who do not need it.

I have no doubt there is somebody out there behind the curtains being coached to come in and being taught how to read an appropriate question to put to me when I finish my few remarks here. I will deal with that if time permits. Why does the government not answer this question? Why is it that there is not one single red cent for people on welfare? Why?

Keep in mind that because of the patchwork arrangement we have in this country, because of the way welfare and social assistance is paid out, we have 10 systems, one for each of the provinces. In an area where national standards are important, the government is passing the buck to the provinces, so they can pay really whatever amount of welfare they like. The government is saying one thing here. Whatever amount you pay Newfoundland, whatever amount you pay Ontario, whatever

amount you pay P.E.I., whatever amount you pay Quebec, we the government in Ottawa will not up the ante one cent on account of this legislation for people on welfare. Let the Tories answer that question when they get up.

Second, let them answer this question for the people of Bay d'Espoir that I have mentioned or for the people of Burin—St. George's generally, for the people of Newfoundland and for the people of Canada. Why is it that the government, in its pretence to be helping poor people, has gone out of its way to help the well-to-do, even in this particular bill with its increased child care benefits? Why? We all know that even under the old clawback system of family allowances that the well-to-do did not really benefit from family allowances because they were not there for those people anyway. Nothing is really changed here.

There is a mechanism that is different. Instead of giving family allowances to people with $100,000 and then clawing it back on income tax, we are not going to give it to them. It is just another mechanism to see that in the end they did not get any family allowance. So there is nothing really changed right there.

One of the things that has changed is that the people who could most afford their own child care expenses are going to get the increased benefit of $5,000 to $6,000. I said in my earlier speech a couple of days ago that it is also an attack on universality. I believe that strongly, and had I the time I would pursue that, because that also is a nefarious, disgusting, despicable part of this particular legislation.

• (1900)

The most despicable part is the deceit, the big lie that says we are going to help the poor, when we all know very well that this bill does not help the people on welfare, this bill sneaks in a little bit for the rich. Every time they can get that little bit for the rich. That is the shameful thing about this, and that is why the people of Bay d'Espoir and of Burin—St. George's are not very happy with this bill, I will tell you that, sir.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague on an excellent intervention. I wonder in the time that is remaining, if my colleague would avail himself of the opportunity to try to explain to the House if, in fact, this present administration, through the auspices of either Bill C-80 and/or any other legislation in consequence thereof, has been able to provide additional benefits to the good people of his province as well as to the good people of the province of Nova Scotia.

I am thinking in particular of those provinces that have traditionally been known as have not provinces. Has this administration, through the auspices of Bill C-80 and/or acts which are a consequence thereof, been of any help or assistance to those have not provinces?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It being 7.01 o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, September 15, 1992, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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 yeas 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 agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 238)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Belsher
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Cadieux
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Dick
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Jacques
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
McDermid
McLean
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Shields
Sparrow
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—99

Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Boyer
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Danis
Della Noce
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Fontaine
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hudon
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Masse
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Pronovost
Ricard
Saint-Julien
Soetens
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vincent
Wilbee

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bellemare
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Chrétien
Copps
Dionne
Ferguson
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier

Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Black
Blondin-Andrew
Butland
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Foster
Gagliano
Gérin

Harb
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Laporte
Maheu
Marchi
McGuire
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Plamondon
Riis
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Volpe
Wappel

Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mills
Nault
Parker
Rideout
Simmons
Speller
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—62

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair
Peterson
Rompkey

Oberle
Reid
Vézina

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford) moved that Bill S–7, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Royal Society of Canada, be now read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

• (1930)

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order and the usual practices of the House, Bill S–7, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Royal Society of Canada, be referred, after second reading, to a Committee of the Whole instead of to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope, and

Private Members' Business

That, unless otherwise disposed of, at the end of the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business this day, any proceedings then before the House shall be interrupted and every question necessary to dispose of the said bill at all stages shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent to receive the motion tabled by the hon. member?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared to accommodate and try to pass the bill through all stages, but I am not prepared to have a limit on debate at eight o'clock, which is what that motion implied.

We are quite prepared to spend the time in private members' hour today and extend the time of the sitting of the House if necessary in order to accommodate the hon. member, but if his speech goes 20 minutes and then there is a 10-minute speech from one member of the opposition and other members do not get an opportunity to speak before the bill is put through all stages, we are not prepared to agree to that. I do not think that was the agreement that was discussed.

We are prepared to extend the time of private members' hour until 8.30 p.m. if necessary and seek to see that the bill is approved in all stages during that time. I suggest the hon. member make his speech. If at eight o'clock it has not gone through all stages we will then give our unanimous consent to extend the sitting for the purpose of completing the bill and we will consent to have it go to a Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to indicate that we support the general thrust of the motion by my hon. friend. It is our intention that this bill be completed through all stages as expeditiously as possible.

I believe that the caution that my hon. friend from Kingston and the Islands suggests is good. We also want to allow ample time for members to make comments if they so wish.

As far as the New Democratic Party is concerned we support the bill. We support it enthusiastically and want to see it pass through all stages before we recess today.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the spirit of this discussion. I think that there would be an inclination on all sides to let the bill have a thorough examination tonight.

I just wanted to ascertain whether my colleagues opposite were privy to the discussion, I believe they may have been privy to the discussion, from which there was an understanding to have two items dealt with tonight, the other being the change in name of my friend's constituency of Timiskaming.

If that is in order then I think you would find that there would be consent for private members' hour to deal with those two items in all stages without there being an absolute and final limit on it. We will see how the debate progresses without it terminating at 8 p.m.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): May I suggest to the parliamentary secretary that he draft a proper motion.

Mr. Edwards: It will not be necessary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Then the sponsor of the bill, the hon. member for Oxford, has the floor. If during this debate, some developments should occur, the Chair will welcome any suggestion to speed up the review of the legislation, if the hon. members so wish.

[*English*]

Mr. Halliday: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank colleagues opposite for their willingness to co-operate in this and I can assure them my remarks will be fairly brief.

The proposed act under consideration concerns certain modifications to the act of incorporation of the Royal Society of Canada found in Victoria, chapter 46. The Royal Society of Canada was founded in 1882 by the Governor General of Canada the Right Hon. the Marquess of Lorne and was incorporated by the Parliament of Canada in May 1883. Its object is to promote learning

and research in the arts and sciences in all parts of Canada.

The founding members were led by Sir William Dawson, principal of McGill University and first president of the society and the Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau, former premier of Quebec and the society's second president. Despite sentiments that the formation of such a body was premature, these men saw the need for a body devoted to encouraging the growth of scholarship and research in the newly formed nation. At that time, active scholars and researchers were few in number and widely scattered largely across central and eastern Canada. The new society provided a venue for the presentation of their work and an opportunity for contacting others with similar professional interests.

In considering the scope of the body, the Marquess of Lorne was the decisive influence in ensuring that it represented the full range of existing scholarship including literature, history and the scholarly arts as well as the natural sciences. In this it followed the model of *l'Institut de France* which incorporates five academies rather than that of the exclusively scientific membership of the Royal Society of London. One of the founders, Mr. Joseph Tassé, remarked that it was a federation of the intellect completing the still young political federation of the provinces.

The society today has been true to the vision of its founders. It now comprises three academies, *l'Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines,* the Academy of Humanities and Social Science and the Academy of Science, which includes divisions for the applied sciences and engineering as well as the life sciences, physical sciences and earth and space sciences. It continues to be guided by Dawson's original aim of building an organization characterized by: "productiveness exclusive in its membership, but inclusive in that it offers its benefits to all".

Through its 110 years of service to Canada it has elected to membership leading scholars and scientists from all parts of our country representing an ever widening array of fields of learning and research. An unbroken succession of annual meetings has been recorded in its publications which provide a rich source of information about the intellectual growth of Canada. The society now gives 17 medals and awards in various fields of endeavour. Some are given for distinguished lifetime achievements, while others are awarded to younger researchers for outstanding work early in their careers. It has expanded its activities in recent decades by holding conferences in many parts of Canada on topics of the day and frequently in co–operation with other organizations. It launches studies into matters of national or global importance and provides advice to government and the public at large on current issues.

It has increasingly sought to bridge academic disciplines and address complex topics by bringing together specialists with different experience and expertise. This approach has distinguished its comprehensive studies of AIDS in Canada, of the safety of nuclear power and of the challenge of global change. This is the hallmark of the society's approach to its ongoing responsibilities for fostering research on the environment in its natural and human dimensions, for raising public awareness of science, for advancing the position of women in academic and professional life and for evaluating the research accomplishments and capabilities of the country.

By these and other demonstrations of its capacity to mobilize its members and call upon the commitment to service that they make upon election, the society has received increasing recognition of its emerging role as a national academy.

• (1940)

Since 1989 it has received growing support from its members, from government and increasingly from the private sector toward the goal of realizing its full potential.

Compared to national academies and the equivalents in other advanced and even some developing countries, the Royal Society of Canada still has far to go in increasing the scope of its responsibilities and activities. In its efforts to achieve further growth, it is found that the act by which it was incorporated in 1883 imposes certain restrictions. The petition now before the House seeks to remove these constraints.

The society requests that the provision in section 1 of the original act which limits the value of the real estate that the society may hold to no more than $4,000 be deleted. This would permit the society to obtain property for its purposes without restriction as to value.

Clause 2 of the amendment requests that sections 5 and 6 of the original act which concern the continuation of the original bylaws and offices of the society also be deleted as having served their purpose and being no longer relevant. Similarly, it is proposed in clause 3 that section 8 of the original act concerning the competence of members of the society as witnesses in any legal actions undertaken by the society also be removed as being no longer necessary in present day law.

I would like to add that it is my privilege to co-sponsor this bill along with the recently retired and highly respected former senator representing Quebec, the Hon. Arthur Tremblay.

I am therefore honoured to present this bill to the House and I wish to thank all of my colleagues for graciously agreeing to this expeditious process which, I believe, is appropriate in light of the consideration given by the other place.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to make a few very brief comments in respect of this bill. I want to say at the outset that the hon. member for Kamloops who has been called out of the House for a few moments wished me to indicate to the House his regret at being unable to be here to make a brief speech as well at this point. He fully supports this bill and the intent of it.

I am also pleased to indicate the support of our party of the procedures the Royal Society of Canada has adopted here to make minor amendments to the law that established it. I am pleased to say that the president of the Royal Society of Canada this year is Mr. John Meisle, a professor of mine at Queen's University and a member of the department of political studies there. He was head of the department when I was a student at Queen's and I enjoyed very much the courses with him that took us to various parts of Canada, particularly the trip to Quebec City and to your own constituency, Mr. Speaker, where we learned something of French Canadian government and politics as the course was called at that time.

This bill seeks to make quite minor amendments to the act as outlined by the hon. member who has just spoken. We concur in them and are pleased to assist in the bill's passage and I trust the bill will receive speedy approval from all sides of the House.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

> That, notwithstanding any Standing Order and the usual practices of the House, Bill C-351, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Timiskaming, be now called for second reading and that the House proceed to dispose of the said bill at all stages.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. Milliken: No, Mr. Speaker, but we would be willing to let the bill be called for second reading. It may be passed in all stages but only by unanimous consent at each stage.

* * *

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming) moved that Bill C-351, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Timiskaming, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous agreement to refer the bill to Committee of the Whole, but I dare say the hon. member will want to give us an explanation of the purpose of the bill at second reading.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, yes I would like to take a few minutes to inform all colleagues here tonight the reason why I have asked for consent to have the riding of Timiskaming changed to the riding of Timiskaming—French River.

By proclamation on July 13, 1987 during redistribution, the riding of Timiskaming took a very new face. For many years Timiskaming was a north-south riding which included the corridor of Highway 11.

The unfortunate part about it, with population changes in our area and redistribution taking place, is that there had to be a change and an adjustment in the style and the population of Timiskaming. In that manner, the riding of Timiskaming changed from a north-south riding to an east-west, north-south with communication taking part in not only just in a central part in the

north-south but also with communication in the east-west.

We took part of what was then Nickel Belt riding into the riding of Timiskaming. One of the greatest problems that we faced at the time was that individuals from that part of Nickel Belt that had become part of Timiskaming could not identify with the fact that all of a sudden they had become part of a different riding.

They asked at that time if there was any possibility that we could look at changing or identifying that part of the new riding of Timiskaming. In doing so they have a lot in common with the north-south part of Timiskaming with regard to tourism, forestry and agriculture. We wanted to make certain that they were part of Timiskaming.

In doing so, we have asked here tonight if we could have the riding of Timiskaming identified as Timiskaming—French River, which would then encompass the entire part of the new riding and welcome the new constituents who became part of Timiskaming in 1988 to be fully an enjoyable part of the entire riding of Timiskaming—French River.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 7.53 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.53 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 17, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

REFERRAL TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to table, in both official languages, a list of Order in Council appointments made recently by the government.

Pursuant to Standing Order 110(1), the appointments are deemed to have been referred to the standing committees indicated in appendix.

[*English*]

I think there is consent for the following motion:

1. That, during the consideration of Government Business No. 12,

a) not more than one amendment to the main motion from the Official Opposition and not more than one amendment to the main motion from the government may be moved;

b) after a representative of each recognized party has spoken in debate, the question necessary to dispose of any amendment moved by the Official Opposition shall be put forthwith without further debate and any recorded division demanded shall be taken forthwith;

c) at no later than 5 p.m., all questions necessary to dispose of any amendment moved by the government and the main motion shall be put forthwith without further debate and any recorded division demanded shall be taken forthwith;

2. That, not withstanding the provisions of government business No. 12, the Standing Orders and the usual practices of this House, following the disposal of government business No. 12, Members be allowed to debate the subject matter of government business No. 12, provided that,

a) during such debate, the Speaker shall not entertain any dilatory motion or quorum called and the House may sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment;

b) when no member rises to speak, the Speaker shall adjourn the House; and

3. That Private Members' Business be cancelled on Thursday, September 17, 1992 and the item which was scheduled to be considered on that day be permitted to retain its position on the Order of Precedence.

• (1010)

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties with regard to this particular motion. What is not contained in the motion is reference to the bill that we will be beginning shortly, Bill C-91. I take it that our understanding is the correct one, that the government will lead with a spokesperson and that the Official Opposition will have a spokesperson. The New Democratic Party will have a spokesperson as well. Thereafter the completion of that debate, which may take place prior to twelve o'clock noon, we would then commence the debate on Motion No. 12.

Mr. Edwards: That is understood. I would hesitate to put a time limit on it because the times for the first two speeches are open-ended. I would anticipate that what my hon. friend says is quite correct.

Mr. Dingwall: Having heard from the parliamentary secretary, I take it that we will just commence the debate at second reading of Bill C-91 and we will not complete it today and it will be adjourned for another day. On that basis, I would give the consent of the Official Opposition to the motion as read by the parliamentary secretary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association.

This report concerns meetings of the subcommittee on the CSCE of the Civilian Affairs Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly which was held in Bonn, Germany, from June 14 to June 17, 1992.

* * *

PETITIONS

KILLER CARDS

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions.

Under Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present the first group of 142 petitions, duly certified and containing approximately 5,200 signatures of citizens from Burlington, Hamilton, Ancaster, Dundas and Stoney Creek. The petitioners support Mrs. Debbie Mahaffy in her efforts to have the importation of killer cards into Canada stopped.

They applaud the efforts of the Minister of National Revenue for his statement in support of his action that has halted killer cards at the Canada–U.S. border.

The petitioners request that Parliament amend the laws to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer cards in Canada.

JUSTICE

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): The second group contains 22 petitions with approximately 2,200 signatures. These petitioners urge the government to stiffen the penalties for violent crimes and point in particular to Miss Nina de Villiers who was brutally murdered on August 9, 1991.

The petitioners ask the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General to continue to review all legislation that deals with public safety and negotiate, where necessary, with the provincial authorities to ensure that the laws are amended to reflect the concerns expressed by the petitioners on public safety.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions, pursuant to Standing Order 36. The first one is signed by a large number of people within my own community, particularly people from the Indo–Canadian community.

The petitioners point out that family class and assisted relatives have always been an historical part of Canadian immigration. They also point out that family class and assisted relative persons have relatives to assist them in finding employment, housing and learning Canadian language and custom, thus speeding their integration into the Canadian society.

They also point out that the government's present proposal is going to downgrade and make it more difficult for family class and assisted relatives to obtain immigration visas.

They call upon this government to forgo its bill and make family class and assisted relatives its first priority for all immigration.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by a large number of people from British Columbia, particularly seniors, who are frightened about the dramatic escalation of drug costs in this country.

They call upon the government to withdraw Bill C–91 and to rescind Bill C–22, the Patent Protection Act, so that we may have a truly generic drug industry in this country with true competition in order to keep drug prices down.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the petition I wish to present to the House today is with regard to section 745 of the Criminal Code.

Section 745 allows those convicted of first and second degree murder to make applications to the court for a review of their parole eligibility date.

Section 745 is a vehicle to allow convicted killers to be released prior to serving their full sentences; after 15 years this application can be made.

The petitioners call on the Parliament of Canada to remove section 745 from the Canadian Criminal Code.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada launched a very important and very significant proud to be Canadian tour earlier this year.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to submit to the House of Commons a petition which has been signed by many residents of Brandon—Souris and other parts of Manitoba.

The petitioners are pleased to participate and to take this opportunity to nurture a positive lifelong relationship with our heritage and our flag, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

[*Translation*]

THREE GORGES DAM

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the privilege to present two petitions on behalf of the residents of the beautiful riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

[*English*]

The first petition is a petition by my constituents calling upon the Parliament of Canada to make it such that the Government of Canada refuse to participate in the Three Gorges Dam project in China.

The citizens of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell are very concerned about this issue and have asked me to table this petition before the House.

It is my honour, privilege and pleasure to do so.

JUSTICE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition which I would also like to table in the House of Commons at this time.

This petition concerns the case of Christine Lamont and David Spencer who have each been sentenced to 28 years in prison in Brazil.

We certainly hope that the minister of external affairs and the Brazilian authorities, who I hope are watching television right now, ensure that justice is done for Mr. David Spencer and Christine Lamont to expel them from their country and to return them to Canada.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my first petition is from petitioners from my riding of St. Boniface which is the geographic east-west centre of Canada.

They want to ensure that the use of foul language on radio and television, in English and French or other languages, is carefully watched by Parliament in terms of the functions performed by the CRTC.

• (1020)

They point out that unfortunately there is derogatory and foul language used on television and radio, including the use of the name of God in vain. They feel that this is contrary to the basic principles that they are trying to utilize in raising their families.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition with respect to the GST on books and other reading materials. These Canadian petitioners ask that this tax be removed immediately.

They point out that there has never been such a tax in Canada and that in most countries in the world with a value added tax there is no such tax. They believe that it is contrary to our democratic principles and to certain objectives such as the increasing of literacy rates in Canada.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a final petition with regard to petitioners who seek to ensure that the government review not only the promise that the Prime Minister has made to remove the goods and services tax on books and reading materials, but also its reductions and cuts in transfer payments to provinces for education.

Here again the petitioners believe that it is contrary to government statements to assist young people in preparing for their future and the creation of jobs. It is contrary as well to enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of our nation.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 248 and 335.

[*Text*]

Question No. 248—**Mr. Taylor:**

Since April 1, 1991, what is the total amount of fees demanded by government departments and agencies under the Access to Information Act and (a) how much was paid in fees over the same period (b) What is the average and median demand for fees (c) What is the percentage of requests for which fees are demanded in relation to the total number of requests?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): The following data relates to the Access to Information Act and fees for the period of April 1, 1991 to March 31, 1992.

Total fees collected	$125,155.40
Total fees waived	$35,348.60
Total fees	$160,504.00
Total requests completed	$10,175
Average fee collected	$12.30
Median fee collected	$70.00
Median requests completed	27
Average median fee collected	$2.59
Total times fees waived	2,712
Total times fees requested	7,463
Total requests completed	10,175
Percentage of requests for which fees were collected	73.5

Question No. 335—**Mr. Breaugh:**

Why is the Department of National Defence spending $200 million on a contract to purchase 2,750 Italian designed light military trucks instead of purchasing Canadian-made ones?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): While the winning bid is based on a truck of Italian design, the vehicle will be produced in Canada at the Western Star plant in Kelowna, British Columbia. Western Star Truck Inc. was the successful bidder since its proposal best met criteria regarding operational needs, overall cost, industrial and regional benefits, support, system engineering, and delivery.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

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

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

PATENT ACT AMENDMENT ACT, 1992

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)) moved that Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent act, to amend another act in consequence thereof and to provide for other related matters, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor. Today I welcome this opportunity to introduce the second reading of Bill C-91, the Patent Act Amendment Act, 1992, a bill that strikes a balance between the needs of a dynamic Canadian economy and the needs of consumers.

This legislation will help create new jobs, attract new investment in research and development and provide new export opportunities for our many manufacturers of patented drugs. It is also a guarantee that Canadians can continue to buy patented drugs at a price that is and will remain reasonable.

I think we should look at the two aspects of this balance. As far as economic benefits are concerned, Bill C-91 is another step in the government's program to modernize and rationalize Canadian patent legislation. In a global economy that draws its strength mainly from Canadian and international know-how, ideas and innovation are essential to be able to compete on international markets.

Any nation that wants to maintain a high standard of living must remain at the forefront of scientific development and technology. To maintain its status as the country with the best quality of life in the world, according to the UN, Canada must have patent legislation that rewards creativity and attracts investment.

Under Bill C-91, pharmaceutical products will be allowed the same 20-year protection as tools, communications systems and medical products. This legislation

will reward innovative research and medical discoveries that enhance the quality of life of Canadians.

This legislation will help bring the Canadian patent system more into line with the systems of our main trading partners. In a global economy, businesses will prefer to invest in countries that offer the best possible environment for their investments. Without effective patent legislation, Canada will not be able to attract investments in manufacturing, research and development that create specialized, well-paid jobs in rapid growth industries.

[*English*]

I would like to say a few words about things that will change as a result of bringing our patent laws more in line with those of other industrialized countries.

Since Bill C-91 was tabled some erroneous reports have appeared. I know that members on both sides of this House will want to clear up some misunderstandings during the debate on this bill.

Currently a drug typically enters the market 10 years after its patent is filed. The generic can enter on average seven years later, or around seventeen years after patent application.

The new proposals would add, on average, about another three years to this period. This means that generic products would come on the market 20 years rather than 17 years after patent application.

Once the patent expires generic drug companies can compete openly with the company that invented the medicine. This is more consistent with other industrialized countries with whom we are competing for investment.

I believe that members of this House will agree that an added three years of market exclusivity is reasonable, in particular when one considers the benefits of the policy which moves Canada in the direction of a dynamic, world-class pharmaceutical industry.

At the same time this government will ensure that these benefits do not come at the expense of Canadian consumers. This is the other side of the balance, and I know that all members will applaud the measures of this bill to ensure that drug prices remain reasonable.

[*Translation*]

The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board will be given new powers to monitor the prices of both existing and new patented medicines. Its new powers will allow the board to order price reductions, impose fines and, depending on the circumstances, impose jail sentences on offenders who refuse to abide by the orders of the board.

I know many opposition members will support these measures.

Members on both sides of the House will recall the stormy debate around the patent legislation reform in 1987. A number of opposition members protested vigorously when the government implemented the first stage of this reform. The other place blocked government business for weeks in a vain attempt to reverse the decisions of this House.

Consider what hon. members of the opposition said when the amendments to the Patent Act were introduced in 1987, they maintained these amendments would raise the price of drugs. They said the changes would stimulate research by multinational pharmaceutical companies at the expense of Canadians who would have to pay more for drugs.

• (1030)

We must recognize that they were proven wrong. From January 1987 to December 1991 the price of existing patented drugs increased by an average of 2.9 per cent annually. Those are the latest figures available for this four-year period. This rate is well below the Consumer Price Index which stood at 4.4 per cent during that period; in fact it is about half as much.

The opposition was wrong about price increases, and I will show how it was also wrong on other issues.

[*English*]

We will recall that critics did not believe that the pharmaceutical companies would live up to their commitments for increased R and D spending. The innovative industry promised at that time to double R and D spending as a per cent of sales by 1996, from 5 per cent to 10 per cent.

They have done it and, moreover, they have done it in five years ahead of schedule. By 1991 R and D spending as a per cent of sales in Canada had reached 9.7 per cent to a point where the industry is investing over $375

million per year in R and D in Canada. The cumulative total is $1.1 billion since 1987 with basic science research comprising the fastest growing component of that total.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in new pharmaceutical investment has poured into Canada. Canadian universities and hospitals have benefited from research and development funding by pharmaceutical companies. In fact the innovative sector has become the single largest funder of medical research in the country. This industrial sector employs more than 18,000 Canadians and through its contribution to medical research institutions, hospitals and universities, helps to maintain and create many more jobs in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote some comments received from university research centers across Canada.

I have here a letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa, Mr. Seely, who wrote:

[*English*]

> I am writing to add my support to that of many others in the biomedical community for the recently announced intent of the government to introduce new legislation regarding protection of intellectual property. This would bring us into line with the other G-7 countries in the world and I think do much to facilitate pharmaceutical based research in Canada.

[*Translation*]

I have also received a letter from the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Western Ontario, Mr. Chodirker:

[*English*]

> —extended patent protection for the brand name pharmaceutical industry has created a significant opportunity to attract additional research revenues into Canada.

[*Translation*]

I also want to quote Dr Cameron, of the Department of Medicine at Vancouver General Hospital:

[*English*]

> The brand name pharmaceutical industry has certainly been involved in a very major way both in continuing medical education activities, and in research and development both through their own company and support extended university based research.

[*Translation*]

I could refer to other letters because I have received dozens of them, but I will end by quoting a statement made by the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Mr. Jean Guibault:

> We absolutely must grant the Canadian pharmaceutical industry a protection comparable to that which is granted to its foreign competitors, or else we stand to lose the massive investments made in Canada by these companies, as well as thousands of very high-quality jobs generated by the research done here.

[*English*]

This growth of the pharmaceutical sector and its massive investments in R and D have not been detrimental to consumer interests. The balance we created in 1987 with the creation of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board has worked to benefit consumers. In 1987 the Liberals and the NDP argued that the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board would be ineffective in maintaining reasonable drug prices. They maintained that the board had no teeth.

What has happened since then? We have seen that the board has been an effective guardian of the interests of Canadian consumers. The proof of that is in the pudding. Price increases for patented drugs, well below the rate of inflation since the creation of the review board in 1987, are a testimonial to the board's effectiveness. People said in 1987 that it would not work but it has.

[*Translation*]

In fact Canada's drug companies have complied with the board's directives to such an extent that until recently, the need to hold public hearings to review allegations of overpricing did not even arise. That is proof that the board has muscle and the opposition members' fears have proven unfounded, all in all.

The board's powers fitted well with the regulatory regime established in 1987. They have proven to be effective. In 1987, our opponents claimed that the generic drug industry, which had grown considerably between 1970 and 1987 thanks to its ability to reproduce patented medicine as a result of the inadequate patent protection that existed then, would die and that this would be bad for consumers.

The generic drug industry is not dead, far from it. Since 1987 it has grown 180 per cent. That is a long way from a dying industry. The generic drug industry benefited from Bill C-22 passed in 1987 and it will also benefit from this one. More than half the sales of the generic drug industry come from drugs the patents of which have expired. The law will change nothing as far as that is concerned.

Furthermore, in the next few years, the patents on many drugs will expire and generic drug companies will be able to produce them.

In summary, the generic drug sector will continue to grow. Consumers will continue to benefit from the resulting savings. The actual effect of the policy will be to extend by about three years on average, from 17 years to 20 years, the period that generic drug companies must wait from the date of the patent application until they can reproduce a brand name drug.

This bill will only create conditions that are more like those under which generic drug companies operate in the other industrialized countries.

We have succeeded in achieving a balance between consumer protection and industrial development. That drug price increases have been kept at an average annual rate below 3 per cent, which is much less than inflation, is striking evidence of it.

The provisions of Bill C-22 have worked. We have proven the skeptics wrong—one might even say that they have been confounded—and we will now continue what we were doing.

Nevertheless, with this bill we are certainly not going back on our commitment to protect consumers. We are abolishing the mandatory licensing regime, but we are giving new powers to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. All hon. members who demanded a stronger board in the 1987 debate should support these measures.

• (1040)

[*English*]

The bill strengthens the mechanisms for monitoring the price of patented drugs, both existing and new, by giving the board new price rollback powers. The structure of fines and penalties outlined in this bill empowers the board to recover up to twice the amount of excess revenues generated by excessive pricing.

Through the bill, businesses that refuse to comply with board orders or refuse to provide pricing or sales and expense information will be subject to fines of up to $100,000 per day. Individuals could face fines up to $25,000 dollars and the possibility of jail sentences of up to a year. The board's orders will have the same effect as a court order and failure to comply could be considered as contempt.

These provisions will give the board very sharp teeth and strong jaws. Members of this House can be assured that the prices of patented medicines will remain reasonable as a result.

I have heard claims from some of the hon. members opposite that new patent protection will increase the health care costs by $1 billion. To say that such a figure is exaggerated would be a drastic understatement.

In fact, the cumulative increased costs of drug purchases by pharmacies and hospitals as a result of the elimination of compulsory licensing will amount to about one-eighth of what the opposition alleges.

From 1992 to 1996, it is estimated that the cumulative increased costs as a result of increasing the protection for the innovators in the pharmaceutical industry will amount to $25 million per year.

Let me put that into context. In 1990, patented drugs at the retail level accounted for about 3 per cent of total expenditures of health care in Canada. The increase in costs that will result from the elimination of compulsory licensing will add to this, it is true. The increase represents $1 per Canadian per year or less than one-twentieth of 1 per cent. It is one-twentieth of 1 per cent of the total health costs in Canada.

It is reasonable to start us on the road to a dynamic, globally competitive pharmaceutical industry in Canada. It is reasonable in order to obtain highly skilled, highly paid jobs in a growing high-tech industry.

Above all, it is reasonable in order to see the development of new medicines that will increase the health and quality of life of Canadians. New medicines will in fact lower health care costs in the longer term.

This legislation is about reasonableness and balance. It is a vital component of the government's agenda to help Canada enjoy prosperity in the years to come.

[*Translation*]

We must consider this measure in the context of the government's overall economic program. This program was revealed shortly after our government was elected in 1984 and was part of the economic renewal program proposed by the then Minister of Finance who is now Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Government stuck to this program, and it paid off.

The agenda for economic renewal is meant to prepare the Canadian economy for the future. The global economy has already entered the 21st century and it will be based on know-how.

The standard of living in Canada will no longer depend on traditional sources of wealth such as our plentiful natural resources and inexpensive energy. Neither will it depend on our production capacity. It will depend on our capacity as Canadians and Quebecers to compete in this global economy and to innovate in order to add value to products, services and manufactured goods and carve a niche for ourselves in the world markets.

The prosperity of a nation and its capacity to improve its standard of living in the global economy will be determined by such factors as innovation, flexibility and search for excellence.

These cannot be harvested or created from scratch like our sources of prosperity have been for the past few decades. They have to become a part of people's lives. They must be imprinted on the future generations. They are the fruit of consensus and commitment.

To prosper in an economy based on know-how requires adjustments in labour skills. The new economic environment demands constant product and technology innovation. It requires using and adapting the very best ideas and the very best technology from whatever part of the world they originate.

It also requires commitment to research and development to promote new ideas and technologies that Canadians could then sell or export to other parts of the world.

No country in the world, including Canada, will achieve prosperity based on these factors by closing the door or putting up barriers to international trade and investment.

Change has a global reach on the economic scene and it affects all nations. The conditions for wealth and prosperity have changed drastically and forever for all nations.

[*English*]

Around the world countries are exploring new ways to create industries to cater to demands that did not exist even a decade ago. They are looking for new methods of training people in scientific disciplines and providing work skills to meet those new demands. They are changing some of the basic institutions of their countries in order to make them more flexible and ready to adapt to technological change.

In order to prosper in the global economy, Canada must promote high quality, improve value, apply best-practice technology and sharpen managerial skills. Above all, Canadians must become very good at fostering excellence in science and technology.

[*Translation*]

As part of the Canadian government's economic agenda, Bill C-91 will enable us to achieve this goal.

To conclude, what we have here is a well balanced legislation which enables us to bring about the necessary changes to prepare Canada for entering the global market and provides us at the same time with the necessary provisions to ensure the protection of the consumers.

I call upon all hon. members of this House to set aside the somewhat petty attitude that prevailed during the 1987 debate and be more open-minded now. We are at the crossroads of the global economy and we do need tools such as this one to promote economic development, high technology, job security and well paying jobs to make sure that we will be able, together with the pharmaceutical companies, to make major investments across the country that will total billions of dollars in a matter of a few years. We cannot do it on our own and neither can they. However together we can.

I urge my colleagues in this House to support this bill to allow such investment to be made in Canada as soon as possible.

• (1050)

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into debate on a very important piece of legislation that has just been put before Parliament.

The piece of legislation I refer to is going to change the rules of the game forever. It will affect every single Canadian consumer, affect research and development in Canada and the very survival of a two-sided drug industry in Canada, that being the patent of the pharmaceutical manufacturers and the generic industry in this country.

Before I start, I want to make it extremely clear that this debate is not about taking one side over the other, about swallowing the package of facts as they see it from the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association or indeed on the other side of it, going over to the generic drug manufacturers and taking as gospel truth every fact that they purport when they come out in support of their industry.

This debate first and foremost has to be about Canadian policy development that must, as its underlying foundation, be made in the best interest of Canadian consumers.

I would like to premise my remarks by indicating that the pressures have been great on many members of Parliament, from both sides, in this very vibrant and important industry in Canada. The Liberal Party's position, which I will enunciate today, is a position that has been agreed to after careful consideration of the facts, independent facts; after a careful review of past Liberal Party policy in this area; and, most important, after consultation with all the stakeholders and that includes the pharmaceutical manufacturers industry in Canada, the generic manufacturers industry as well as consumers, research and development and health care institutions across this country.

Before we start this great debate it is important that Canadians who are watching have some understanding about how we arrived here today. Back in the 1960s there were three parliamentary committees which reported that the average cost to Canadian consumers for pharmaceuticals in Canada was much higher than comparable economically developed countries around the world, the countries that we do our trade with.

As a result of those three reports, the then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, introduced a piece of legislation in this House. Effectively that piece of legislation spawned and saw the birth of the generic drug industry in Canada.

At that point in time they tried to moderate prices by legislating competition. What they tried to do was to say, from this point on, for drugs that are under monopolistic patent protection in Canada, we are going to try to moderate those prices because we believe they are too high for Canadian consumers. We are going to allow for those patented drugs to have a compulsory licence issue. If another company comes in and makes an application to produce a generic form of the drug it would be able to do it and in return it would give a percentage of 4 per cent of the sales back to the holder of that particular patent.

I have read the debates. The large companies and primarily the multinationals complained bitterly that they believed that that particular bill would lead to a flight of capital in research and development dollars from the large and very important pharmaceutical manufacturers in Canada.

In addition to that, they said that there would be a slippage in their percentage of market share and that these companies which must make a profit so that they can reinvest it into research and development of new products would be greatly diminished. That was the debate at the time.

What happened is that years later in the early 1980s, when there was still this cry that the compulsory licensing was abhorrent to a free market system and that it was not doing the job that it was intended to do, is the Liberal government—the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was the consumers and corporate affairs minister at the time—commissioned a study to try to find out whether or not the system of compulsory licensing in Canada was indeed detrimental to the pharmaceutical industry in Canada.

They went to a very respected Canadian, Mr. Eastman, and asked him to compile a report and to put that report to the minister and to Parliament. Something happened in the intervening years and unfortunately the Canadian population found itself governed by the Tory horde opposite after the 1984 election campaign. I will tell you

what happened when the Eastman report was delivered in 1985 it had some shocking facts in it. In 1983 alone a system of compulsory licensing was put in place by the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. The system of compulsory licensing has saved Canadian consumers about $211 million over what they probably would have paid if there was not generic competition. In addition, they had a good look to find out whether or not the legislation as claimed had a detrimental effect on the profitability of the large multinational drug companies that do nearly all of the research and development.

The Eastman report clearly found out that that was simply not the case. It found that the drug companies operating in Canada were able to maintain and indeed increase their profitability more than they were increasing its profitability in other countries where there was no generic competition. The report also pointed out that the pharmaceutical industry in Canada had lost a percentage of its market share.

At the very time that it was losing a percentage of its market share, and it was a small percentage, it also found out that its profits had increased. Therefore, it seemed that we had found the proper balance and that with the introduction of compulsory licensing back in 1967 that we had indeed created a uniquely Canadian solution to the lack of competition in the drug industry in Canada.

Not only that, as an aside, as a plus, as a bonus, we had spurred not a multinational generic drug industry in Canada, we had caused the creation of a Canadian generic drug industry, an industry that, as I said earlier, not only saved Canadian consumers in excess of $200 million in 1983 alone, but has grown to now represent about $400 million in sales and employ over 2,500 Canadians.

The experience seemed to be a positive one. If there was any question at that point in time that the system should be changed to wholesale for the sake of change, it simply was not borne out by the facts contained in the Eastman report which was tabled in 1985.

The world was changing in 1985. We had right wing governments right across the world. We had Maggie Thatcher and her Tories in England dismantling that economy. We had Ronald Reagan in the United States.

An hon. member: Who?

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Ronald Reagan, the guy who increased the food lines by about 300 per cent in every American centre, who set about to disenfranchise the poor and the downtrodden in American society and who had a free market dream that you support success and that you damn failure.

In the early 1980s there was a real change in what was going on in the United States trade department. Indeed, in 1981 the Reagan government appointed Mr. Ed Pratt to head the United States top private sector trade advisory panel. This individual is past president of Pfizer Incorporated which is a very large and very important pharmaceutical manufacturing company.

In the next few years it became very clear, when Clayton Yower was appointed as chief U.S. trade negotiator, that the number one trade irritant that the United States was raising with the Prime Minister and his Tory ministers opposite was, above all things, our compulsory licensing. It was not whether or not our steel products were going in at a subsidized rate. It was not on softwood lumber. It was not any of those things. It was on our system of compulsory licensing in Canada.

When Ronald Reagan was in Quebec City for that awful shamrock summit where we saw the spectacle of the Prime Minister of Canada not only embarrassing himself by hugging up to the President of the United States, but singing with him. It was the most embarrassing moment in Canadian history. He bellied up to the president. There was a report in the paper at that point in time that the number one issue that was raised by the VP at that point in time, who is now President Bush, was the current Tory government's slowness in getting rid of this demon called compulsory licensing.

It was pretty clear that it was way up on the agenda in the United States. What we did not know at the time and which we have subsequently found out is that this government's agenda is not driven by what is in the best interest of Canada, but is driven by this country's Prime Minister's absolute mania with being a friend of who ever is the President of the United States. Whatever is the priority of the President of the United States then becomes the priority for public policy-making in Canada. Good luck to the 27 million consumers in Canada.

• (1100)

The shamrock summit took place. They had not yet started to fish down at Kennebunkport. That was yet to come. However, the interests of Canadians in having a unique situation where we could have a patent medicine industry investing in Canada and producing new products for Canadians and a generic industry that moderated prices is going to change forever.

I want to refer back to 1986–1987, to the bill which was brought in, Bill C–22. It was a precondition for the Americans to enter into that awful free trade agreement from which we all now suffer.

A couple of the members opposite are shaking their heads. I want to quote from a document called *Pharmaceuticals, Patents and Politics—Canada and Bill C–22*. Bill C–22 was the bill that effectively changed compulsory licensing in Canada and laid the groundwork for Bill C–91, which will kill compulsory licensing in Canada.

I want to quote from this document: "During this period of time, 1986, the Conservatives continually and vigorously denied that there was any connection between the free trade agreement with the United States and changes in compulsory licensing, but the facts made their denials hard to credit".

The U.S. deputy chief negotiator in the free talks said that Ottawa did not want intellectual property to be in the free trade negotiations. They did not want to appear to be negotiating that away as part of the free trade agreement. Whatever changes they were going to make they wanted them to be viewed as being in Canada's interests. That was a high priority issue for us. We are not above flagging the importance of resolving the issue to the Canadian negotiator for the success of over–all negotiations.

I want to further quote: "The Americans gave the final proof of the linkage between the two issues the day after the successful conclusion of the negotiations" for the free trade deal, the FTA. A U.S. summary of the agreement said the accord contained a clause, "to make progress towards establishing adequate and effective protection of pharmaceuticals in Canada by liberalizing compulsory licensing provisions. It was only after Conservative politicians"—these guys opposite—"demanded the removal of that section that it was dropped from the final text". The proof is clear.

Bill C–22 back in 1987 was more about pleasing our American neighbours than it was about its stated intentions, which was to increase research and development in Canada. The government persisted. When a government has a majority, it can pretty well do what it pleases. It introduced Bill C–22 and that is the legislation we operate under currently.

What did Bill C–22 do? Bill C–22 effectively extended patent protection in Canada. It increased the level of monopolistic patent protection and allowed for compulsory licensing for about 17 years, in most cases. Do not forget that as a nation we are always trying to increase our research and development, a noble and worthy goal to set and a cause to pursue.

The pharmaceutical industry in Canada at that time said: "If we get the extended patent protection which is in Bill C–22, we know that it will extend the period of monopolistic patent protection. If that is done, we are prepared to increase the level of research and development as a percentage of the gross revenues that we are putting into Canada".

At the time of Bill C–22 these companies were only putting in about 5 per cent. They had agreed in public that they would go up to 8 per cent by 1991 and 10 per cent by 1995. The timeframe for Bill C–22 was to be from 1988 to 1995 with a cabinet review to see whether or not the stated goals were being achieved in 1991 and then a full parliamentary review in 1995.

One of the most difficult, heated, boisterous debates in this House during that time was over this drug patent legislation. The Liberal Party stood on its principles and said that before we started charging Canadian consumers for increased profits with large drug companies we wanted to make sure the seniors in this country, the provincial pharmacare programs and each and every consumer was not being unduly gouged. We believe that the system put in place by the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra back in 1967 should not have been thrown out. The Eastman report, which this government likes to quote a lot, showed that it actually was working in this country, that we had done something differently and most of all it was working.

The Liberal opposition led by our current House leader said no to the government. This was before the government ripped the guts out of Parliament so that we could not hold up legislation any more and it could do whatever it wanted. We held up that legislation for nine months, for nine solid months.

We made sure that the government had a public commitment by the pharmaceutical manufacturers for increased research and development in Canada in exchange for the extension of patent protection. We were concerned about the impact of extended patent protection in Canada on Canadian drug prices.

At that point in time we forced the government to come in with a monitoring agency called the Patent Medicine Prices Review Board. The pharmaceutical industry said: "If you give us this extended protection, we will guarantee that we will keep the increase in the price of drugs below the cost of inflation. We will guarantee that we will increase our level of R and D", that is to the levels I have previously mentioned. The government agreed that there had to be a mechanism in a more monopolistic environment to protect Canadian consumers, and it formed the PMPRB.

The Liberal Party insured that if the majority opposite forced through a bill there were some protections and clearly stated goals and objectives in Bill C-22.

One of the other things pharmaceutical manufacturers indicated was that if the bill went through and they were given this extra period of monopolistic protection, not only would they increase R and D, not only would they keep our drug costs down, but they would create up to 3,000 new jobs over the period this legislation was to be in force. That was about 3,000 new jobs at that point in time.

The results and the success of these companies in meeting those targets are highly questionable. In the fourth report of the Patent Medicine Prices Review Board, a government owned agency, clearly indicated that the pharmaceutical industry in Canada was at about 9.6 per cent or 9.7 per cent. Clearly it is getting very close and will meet that target of 10 per cent of R and D to revenue, but the problem we have and a lot of professionals out there have is the very definition of research and development.

The scientific community, is desperately in need of investment so that it can create new products, so that it can create new drugs and so that it is viable and competitive. It found that it was not getting the new money that was coming into the system. The PMPRB, in its fourth report, clearly indicated in 1991 that there was a tremendous amount of money put back into what was defined as R and D by the pharmaceutical manufacturers industry, but in actual fact basic research, the stuff that creates new drugs, new pharmaceuticals in our Canadian laboratories, was only at 26.5 per cent of all the money spent. The rest of the money it was spending in actual fact was going to a lot of clinical research and a lot of marketing. I do not think that is really high-tech R and D. The universities I have talked to said: "We have received a few bucks but not what we thought". Maybe the definition of R and D was wrong.

I want to quote today from the paper, and I cannot believe the minister did not quote it himself. There is a report today in *The Montreal Gazette*: "Few benefits from the 1987 drug patent changes, study shows". This is a report from the government's own department that was prepared—it is now in national papers across Canada—in advance of the Minister for International Trade going down to sell us out in Mexico in the North American free trade talks.

I quote specifically what it says on research and development: "There has been some improvement since 1988 in basic research, work to discover new drugs. In 1990 it accounted for 26 per cent of research spending, compared with 19 per cent two years earlier. The study suggests that Canada is unlikely to become a centre for basic drug research". To quote a government document: "In general R and D is conducted in the corporate headquarter's home country to foster closer linkages with over-all corporate policies, the study says".

• (1110)

I do not know if we got the types of jobs we were supposed to get as a result of these research and development dollars being spent. Most of them are going into other things. Most of them are going into product development. The universities have not benefited to the

extent that Liberals want those universities to benefit from the dollars that are made, the revenues that are generated, by multinational and foreign drug companies.

I said that I would quote wherever possible documents that are not from either side in the industry. The PMPRB's fourth annual report stated: "The location of significant research in the pharmaceutical industry is principally determined by the location of the parent firm's headquarters".

An OECD report entitled "Multinational Enterprise Governments and Technology" stated: "Whenever governments have tried to encourage pharmaceutical innovation in countries where it only exists at lower levels, the results have been disappointing".

Indeed and article in *The Montreal Gazette* on this very issue stated that the situation was very clearly not as it seemed. It said: "High quality jobs promised by the drug industry include cleaners".

What about the 3,000 jobs we were promised? A new report out clearly indicates that 3,000 jobs have not been created, that in actual fact to date it is slightly over 1,300 jobs and that in some parts of the industry across Canada there has been a slippage of jobs.

I want to quote again from this article. It is in today's paper. It is not something that we have dredged up. We read it in this morning's paper. It is quoting the government report about the investment in new jobs in Canada and the type of jobs that the pharmaceutical industry has actually created. It states: "In 1987 the brand name drug producers and the government predicted the new law would create 3,000 jobs by 1996. The study's authors, using figures provided by the brand name and generic drug makers, concluded that only 1,386 jobs were created between 1987 and 1990 and nearly half of those jobs were in marketing and sales with only a third in research and development", the very sector that was targeted for growth back in 1987. It did not happen. It is not there. The facts are the facts and the facts speak for themselves.

It is fairly clear that the experience with Bill C–22 has not been what it should have been. We have had the government and the PMPRB which is mandated to do three things. The Patent Medicine Prices Review Board is supposed to do three things. First, it is supposed to monitor the increase in the price of drugs that Canadians pay year over year, because the commitment given by the industry in 1987 was that it would stay below the rate of inflation.

Second, it was to do was to monitor the entry level price of drugs to ensure that consumers were not gouged by the large companies, generic or otherwise, that were to be introducing products into the marketplace at a higher entry level price than was justifiable.

Third, it was supposed to do was monitor the rate of research and development investment that had been promised by the industry.

The government and the PMPRB have come out and said that they have done their job. There is only a 3.2 per cent or 3.3 per cent actual increase in the price of pharmaceuticals in Canada, but some other compelling reports have said that the PMPRB simply has not done its job and that either it is comparing apples to bananas, there is something vastly wrong with its methodology or it just cannot do the job of protecting Canadian consumers.

The following Canadian insurance plans have reported substantial increases in the price of drugs since the passage of Bill C–22. The Ontario government pharmacare plan reports that in reality consumers are paying 13.2 per cent more for drugs in Canada, not the 3.4 per cent that the PMPRB likes to quote and that the minister opposite quoted.

Since 1988 the Green Shield health insurance company, one of the largest insurance payers in Canada for pharmaceuticals, has kept a computer record of every prescription it has paid through its insurance program. It has been well over $1 billion in claims. It says there is something wrong because the real cost is going up at 11.4 per cent per year.

The Manitoba Health Insurance Plan reports a 12.3 per cent increase per year. The fourth annual report of the government's own board, the PMPRB, says that even though price increases on existing drugs have been below inflation, which I contend is not the case, costs to consumers, third party insurers and provincial drug plans have increased at a faster rate chiefly because of the substitution of new drugs for those previously prescribed.

If the Canadian public thought it was going to get moderated increases in the price of drugs as a result of Bill C–22, we have been conned. I do not know how many times this government can say that everybody else is wrong and its board is right.

Government members should talk to the provincial health ministers. They will tell them that the actual cost of provincial pharmacare programs has gone through the roof. The New Democratic government in Ontario that claims to be first and foremost the government that wants to look after people just de-listed a number of pharmaceuticals. If people on fixed incomes or seniors get sick, they are not going to be allowed to get those drugs. This is an erosion of the universality of health care. Health care means having available to them regimes, pharmaceuticals and drugs to make them well again. That is what it means. The people on low incomes are being denied that by provincial pharmacare programs because the government's PMPRB has turned out to be a toothless tiger. It has not worked. It is clear that it has not worked.

Here we go today. We have a drug industry in Canada that was supposed to be operating under a regime. That regime of compulsory licensing was given seven years of extended patent protection under Bill C-22. The government is going to change it now. It might have done a cabinet review. They should have come to Parliament and told us if there was something wrong with the enforcement mechanisms or if their goals were no longer attainable.

All Canadians were supposed to be operating under that regime until 1995, but government members had a surprise up their sleeve. Guess what happened? They were back at the negotiating table for the North American free trade deal with their buddies in Washington and Kennebunkport. They were out fishing and the only fish that was hooked was the Canadian consumer, and it was by the American president in Kennebunkport.

All of a sudden the government decided to change the rules of the game without any substantive evidence that Bill C-22 had been effective in controlling prices or increasing the level of real research and development to what it should be in Canada. It came in with a new bill and what a bill it is.

The minister of health did not want this bill up this week. The reason it is up today is that the minister was embarrassed. He did not want it debated on Tuesday and Wednesday because he was meeting with provincial heath care ministers, the very provincial health care ministers mentioned in section B of *The Gazette* today: "Provincial health ministers join to fight drug costs". He is meeting with provincial health care ministers. The reason this bill was not up on Monday and Tuesday of this week was that it would have been an embarrassment to the national minister of health because he could not have explained away the rising drug costs to provincial governments. They put it off until the end of the session: hopefully that there would be a couple of speakers and everybody would forget what they were trying to do.

The negotiations started again with NAFTA. The government made a decision. In speaking to a group of pharmaceutical manufacturers' employees in early December the minister of health indicated clearly that they were going to harmonize with the United States and that they were going to kill that awful little beast called compulsory licensing, that beast that was saving Canadian consumers perhaps a quarter billion dollars a year in drug costs. If they did not do it then all of a sudden the multinational companies that had kept the 1987 commitment in terms of R and D would leave Canada. They were going to run off again. Where were they going? Would it be to Mexico? I do not know what they were going to do. That is what they said. They said they were going to effectively eliminate compulsory licensing altogether in Canada. They said they were going to increase effective patent protection.

An hon. member: What did GATT say?

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): That is an interesting point. My colleague over there from the consumer and corporate affairs committee says: "What did GATT say?" This is a point of contention.

The GATT negotiations have not been concluded yet. They are still hung up. There is no GATT agreement. There is a draft report which has not been accepted called the Dunkel document. That is what it is. If they are starting to put Canadian policy forward based on some foreign document with some fuzzy dates that they pulled out of their navel, the guys opposite will deserve to get kicked out sooner than later. They are supposed to be governing in the best interest of Canadians, not for their friends on the multinational cocktail circuit, which is exactly what they have done here.

What has happened here? They said that they were going to do away with compulsory licensing in Canada.

• (1120)

Not only are we going to do away with compulsory licensing in Canada, but guess what, folks? We are going to do away with it retroactively. We are going to change the rules of the game retroactively.

For generic companies that would make applications for generic licences, products currently in patent, we are going to turn the clock back. The government did not bring the legislation forward until June but made it retroactive to last December 22. The Minister for International Trade got up and said: "That is the date on the Dunkel document".

What in the name of God is the Dunkel document? It is not a document of this Parliament. It is a piece of paper that will be changed 50 times before it gets signed, if it ever gets signed. Let us not fall for that ploy.

This is what it has effectively done. This is the crux of the issue here today. Not only is it going to do away with compulsory licensing but it effectively is going to give those patent drug companies in Canada three additional years of patent protection, that is three additional years for drugs that are currently in the marketplace.

I want consumers to understand what this means. It means under the old legislation that when a company entered a product into the marketplace, drug B, they entered it knowing that quite likely if it was a leading edge drug, at the end of seven years in the marketplace there would be a compulsory licence issue. The facts are the facts, independent, both sides of the industry, wherever you look: Whenever a generic licence is issued on average, the cost to consumers for the drug drops by about 25 per cent.

We have all these drugs currently in the marketplace. They went into the marketplace expecting that after seven years they could be faced with generic competition, which would mean probably that the price would go down by 25 per cent in the last three years.

The government says: "No, no, no, no, no. For all the drugs currently in the marketplace you are not allowed to get a generic licence, and we are going to give a windfall window of profitability of three additional years to those companies". This amounts to a minimum of about $600 million in possible additional profits to foreign based multinational drug companies in Canada.

Each and every consumer in Canada who will be purchasing those drugs during the last three years when they should have been subjected to competition are going to pay through their pockets. Each and every provincial Pharmacare program is going to pay from taxpayers' pockets as well.

Increasingly, over and over again, provincial Pharmacare programs are going to have to do what Ontario did and start delisting the most expensive products.

An hon. member: It is going into someone's pocket.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): There is a lot of money in somebody's pocket and it certainly is not going to be in the pockets of Canadian consumers.

We have said that this bill is the billion dollar bonus bill for those companies, and we think it is wrong. The Liberal Party consistently has fought retroactive legislation because it is wrong. It is close to contempt of the parliamentary process.

This piece of legislation is wrong. It seeks to change the rules of the game in the middle of the script. This bill is wrong because it does not provide adequate protection to Canadian consumers, if indeed it does go through. These companies effectively have killed generic compulsory licensing in Canada.

The minister came forward today and said: "We are going to give this new and improved PMPRB", the same PMPRB that he has got up time after time in the House to defend its figures. During the press conference, he and the Minister for International Trade on June 23, when they introduced this piece of terrible legislation, admitted by their comments that the PMPRB maybe had not done its job, so they are going to have to strengthen it.

How are they going to strengthen it? They put the powers of roll back. They stripped it of its ability to issue a generic licence to keep prices down, but they were going to have the powers of roll back. I have here and I would like to table it at the end of my speech a legal opinion that was prepared for the CDMA, one of the sides in the industry, so you can take it for what it is worth.

The individual who it was prepared by is a respected lawyer in this company, James MacPherson, Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. He clearly puts out arguments on both sides as to a constitutional challenge against section 81 of this new bill, which is the section that would allow the PMPRB instead of issuing a compulsory licence to make sure there was no price gouging and could roll back. It is highly questionable in this report as to whether or not a court of law would deem that clause to be unconstitutional. If it did deem it to be unconstitutional, guess what would happen? We would have an industry in Canada which effectively could not be controlled on price increases by generic competition and the very new mechanisms, the guts of the new bill to protect Canadian consumers, could be ruled unconstitutional.

What you would have is an unregulated longer monopoly period for drugs in Canada. Who is going to benefit from that? I do not think the Canadian consumer is going to benefit and the minister's people should have known this.

There have been other cases before the courts about whose jurisdiction this properly falls into. This did not fall out of the sky. People should read it and I want this tabled in Parliament today because it is an important document. If the minister is not aware of it he should very quickly make himself aware of it. He may make a decision that he is not going to proceed with the bill at this point in time.

In addition, the Liberal Party is concerned that we have a minister of health that just yesterday, before we even started debate on this bill, agreed with provincial governments at this conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, saying that they were so concerned about the possibility of this new bill raising prices for consumers in Canada that the provincial health ministers have formed a task force to suggest amendments to a bill that had not even been introduced at second reading for approval in principle in the Parliament of Canada.

For goodness' sake we have respected lawyers coming out and questioning the wisdom. We have provincial health ministers that have already established a task force before the bill was ever debated in the House of Commons. If there was ever a piece of legislation introduced that should be withdrawn and looked at again in greater consultation this is it, but the government will go ahead.

The other thing I have mentioned is that it could be $400 million or $600 million in windfall profits for these companies. The companies have come back and said if the bill passes—and I want to be fair to them—we will invest $400 million in new investment in Canada. I do not know how we make policy in this country. I thought we made policy for the greater good of Canadians.

I do not like the approach of any industry in this country that comes and says you pass this legislation for me and I will do this. If you do not, I will not. I do not like that type of pressure being put on me as a parliamentarian because I do not think it is right.

Further, there is absolutely nothing in this bill that would compel the PMAC drug companies that do great work in this country to increase their level of research and development. If this bill does go through, and the government has the majority, we will be proposing amendments to the bill to ensure that if there are extended periods of patent protection that a higher percentage of R and D dollars to revenue is spent in Canada.

We want a more rigorous definition of what R and D is and we want some of that money put over to private sector bodies representing the universities and health care teaching institutions so that money can be invested in those facilities and so there is a net benefit to the educational system in Canada. That is what we want.

It is clear as well that this government is probably trying to kill any aspect of compulsory licensing in this country because south of the border there have been some congressmen who have said: "Gee, what are they doing in Canada? " There was a Senate committee on aging that just reported the other day. The Senate committee on aging said this the other day. They looked at the average cost of drugs in this extended monopolistic system in the United States to consumers and in some cases found the same drug in the United States where there is no generic competition before the expiration of patent.

Do you know what they found? They found that some drugs in the United States, some of the most current drugs, are up to 64 per cent higher than what they are in Canada. In the United States they are now looking at the system of compulsory licensing as a way to moderate prices for American consumers. Once again before this government goes to the polls and gets its you know what wiped by the Canadian electorate, it wants to push

through this bill to please people not in Canada, but in the United States.

The Liberal Party will oppose the bill in its present form and the Liberal Party will oppose the complete elimination of compulsory licensing. The Liberal Party will oppose any piece of legislation that effectively increases the level of patent protection in Canada without dictating and mandating that there be a greater percentage of research and development dollars in this country.

In conclusion, I want to say this debate has not been an easy one. I want to put this on the record if you will just bear with me for a second.

• (1130)

In the last 72 hours I have received more calls from lobbyists and former lobbyists in this industry who have indicated things like if we would moderate our opposition to this bill for Canadian consumers, maybe we can get some investment in Atlantic Canada.

I find that approach absolutely abhorrent. If anyone out there watching thinks that is the way the Liberal Party dictates and makes its policy, they are sadly mistaken.

In conclusion, this bill is not a good bill for Canadian consumers. It is a bill that cannot be allowed to pass as it is. The Liberal Party will continue to be vigorous in its opposition in debate in this House to protect Canadian consumers and the viability of both sides of the drug industry in Canada.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to rise and speak on this bill. It is a very significant piece of legislation and most Canadians already are aware that it is detrimental.

Unfortunately I have limited time so I cannot deal with all of the points within this bill. I want to talk about three or four significant things such as why the government is proceeding at this time, the whole question of cost, and job creation.

It is very peculiar that the government would proceed with the bill at this point. Let us take a look at how this bill was introduced. It was introduced in the dying days of Parliament in June. It was set over and is now being introduced this week when the country's focus is on the Constitution. The government was originally going to bring it in and force it through closure. It backed off because of the uproar that has already started in the country, particularly among provincial governments.

The government is pushing it forward for a number of reasons. It wants to see if it can get the jump on those opposed to this. All we have to do is pick up any paper or talk to any consumer group in this country and we will find opposition. Seniors are frightened because they know their drug costs are going up.

I will read what the Canadian Health Coalition states: "It will mean increased drug prices for consumers and even greater stress on the health care system. If hospitals and other institutions have to pay more for drugs, they will have fewer dollars for other services. The squeeze on the system will become even greater".

Other people like Walter MacKinnon, president of the Cape Breton Health Coalition, states: "The bill is a gross betrayal of the government's primary role of looking after the best interests of Canadian people".

It is not yesterday, contrary to what the previous speaker said, that the provinces' health ministers formed a task force looking at the whole question of drug pricing. They did it in their meeting in March. They had people working on this program for a number of months with a view to reporting back to the health ministers in December.

One of the reasons that this bill is being pushed forward right now is that this government wants to rush it through before the provincial deputy ministers of health could bring back their report on a national drug services formula.

Yesterday in the federal health minister's meeting with the provincial ministers, the issue came up. The provincial ministers made it very clear that they are unhappy with this bill. Lo and behold, guess who agrees with them? The person who agrees with them is the hon. minister of health for the federal government. He said yesterday: "Their concerns have a good chance of being addressed. We hope that it will be possible that it can be put in the bill". Already the minister is admitting that this bill does not address the concerns of the provincial ministers of health.

It would be much more of a proper procedure for the government, when it knows that these concerns are not being addressed, to simply withdraw the bill and then

reintroduce the bill once those concerns have been addressed.

We have had private drug plans expressing concerns about this bill. We have had labour unions expressing concerns about this bill. We have had a major legal opinion that says the guts of this bill, the very reason this government is saying that it is bringing this bill forward, which is to give the prices review board some power to do something, some powers to roll back prices, is probably unconstitutional.

Instead of doing the honourable thing and holding back this bill and referring that matter to the Supreme Court, the government has decided to push ahead. I am left wondering why. The only conclusion one can come to again is that there is a parallel between this bill and Bill C-22.

Bill C-22 was brought in prior to the introduction of the United States free trade agreement. It was a precursor that the government had made a promise to the American government that it would deal with this matter of licensing so that it would not have to be specifically dealt with in the free trade agreement.

Now we are in the middle of NAFTA negotiations, a North American free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, and here we have the government again putting through legislation to harmonize its legislation with what the United States wants. Again, it is simply because the government has made a commitment to George Bush as part of the North American free trade deal to get this matter taken up.

The minister said this bill was a balance. If he and the Conservatives think the balance is to increase cost to the consumer, loss of jobs in the industry, threatening the 2,500 jobs in the generic drug industry on the one side and on the other side increased profits for the multinational corporations, they are right on.

What I think the Canadian public has to do is go back and look at what this government promised in terms of the drug industry when it introduced Bill C-22, which extended the patent protection for the multinational drug corporations. It made a number of promises and again it is repeating these promises.

One of the things it promised was that there would be no increase in the price of drugs. It would make sure that there would be a moderation.

First of all, let us take a look at what the Prices Review Board said. It said that 40 per cent of all new drugs coming on to the market exceeded the guidelines. All the multinational companies did was bring the prices on excessively high and then increase them 3 or 4 per cent. Is that really great for the consumers? We would have been better to let them bring them on at a low price and then increase them at 8 per cent. There has been no containment of the prices.

Green Shield has documented clearly that the increase in drug prices is not the 3 and 4 per cent that the government talks about but rather 11.4 per cent.

• (1140)

Under competition, which the government normally espouses, with the introduction of generic drugs there has been a containment of costs. There is documentation showing that when there is competition for one generic drug against the patent drug, the price is reduced by 20 per cent. If there are five competitors in the generic area, the price is reduced by an average of 45 per cent. If there are 10 versions the price is reduced by 72.5 per cent.

The government, on behalf of the multinational corporations, wants to ensure that there is an extension of the patent protection so that this type of competition is not forcing the multinational drug companies to bring their prices under control.

One of the things the government talks about is making sure that the drug industry is profitable. I guess that is true. No corporation is going to stay in business very long if there is no profit. However, if you take a look at the profits of the multinational drug corporations, even in a time of downturn in the economy, they have made excessive profits.

In 1990 an inquiry into the pharmaceutical industry in Ontario found that profits after tax on equity of the pharmaceutical companies were almost 25 per cent, compared with the best in the manufacturing area of about 11 per cent. What we have here is a pharmaceutical industry that is making dramatic profits compared to any other type of investment in this country. This government is saying that it needs more protection so it can drive its profits up even farther.

Returning to the Green Shield study on this question of the introduction of drugs on to the market, which the prices review board has documented, 40 per cent of the cases in 1990 and 1991 are in excess of the prices review board guidelines. Green Shield was able to document that since 1988 costs of new drugs coming on to the

market have doubled since the introduction of the patent legislation.

What you really had was the government saying it would set up a review board but that it really had no method of controlling or monitoring the entry price. The companies have simply entered their price in a high manner and then have carried on. It has doubled since the legislation was introduced and will continue to double.

Before the introduction of compulsory licensing, Canada had the highest cost of drugs in the world. What we have here is a potential that this bill will go through, patent protection will be extended for another 10 years, the court will strike down totally section 81, saying that it is not constitutional for the prices review board to have the power to roll back prices, and what we will get is an unregulated, extended monopoly which continues to gouge Canadians, to gouge health care and to gouge old age pensioners.

When we were studying health care costs in Canada, it was documented that the fastest growing proportion of health care costs in Canada was in the drug area; not acute care hospitals, not physician services, not community services, but drugs.

We had another study looking at hepatitis B and the bringing in of a vaccine. We had a spokesperson for the drug industry appear. We asked him to explain why the vaccine for hepatitis B in Canada costs $30 a dose and you have to have three doses. It is mostly bought in bulk for $90. In New Zealand, because of a government program and because New Zealand will not accept the price the multinationals are manipulating, it is $7 a dose. We asked why there was the discrepancy, and how its drug prices were brought onto the market in Canada. He said: "It is basically what the traffic will bear, what we can get away with". This is a spokesman for the drug industry. He said: "That is how we price the drugs. We can't get away with $30 in New Zealand, but we can in Canada".

I want to turn my attention to one of the other hollow promises made in Bill C-22, and that is the creation of jobs. The government said repeatedly that there would be 3,000 research jobs, not maintenance jobs or cleaning jobs but research jobs. I want to quote a couple of statements by the then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The then minister said: "Increased research spending will generate a minimum of 3,000 high quality jobs for Canadian scientists and biochemists". That was said in December 1986. The same minister made a similar statement in November 1986, as reported in *Hansard*: "I know that 3,000 young scientists are anxious to have a research opportunity in Canada".

What do we have? What is the record of jobs under this bill? One of the reasons I am sure they are trying to rush this through is that they hoped their own report would not become a public document. However, unfortunately, like many things that the government is finding out, most things eventually surface to public light.

The report says that there are few benefits from the 1987 drug patent changes. Dealing specifically with the area of jobs, there were supposed to be 3,000 new research jobs but the report points out that there were only 1,386 jobs created and over half of those jobs were in marketing and sales. All a doctor needs is another drug salesman to come around knocking on his door with another drug sample. That is where the jobs were, in marketing, in making more television ads to convince the Canadian public of what good corporate citizens they are. That is where the jobs were created. Only one-third of those jobs were in research and development. That means that about 450 jobs were created in research and development, not 3,000 as this government talked about.

At the same time, what has happened to jobs in other parts of the drug industry? There has been a dramatic loss of jobs in drug manufacturing. Basically what has happened was that the pharmaceutical companies got the patent protection. Canada is such a small market they did their manufacturing offshore. We have become a warehouse and we then distribute the drugs.

An hon. member: That's not true.

Mr. Karpoff: The minister says it is not true but I have a list here giving specific job losses over the last two years by the multinational pharmaceutical companies. It gives them specifically: Allergan, 62 jobs in Montreal; Alcon Canada, 48 jobs; Bristol-Myers, 124 jobs lost. It goes on.

These are not the mythical jobs that the government talks about—3,000 jobs.

An hon. member: Not true.

Mr. Karpoff: The member says "not true". Not true? There is documentation listing the specific firms and the specific losses of jobs. The total is over 700, and that does not count some of the ones in which there were losses of jobs but they could not put a figure to it. For example, when American Home Products was acquired by A. H. Robins there was a loss of jobs. They were not able to document how many so they did not count them. Even without counting there was a loss of jobs.

Their own documents cannot document 3,000 jobs. Show us the 3,000 jobs in research and development. Show us where they are specifically. They cannot because they are not there. What we have is a bill that is going to protect the drug industry and is not going to create jobs.

• (1150)

I just want to turn my attention to one other thing, and that is the duplicity of the Liberal Party that stands up in this House and says that it is opposing this bill. Yet the Liberal critic for science and technology has clearly said that he and other Liberals support this bill.

Who is the chief spokesperson for the multinational drug companies? It is none other than Judy Erola, a former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for the Liberal government. She was the shepherd who was supposed to be watching the sheep, she was the shepherd on behalf of consumers. The shepherd has not only become the chief spokesperson for the wolves but she has become the chief architect of the attack plan of the wolves. That is the duplicity of the Liberals with regard to this bill.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member and it concerns the Green Shield plan and the prices review board. Is he not comparing apples and oranges? Does not the Green Shield plan cover all consumer drugs, both patented and non-patented? In fact, the Green Shield covers things like billing fees from pharmacists and so on. Does he not think it is unfair for him to compare apples and oranges by comparing the Green Shield plan? In fact, the Green Shield plan could deal with the increase in the price of medicinal brandy prescribed by a doctor because that is an item that goes through the pharmacy, while the prices review board refers only to patented medicine.

As a further question, I want to ask him what the Liberal candidates' chances might be in Montreal, given their stand and the split in their party. The Liberal science critic, who realizes the importance of intellectual property, not only in patented medicines but in other areas, has written a letter to each member of the Liberal caucus saying: "Opposition would be a serious mistake". I further quote: "In order to maintain existing jobs and obtain additional investment in today's global market we need to provide patent protection comparable to that which exists in other industrialized countries". This was reported in *The Toronto Star* this morning. That was a letter written by the member for Saint-Henri—Westmount. What does he think the chances of nominated Liberal candidates are in that area?

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, the member has asked two very interesting questions. I cannot really speculate on the last one. However, I know the chances for nominated Liberal candidates in my province of British Columbia, particularly in ridings in which there are a large number of seniors, goes down dramatically when they begin to realize that the Liberals are playing their traditional game of speaking out of both sides of their mouths.

In order to protect their seats in Montreal they are allowing their critic to issue statements so they can have something to show them in Montreal, but they will speak out of the other side of their mouths in B.C.

I do not know about their chances in Montreal, but I know that their chances in the rest of Canada certainly are not going to be enhanced by this kind of discussion.

I also think that the Liberals should speak to their former consumer affairs minister, the person who is really the architect of the publicity campaign behind the multinational corporations.

Going on to your first question, which is also very important, it is not just the Green Shield study but other studies. Various provincial pharmaceutical plans have documented the price coming on. Green Shield has documented prescription drugs coming on. It has documented the new drugs that came on at double the price and then increased.

As for this whole business of the prices review board, there is another thing that is happening around it that the public should be aware of. The multinational drug companies have found another loophole in this prices review board. Genentech was the first one to do it. It is a major heart pill that is quite difficult to manufacture. The volume in Canada is so small, in terms of a world-wide program, that it is probably really not economical for a generic drug company to start manufacturing it in Canada for a Canadian market.

It had its application in for patents. The prices review board started looking at its price and, my gosh, discovered that the price for the product was so excessive that it was going to say it was above the guidelines. The minister of health for the province of Ontario intervened. What did it do? It said: "That's fine. We will simply withdraw it from the patent review process. We'll say it is a public product. Then you cannot have any control over the price".

This bill is a long way from being passed. This bill is going to be fought by the New Democratic Party right to the end.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member for Surrey North that I know that, and I can appreciate it, this is his first tenure as a member of Parliament representing that great constituency.

My colleague, the hon. member for Dartmouth, and my colleague from Saint-Henri—Westmount had an opportunity just last week to be in British Columbia and visit that particular area of the province. The hon. member should take very serious note of the polls which reflect the high support that the Liberal Party of Canada has in that particular province, as well as in that riding.

Before the hon. member stands in his place and uses such terms as duplicity he might want to examine the full meaning of the word hypocrisy, which he has practised in this House of Commons since he has come to it.

On each and every occasion that he has had an opportunity to speak he has tacked onto the end of his speech different challenges to different political parties, knowing full well that very little time remains in order to debate that particular assertion.

Perhaps the hon. member, in his great eloquence, would stand in his place and give a clear and unequivocal undertaking to all members of this House that his friends, Ontario Premier Bob Rae, Premier Roy Romanow and British Columbia Premier Michael Harcourt will come to Ottawa and make substantive presentations before the legislative committee that is studying this particular bill.

Furthermore, the hon. member should know that the policy as enunciated by the hon. member for Dartmouth is the consistent policy that we have taken since we introduced legislation over 20 years ago with regard to this particular subject matter. If there is any hypocrisy or duplicity it is in the mind of the hon. member opposite.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The opposition House leader has been around this place a long time. He knows that it is unparliamentary and out of order to accuse individuals of hypocrisy. It is one thing to accuse political parties of hypocrisy or duplicity or a variety of other things, but it is quite unparliamentary and out of order to accuse individuals of hypocrisy. That is stated clearly within the rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to ask the hon. opposition House leader to withdraw the personal accusation of hypocrisy that he made to the hon. member for Surrey North.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I will check with *Hansard*, but I thought that the hon. member was talking not about someone in particular but in general.

Therefore I hesitate to grant the request made by the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona until I have checked the transcript of what was said in this House.

I recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to check the "blues" and tapes because I think you will find, at least on two occasions, the opposition House leader referred to the hypocrisy of the member for Surrey North. He

used the expression "the hypocrisy in the member's own mind", I believe.

If you check the tapes and find this to be true, I would ask you at some subsequent point to ask the opposition House leader to respect the rules of the House and withdraw those personal allegations.

Mr. Karpoff: It is interesting that the hon. House leader talked about my riding of Surrey North. As everybody knows it is one of the fastest growing ridings in Canada. I have spent the last four years working very hard to represent all aspects of that community. I am sure the House is quite interested that the Liberals have had a nominated candidate for the last two years running against me. She is a woman with quite impeccable credentials, who is very well known in the community and has lived there for 25 years. Of course the Liberals support gender equality, so what did they do? They just dumped her. They unceremoniously organized a meeting in which people from outside my riding of Surrey North came into the riding and dumped her, pushed her aside. That is what is happening with the Liberals in my riding.

If the hon. House leader for the Liberals wants to stand up and debate what is going on in Surrey North, I think he should have some more information. The previous candidate for the Liberals and many, many Liberals in the riding who have worked very hard for the Liberal Party for the last 20 years have come to me in the last two months and said they will be supporting and working for me. They cannot understand why the Leader of the Official Opposition engineered the dumping of a community person in my riding of Surrey North. Why would they allow the long arm of the bureaucracy of the Liberal Party in Canada to reach from Ottawa down to Surrey and dump a community leader?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Berger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege because, of course, many people have just referred to comments that I might have made and that are reported in the media today. I raise a question of privilege in order to briefly set the record straight, as I see it. If you allow me, I will be very brief.

[*English*]

I would like to respond to what the member for Surrey North said. It is incorrect to suggest I support this bill without reservation. I believe amendments are called for in a number of areas.

I also believe it is wrong on his part and certainly unhelpful to try to win points in this debate by scaring senior citizens. Clearly, added sales revenue can only come from consumers or taxpayers. I would point out to the member many senior citizens are covered by provincial health care plans. I believe we have to strike a balance between the needs for investment and the needs of consumers. That is the approach I am taking.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, with respect, that was not a question of personal privilege or anything like it. If the member wants to enter into debate on the merits of the bill or on what has been alleged he said about the bill, that is one thing. He should not be allowed by the Chair to get up on a spurious question of privilege like that and be heard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, we always smile when we see our opposition colleagues argue among themselves. Apart from that, it would be very interesting and I would really appreciate it if the hon. member for Saint-Henri—Westmount later in this debate could tell us exactly what he thinks of this bill in order to clear it up for all Canadians. It would be interesting. I hope that he will take advantage of the opportunity given him in this debate to speak out on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I hope that that puts an end to these exchanges. Hon. members will understand that until he knows whether it really is a question of privilege, the Chair must let the member concerned express himself. Messages on this have been exchanged on both sides and I consider the incident closed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: I do not know if there has been a communication breakdown or not. I thought I had explained and had consent from all three parties in the House and members who were present here when the parliamentary secretary rose to read the motion with regard to an adjournment motion, that after each speak-

er from the recognized parties had intervened in the debate this morning, we would proceed with the debate of the adjournment motion.

There seems to be some confusion with regard to members on the opposite side. I know my colleague may wish to say a few words on Bill C-91. If that is the case, perhaps we could hear him while they are waiting for the parliamentary secretary. Perhaps you can explain, Mr. Speaker, why we are not proceeding with the adjournment motion.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for being out of the Chamber when this matter arose.

The opposition House leader and I had an exchange earlier this morning. I hope we do not have to resort to the "blues" to find out, although we may need to.

My understanding of that exchange, based on my response to the question raised by the opposition House leader was there would be one speaker each at the outset on the adjournment motion. I understand second hand the opposition House leader understood we agreed there would be one speaker each on Bill C-91. That was not my understanding. That is the source of the difficulty before us.

I have not had an opportunity to make consultations on this side to see what our best course of action is, but I can assure my friend opposite there is no intention to mislead or be difficult about the arrangement. If he misunderstood me I did not intend to mislead him. The understanding I thought we had among the parties was there would be one speaker each at the outset of the debate on the adjournment motion when we got to it after Question Period this afternoon.

Mr. Dingwall: I know my friend across the way knows I know he would not mislead me intentionally, but just for the record, the parliamentary secretary is correct.

He did state in the motion, for the purposes of the adjournment and the amendment, which would be forthcoming from the official opposition, we would be one speaker per party. That is written in the motion as tabled and as spoken by the parliamentary secretary.

I thereafter interrupted the proceedings and indicated to the parliamentary secretary opposite, for the purposes of Bill C-91, there would be one speaker per party and then we would proceed with the adjournment motion.

I believe my colleagues in the New Democratic Party gave consent to that, as well as the government.

• (1210)

It was on that basis I gave consent from the Official Opposition to the motion which was so eloquently read by the parliamentary secretary.

I do not wish to make this any more difficult than it is. If the parliamentary secretary wishes, we could perhaps hear the hon. gentlemen behind him for a few moments. We might go behind the curtain and try to resolve this difficulty.

I was clearly of the understanding we would begin debate on Bill C-91 with representatives of the official parties speaking and then move immediately to the adjournment motion.

I would like to hear from my colleague from the NDP.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, if it is any help, we in the New Democratic caucus were under the same impression as our Liberal colleagues that there was an understanding there would be one speaker from each party on Bill C-91 and we would then proceed to the debate on the adjournment motion.

As the opposition House leader has suggested, I am open to hearing the member, who just left the Chamber for a few minutes, in order to have discussions, if that would be helpful, to check the "blues" or whatever. Certainly that was the understanding we had here as well.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I think we have the solution at hand.

It is not a major issue with us whether we proceed with the adjournment debate now or later. We may be prepared to move a motion as soon as we have the appropriate individual in the Chamber. Then we can commence the debate.

I think those of us Canadians who have observed the constitutional discussions have seen that when human beings communicate there is an opportunity for misunderstanding. I think we are now prepared to proceed.

Mr. Blais: I move:

That the motion be amended by adding after the word "Chair" in both paragraphs, the following:

but no later than November 16, 1992.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the minister, but we are not yet on this motion. We were still on Bill C-91, the Patent Act, when there was an exchange between the parties on how we should proceed for the rest of the morning.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. These kinds of accidents do occur.

Pursuant to our understanding on the floor of the House of Commons earlier this day, we have now adjourned the debate with regard to Bill C-91 and we will proceed to Motion No. 12. Perhaps the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs might wish to stand in his place and read Motion No. 12.

Thereafter a debate could follow and members could intervene to make their views known with regard to the subject matter at hand.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Do I understand the wishes of the House correctly? Is there unanimous consent to adjourn the debate on Bill C-91?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Hon. Pierre Blais (for the Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

> That, upon the adoption of this Order, this House shall adjourn to the call of the Chair; and
>
> That, at any time during such adjournment of the House, the Speaker may, after consultation with the Government, cause the House to sit for the sole purpose of giving Royal Assent to a bill or bills, and following each Royal Assent, the Speaker shall, each time, further adjourn the House forthwith to the call of the Chair.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, finally we have come to Motion No. 12, which has been placed on the Order Paper by the government House leader and fortunately or unfortunately we have been able to get to this motion today.

I have to say that in proposing this motion to adjourn the House without a date of return by the Government of Canada, it is making history. It is the first government since Confederation to admit on the floor of the House of Commons that it is politically and morally bankrupt. It is clear that the Latin phrase *sine die*, without a date for return, is unacceptable to those of us in the Official Opposition, as I am sure it is unacceptable to Canadians across this country.

I want members to know that I have offered, both privately and publicly, that during the duration of the debate with regard to the referendum that some accommodations could be made to keep the House of Commons and the proceedings before the House opened in order that individuals have an opportunity to express their views and for the government to take positive action to provide economic, social and other forms of assistance to Canadians.

The chief government Whip and I participated on a nationalized television program on which I offered at that time, as well as in private, that perhaps we could sit three days a week and perhaps we could undertake that there would be no surprises with regard to motions of confidence. We also agreed that we would be able to pair with members of the government opposite so long as the House would sit. The opportunity for the government to account for its policies and an opportunity for us in the opposition to provide alternatives to that policy could then take place.

That has fallen, I say quite sadly, on deaf ears.

I agree that it is essential that hon. members be given time away from parliamentary duties in order to attend the unity referendum campaign. I am not convinced that it is necessary for the House to adjourn this early in the campaign. If members of other parties tell me that their communications with their constituents have deteriorated so badly that they need so much time to re-establish them for the sake of national unity, I am willing to set aside my contrary inclination.

What I cannot understand is that the government has allowed itself to decline to a level at which it admits that it is overwhelmed by the difficulties into which it has led Canadians and that it cannot find it within itself to recommend any solutions.

• (1220)

As an example, we have in Canada today a major economic crisis which has gripped the country. We have 1.6 million Canadians out of work, we have an equal number plus who are on welfare rolls, we have students who have not had meaningful work this summer, denying them an opportunity to return to post-secondary education. We have single women who cannot afford child care and are therefore unable to enter the work force. We have fishermen without fish, we have farmers without the proper compensation for their hard labours and we have an unbelievably high incidence of urban crime in our country.

The Government of Canada has sat idly by and perhaps the best demonstrable example of sitting by and doing nothing has been the proposed airline merger between Air Canada and Canadian Pacific. We and other members of opposition parties have questioned the government continuously as to what its policy is or is likely to be. So far we have heard from the minister responsible for transport who has taken a *laissez-faire* attitude toward the situation.

We find in the west, particularly in British Columbia and Alberta, in the Atlantic, in my province as well as in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, P.E.I., many parts of Ontario and certainly many parts of Quebec that if this airline merger takes place the result will be the dislocation of thousands and thousands of jobs directly as well as thousands of jobs associated with the airline industry.

I think of the travel industry and rural communities in various airports. I will give one example, rather personal and somewhat subjective in my own constituency of Cape Breton—East Richmond. At the airport, what will happen to the employees of Air Atlantic and Air Nova?

Obviously there will be a substantive reduction. When you lose 50 per cent in an area which has unprecedented high unemployment, as in parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, the blow is triply devastating.

I find it inexcusable that the Minister of Transport would waltz into this Chamber, provide no course of action, no leadership, other than to say it is a private matter and his hands are tied, he cannot do anything. The House will now adjourn and we will not have an opportunity to make that minister accountable to the thousands of employees, the numerous communities and industries associated with the airline. We will not have an opportunity to force this minister into being accountable and to show some leadership with regard to that dossier.

Mr. Speaker, you come from an area of the great province of Quebec and you have a history in your province, a great history, but you have had a history of individuals who have served in federal cabinets as ministers of transport who have taken significant leadership when it comes to transportation in this country.

What has the present minister done with regard to the airline issue and the proposed merger? He has gone to sleep. Every analyst in this country, every worker in the airline industry knows the two major airlines were going at it like two bulls in an arena. He sat idly by. He did not call them in and say there is a public interest here and we must attempt to try to resolve this in the best interest of Canadians, the best interests of the employees, the corporations and the shareholders involved and have a meeting of minds.

That is what Jean Marchand would do if he were here today in that capacity. However, this minister has done nothing. It is not his responsibility, obviously. He is saying to this Parliament and thereby to all Canadians that he, as the Minister of Transport, has no obligation to act in the public interest.

In the city of Toronto, in the city of Montreal and elsewhere across this country we are going to find that there will be countless numbers of individuals without work who have been involved in the airline. This minister and this government will not be in the House to account for the government's inaction with regard to the proposed merger. I find that to be totally unacceptable and a demonstrable act by the government opposite of its *laissez-faire* attitude as it relates to the Canadian economy.

I take little satisfaction in the fact that in shutting down Parliament the government is reducing the amount of time available to deal further with the largely destructive list of legislation that is presently on the Order Paper. The state of the nation is such that that Parliament's being in session would constitute pressure on the government to address these problems.

If the House were sitting for its regularly scheduled autumn sittings there would be 50 daily Question Periods in which the opposition could push and probe the government hopefully into positive action. There would be, in addition, five opposition days during which we could suggest suitable courses of action. That opportunity will not be with us. For every day that the House does not sit, there is one less Question Period for calling the government to account. For every five days the House does not sit under our rules, there will be one less opposition day. If the House does not sit until after the middle of November the rules delete all of the autumn opposition days.

When the government forced the present rule changes on the House in the spring of 1991, I and my colleagues from Ottawa—Vanier and Saint-Leonard warned the Canadian people and this government that the government would find it difficult to fit its legislative timetable into the reduced number of sittings in each year. We could not foresee how remorseless its use of its streamlined closure rules would be.

The example of the demonstrable act that will live for many, many years against members opposite was just last evening when the Conservative Party, not just the Prime Minister of the day and the Minister of National Health and Welfare, killed forever universal family allowances in this country. I know the news media has given it a bit of attention. There are some out there who will say they will benefit to a certain extent. The question will be in January and February when thousands and thousands of mothers across this country will no longer have a family allowance cheque for their children. If one does not think it is important, think of the sneakers that have been purchased with family allowance cheques.

Mr. Edwards: They are getting more money.

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member opposite will have an opportunity to participate in the debate.

Mr. McDermid: Be fair.

Mr. Dingwall: I will be fair and accurate. There are thousands and thousands of Canadians in this country who need that family allowance. The government says it is going to top up some and take it away from others.

• (1230)

The reality is there are a good number of individuals who do not just want to have family allowances coming into their household each and every day. They need it to purchase the sneakers, sweat shirts, and jeans. They need it to pay for the dentist and get their hair cut. That is something I have never had to worry about like my hon. friend opposite, but that is the reality. They need the $4.50 to take a taxi to the dentist or the doctor, despite the claims from the government opposite.

An hon. member: The people who need it are getting it.

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member says that the people who need it are getting it. The hon. member's subjective interpretation of what is needed is quite different from mine.

We also could not foresee they would become so bankrupt of policy opposite they would not want to use the time available to them. We objected to the reduction of opposition days and we object now to their further reduction by doing it through the back door. If they could not do it through the front door, they are now doing it through the back door.

Once again we in the Official Opposition oppose and oppose vigorously that method of governing this great country.

No wonder Canadians are so cynical about politicians at the national level when a government, voted in by the people of Canada, acts in such an uncaring and insensitive way. If national unity were the only difficulty facing Canada one might understand the terms of this adjournment, but it is unfortunately only one of the problems.

Unemployment reached 11.6 per cent in June. It is the highest since this government took office and has remained at this unacceptably high level for three consecutive months. Since June the number of unemployed Canadians has increased by 71,000. The outlook for the future looks grim. The help wanted index declined five points in August.

Gross Domestic Product growth slowed in the second quarter of this year, posting a mere .7 per cent gain on an annualized basis. This followed a 1.7 per cent annualized rate of increase in the first quarter, making it highly

unlikely the Government of Canada will come anywhere close to its forecast of 2.3 per cent growth for 1992.

On the basis of the composite leading indicator, it is doubtful economic activity will pick up significantly in the near term. The indicator continues to inch upward at the rate of .2 per cent per month. This is not a sign of robust recovery.

Bankruptcy figures are, to say the least, an absolute unequivocal national disgrace. There have been 2,156 more bankruptcies in the first seven months of 1992 than in the corresponding period in 1991.

I practised law. I did some insolvency work. Do you know what a bankruptcy does to an individual and a family? Do you know the potential it can have to cause havoc? It can have a lasting, lasting, lasting effect.

The retail and construction industries, which are employee intensive, were particularly hard hit. Housing starts plunged 14 per cent in the month of August, almost certainly a direct result of the uncertainty in the labour market. Retail sales and manufacturing shipments have been flat and if there is an improvement one month there is inevitably a disappointment the next. There have been few, if any, visible benefits from the Canada–U.S. trade agreement and I am sad to say what we predicted did, in fact, happen. Gordon Ritchie, the number two negotiator of the free trade agreement and a government appointee has said the macro economic policies of the government "—have been highly perverse, cancelling out temporarily and perhaps permanently many of the benefits of the free trade agreement."

The government protests that the free trade agreement was one of the greatest things that ever happened to this nation. I say to them, let us run an election and let the people decide.

The government has negotiated a badly flawed North American Free Trade Agreement without a subsidies or anti-dumping code that will lead to continued harassment of Canadian exporters. The government broke its promises to provide adjustment programs for workers in industry adversely affected by the Canada–U.S. deal. It is doing nothing to prepare business and workers for the North American free trade agreement, except to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars on phony propaganda to sell the deal, which looks increasingly unlikely to pass in the United States.

Sometimes one has to get very personal to get one's message across. We have the likes of the Minister of International Trade spending millions of dollars on an orchestrated propaganda campaign to sell the North American free trade agreement, when fishermen in Newfoundland have to wait in line to get a number in order to get unemployment insurance. At the same time, farmers in western Canada worry about their compensation because of crop failures and students cannot return to university or find a job or any prospect of a job. What does this government do? It spends millions of the taxpayers' dollars to sell the flaws of the North American free trade agreement.

On any objective, national, regional or international test, one would have to conclude that kind of public policy is absolutely idiotic for Canada at this time.

Even if the North American free trade agreement does pass in the United States, that country is preparing programs to offset any dislocations. President Bush wants to expand federal job training by $10 billion, and his opponent Governor Clinton has made the expansion of job training programs a centrepiece of his platform. Despite its promises, the Canadian government produced no such programs following the Canada–U.S. deal, and it has publicly stated it will bring forward no new adjustment assistance programs in response to the North American free trade agreement.

The minister responsible for employment and immigration had the audacity to stand in this House last week and this week and try to sell to this Parliament, and thereby to Canadians across this land, that somehow the existing programs were what the government meant to be in terms of the adjustment programs. That is not what it said in the debate of 1988 prior to the federal election. That is not what it said post–1988. That is not what it said with regard to entering the negotiations in the North American free trade with Mexico round. That is not what it said then, but, again, what can one expect from this administration? Can you expect candid, honest, forthright responses to questions which are of great concern to Canadians? I think the answer is obvious to all those in this Chamber who watch our proceedings and have seen and felt the nasty hand of this negative administration.

• (1240)

Canadians in every region are suffering and no more so than in my own region of this great country. I think of my fellow citizens in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and in my own region of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia. Government policies have created unemployment, while making unemployment insurance benefits less accessible and at the same time failing to provide adequate training and retraining opportunities.

Programs for the victims of the Atlantic fisheries closures, as we all know, are insufficiently funded and hopelessly, inadequately staffed. Victims of western crop failures are denied emergency assistance. Federal policies have caused the cost of education to skyrocket, while decreasing temporary employment opportunities and student assistance, thus throwing even more young Canadians into the ranks of the unemployed.

I have never in my entire adult life witnessed such a grave summer for students as I did this year. There have been more calls and representations from parents, students, their friends and relatives with regard to the lack of employment opportunities, not only to pursue post-secondary education but any type of training. What is there? We have the Minister of Employment and Immigration saying the government thinks it is important to spend millions of dollars in advertising on a prosperity agenda. We have the Minister for International Trade saying to those very same students we have to spend millions and millions of taxpayers money promoting the North American free trade agreement.

In the face of all this, what does the government propose? It proposes to do nothing. It proposes to send Parliament away for an indeterminate period so it can continue to do nothing. For the time being, the unity issue may well predominate. I do not vigorously oppose that sentiment, but to suggest you can carve it out and place it over there as one dossier having no consequential effects, that is, the economy having no consequential effects on the national unity debate, is just not in the cards.

It may well be that Parliament should be adjourned for the duration of the campaign. As I have said in my opening remarks, we could have made some arrangements with members opposite to allow members in all of the regions. I sat through a debate and a referendum in 1980. I sat on the government side. The difference is this is a national referendum and that was the provincial referendum. What we did in 1980 could have been duplicated in 1992.

As a backbencher on the government side, I had to remain here for most of that time while my colleagues from Quebec, each and every one of the 74, went into the province of Quebec and sold the yes side to keep national unity in Canada. Arrangements were made. Numerous members from the hon. minister's party were in opposition, and I make reference to the hon. member for Yellowhead. They participated vigorously and actively in the province of Quebec in that referendum. I salute him for his efforts and contributions.

As a national institution, we cannot bury our heads in the sand and say the economy can sit on the sidelines until we resolve this little file over here.

Mr. McDermid: This has everything to do with the economy.

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member will have an opportunity to participate. The fact of the matter is that they are inter-related. Therefore the hon. member does agree with my thesis. Therefore the House should sit. The government should put forward a positive program to try to address the evils that are in the Canadian economy instead of running away from its responsibilities.

We have heard it all including the arrogance of the hon. minister opposite and, more important, the arrogance of the administration opposite: only the government has the solutions to the Canadian economy. Let us find out if the Canadian people, for instance in British Columbia, agree that the Tories have the solutions to the Canadian economy. They are at 12 per cent in British Columbia and they are doing very well in their bastion of support in western Canada on the prairies, at 20 per cent.

Their national support is overwhelming. They have all the solutions. No one else has any solutions. Their standing is at 21 per cent in the polls. Such arrogance and insensitivity by the administration has a destiny with failure during the next federal election in this country.

There is no justification for this House to agree to an open-ended adjournment. The motion as read by the Clerk of the House says that the House will adjourn to the call of the Speaker.

Canadians and those who view these proceedings must understand what is being suggested here. They are suggesting that the right hon. Prime Minister and all of those members opposite will call Parliament back whenever they feel like it, not when they should, but when they feel like it.

The Constitution says that they have to call it within 364 days. Technically, we could be adjourned for 364 days while they make Orders in Council to appoint their friends to boards and commissions. We could be adjourned for 364 days while unemployment soars. We could be adjourned for 364 days while the welfare rolls double, while Canadians who are in need of medicare are suffering, while students are without work.

It is absolutely incredible to suggest, imply, and then state on the floor of the House of Commons that we will be adjourned until the call of the Chair, until those who occupy the senior positions in the cabinet of the right hon. Prime Minister have an inkling that perhaps Parliament ought to be called back.

I do not think that is what Canadians want. I think Canadians want to know now when we are coming back. What are the proposals that the government will put forward? What will the opposition say to those proposals? What will be the alternatives suggested by opposition parties or other interest groups in the country? They want to know. This government does not care.

This government does not care about this institution. It just cares about the keys. It cares about the keys to the limousines in which the minister gets driven around each and every day. That is what he cares about. That is the only thing that the minister opposite cares about.

Mr. McDermid: We care about Canada.

• (1250)

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member opposite says he cares about Canada. That is a good statement, because I agree with him.

I think in his heart he does care about Canada. Equally so, I think there are millions of Canadians across this country who care about Canada. However, it is the responsibility of a duly elected national government to not only use its heart with regard to national unity, but it must use its head.

I suggest to the minister that he is not using his head. If he used his head he would realize once and for all that national unity is directly linked to the Canadian economy. To suggest that members on this side are not concerned about one or the other is totally absurd.

The minister finally agrees with my thesis that both are very important. You cannot say to a fisherman who cannot get enough to feed his family, you cannot say to a coal miner who cannot get unemployment insurance, you cannot say to a student who cannot find work or enroll in a post-secondary education that national unity has nothing to do with the Canadian economy.

That is reality. That is not arrogance. That is not insensitivity. That is not playing down the national unity card. That is telling it like it is.

I stood in this House not many days ago and supported the government motion with regard to the referendum. I will go to my riding and I will fight on the yes side. I will join with ministers opposite with regard to national unity, but I will not lie. I will not mislead the Canadian people.

The economy is very, very important in this debate. If ministers opposite do not realize how important it is they run the risk of upsetting the apple cart in different jurisdictions in this country.

There should at least be an early date for Parliament to resume its activities. I have offered, privately and publicly, some suggestions. I have offered an opportunity to negotiate, to try to set in motion with the government opposite a way in which we could work this out, but everything has fallen on a deaf ear.

I believe strongly in this great country and I believe that the economy is an important fundamental to the national referendum. I do not say it is the only one, but it is fundamental. Therefore, I urge members opposite not to dismiss it.

I urge members opposite to realize, as I am sure many of them do, that it is hard to sell national unity to those who are hungry. It is hard to sell national unity to the homeless. It is hard to sell it to students, as I said earlier, without work and opportunities to improve themselves.

It is hard to sell it to regions, that for years have been labelled by those in the media and by some in this Chamber as the have not regions of the country.

My province is a great province. At one time, in early Confederation, we enjoyed great prosperity. Today, in many quarters of that great province the dream of prosperity is a dream that they read about in a textbook. I think of the historic capital city of my province, Halifax. It has high welfare rolls and high unemployment. I think of my own area of Cape Breton, where the figure is beyond the national average in some quarters by three and four times—that is 33 per cent to 44 per cent.

I make this intervention highlighting the difficulties that those of us in other regions of the country—not only in the province of Quebec or in the province of British Columbia but in provinces like mine and elsewhere in this country—have ahead of us on this particular issue. I hope the House would come back at an early time to debate those concerns, hear the policy initiatives of a government, respond to the opposition and get on with the job of building a great country.

Canadians want to have a reason to vote yes, and voting yes takes in more than economic reasons. Let us be candid. The government is right on that aspect but it is so wrong if it intends to dismiss that as a major issue in this referendum campaign.

Therefore I move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by inserting between the word "Chair" and the semicolon, the following:

, which shall be for a date no later than October 28, 1992.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether you might find that disposition to call it one o'clock.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, when Canada built the national railroad from coast to coast, it was a structural way of linking each region of the country with other regions. Symbolically the Canadian railroad has accomplished much more than this. It joined the country and unified it as one nation.

The Student Unity Train will travel across Ontario, picking up students at each stop along the line. That is why it is only fitting that during these difficult times the Canadian railway system is being used as a symbol of continuing and strengthening Canadian unity.

Symbolically, the Canadian railroad is much more than this. That is why it is important that Canada's future, the students, be recognized for their efforts to join and unite this country.

Thanks to the University of Western Ontario and the University of Toronto, young Canadian students from universities across Ontario will be boarding the train in October to promote Canadian unity.

In addition, I want to congratulate the Canadian Ethnocultural Council which this morning announced it will support the Charlottetown accord but would propose some improvements to the Canada clause to meet some of their concerns.

Multiculturalism is what Canada is all about.

* * *

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians have invested a great deal of time and energy to arrive at a proposal for constitutional reform.

As we prepare for a referendum on the proposal, many of us feel that a resolution of this crucial issue is essential now. I am amazed that anyone would suggest that we place this fundamental issue aside. To suggest that we turn our attention from the Constitution to the economy is even more baffling. Political stability in any country is crucial for economic security.

The strongest action we can take to improve our economy is to vote yes in support of the proposal for constitutional reform on October 26.

* * *

CHARLOTTETOWN ACCORD

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I support the unity agreement that was reached at Charlottetown, although Canada's largest women's organization has come out against it. Everyone has the right and the responsibility to look at the accord and make their own decisions free of intimidation and threats of loss of funding.

I am confident that the accord is not in any way a threat to either equality rights or social programs. In fact, women have made some gains in this accord and social programs are guaranteed in the Constitution for the first time.

NAC has the right to voice its concerns and to have them taken seriously and discussed. I want to ask the government to refer NAC's concerns about equality rights in the Canada clause to the Supreme Court. That would go a long way to relieve the worries that some women may have about this accord.

* * *

CANADIAN VETERANS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board demonstrated their total insensitivity to the veterans of Canada with production and distribution of *The Valour and the Horror*. They denigrated the contributions to Canada and to world peace by Canadians who served our country in Europe and Asia.

Veterans have protested. Veterans are even in the process of taking action on the basis that the material is essentially hate literature and that it inflames people against veterans. Notwithstanding this, the National Film Board is carrying on its program of distribution of *The Valour and the Horror* to all who want to rent the material from the NFB.

I call on the Minister of Communications to forthwith stop the National Film Board in this distribution.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about post offices in my constituency.

Just recently the St. Vital post office was virtually totally closed and the post office brought about changes to St. Germain, a little community in the southern end of the constituency, changes for the worse, I might add. What has this government done with its postal policy? Marion Grocery, Drake Pharmacy, Metro Drugs, McCullough Drugs, Tache Pharmacy, closed, reduced or cut.

First, there were the supermailboxes, then there were increases in postal stamps with the GST on top of the postage stamps. Now, there are reductions, cuts and what have you.

Who is being inconvenienced with this kind of policy? Everyone is, but clearly people with disabilities, particularly physical disabilities, are finding it extremely difficult to go further, seniors as well and business people too. These people will remember them.

[*Translation*]

Yes, they will remember their policy.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for their decision last February to allow first-time home buyers to purchase a home with a 5 per cent rather than a 10 per cent down payment.

During the seven months that have passed since the program was initiated, it has been used by some 42,600 home buyers and 73 per cent of those purchasers would not have been able to buy a home without this program. It has been used most by couples in their late twenties who have an average household income of between $30,000 and $60,000. Almost 60 per cent of the buyers to date have been renters for more than five years, and 18 per cent have been renting for more than 10 years. Clearly this program has been a success, not only because it has increased home ownership, not only because it has increased the supply of available rental

accommodation, but also because it has increased consumer spending and helped to create badly needed jobs.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Amid the hustle of the October 26 referendum date lurks another looming deadline, the renegotiations of the Montreal protocol. I would like to remind this government that we cannot afford to put life on hold for the next six weeks and lose sight of other important issues facing this country and our world.

Canadians have had ample evidence of the disappearing ozone layer this summer. Sunburns and sore eyes were common complaints for most of us. As I have frequently warned, Canada's location in the northern hemisphere means we feel the effects of ozone loss more than most peoples of the world.

In spite of this, the Canadian government will not support the U.S. proposal to phase out methyl bromide. This highly toxic chemical is estimated to break down the ozone at 30 to 60 times the rate of CFCs. The Americans know this must be banned, but our government is wimping out and supporting only stabilization.

Without firm phase-out dates, no alternatives or substitutes will emerge. We will continue to fiddle while the ozone burns.

* * *

FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, foetal alcohol syndrome is a matter of great concern. I have risen often in the House to address the major and often tragic problems that are involved.

The health issues committee released the FAS report in June of this year calling for government action to help battle this devastating condition. I am pleased the government shares this concern as it mounts the first national symposium on foetal alcohol syndrome to take place in Vancouver from September 30 to October 2.

I personally congratulate the minister of health for his efforts to take one of the recommendations of the committee's report and make it a reality. I believe that the symposium will be a positive step toward the goal of eliminating this national tragedy affecting so many Canadian children and families. The workshops, speeches and panel discussions will assist in educating the medical community as well as provide support to those who are fighting on the front lines against the foetal alcohol syndrome.

There is more that must be done, and I hope the other recommendations of the report will be implemented as soon as possible.

* * *

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, here in this House out of 295 seats, only 40 are held by women. While that indicates a steady improvement, clearly we have a long way to go. I support efforts to encourage the participation of women in politics, but I have concerns with a system whereby seats are designated for women.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has decided to oppose the Charlottetown constitutional agreement, in part due to the lack of a quota for women in the Senate. I disagree with their position. While we should look at ways to encourage more women to run for politics, I believe that in a democratic process women should get elected like everyone else, based on their merits and their abilities. I believe that many women have an important contribution to make to this country, but in my view there are better ways to improve the participation of women in politics than instilling a quota system.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to praise our government's decision to invest once again in the potential of young

people in our society. The plan is to inject $24.6 million into the Co-operative Education Program.

In addition to being given an opportunity to use the knowledge acquired in school, students will also be able to acquire job experience. These young high school students will have a chance to give the private and public sector the benefit of their dynamic approach, while the latter will be able to give students the benefit of their experience and know-how.

• (1410)

It is imperative to invest in tomorrow's generation. Our government realized long ago that in an increasingly competitive world, we must give our young people all the tools they need to maintain the level of excellence of this country.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, Canadians face an important test with a single question. It is a test which will challenge their vision, their understanding and their hopes for this great country.

Like many others in this Parliament I will be saying yes on October 26, not because the Charlottetown agreement is perfect. It is not. It is, however, an agreement forged from a Canadian tradition of compromise, tolerance and generosity which is recognized and respected around the world.

It is an agreement which allows all Canadians to say yes, yes to a new constitution recognizing our diversity and addressing historic grievances, yes to a new social contract which is an example of people from disparate backgrounds living and working together in harmony, and yes to a constitution which allows us to move forward with confidence to confront the challenges of a global economy.

I would encourage my fellow Canadians to reflect deeply on how they will meet the challenge on October 26. I will be saying yes to Canada.

S. O. 31

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, it is welcome news for communities along the Canada-U.S. border, including my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, to see figures indicating fewer same-day trips to the U.S. compared with the same period last year.

In spite of the news, I remain adamant that it is far too early to claim victory over the cross-border shopping war. Progress has been made, but governments and other stakeholders must not lose sight of the fact that our retailers in border communities are still losing billions of dollars in sales across the border.

One area for continued action must be the elimination of third party tariffs. Those already removed by the federal government were indeed well received by our local retailers, especially on electronics. This has led to lower prices in Sarnia—Lambton.

The Retail Council of Canada has submitted an extensive list of further products for tariff removal to the Department of Finance. I urge the finance minister to give serious and immediate consideration to these proposals. I am convinced that this is the type of ammunition which our retailers need and require to help them to do battle on the cross-border front.

* * *

RAILWAYS

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, it is happening again. First, there were three airlines, then two, now one. At one time in this country, there was a multiplicity of railroads, then there were two. Now CN and CP are beginning the process to make it one.

CP has announced that the two carriers are close to a merger of their Ottawa Valley lines. They are going to set up a new company to maintain this line, while each carrier would pay to use it. Is this the beginning of the ultimate merger of the two companies? I believe the answer is yes.

This merger, like that in the air, is a direct result of government policies, deregulation and taxation. Will this government ever learn that the population of Canada can only sustain one of each of the modes? I hope they learn before it is too late.

Oral Questions

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, this government has a responsibility to Canadians to reregulate Canada's airline industry. The proposal to merge Canada's two airlines is to deny Canadians access to a safe, affordable and serviceable air industry. The present proposal will affect not only the flying public but also the thousands of Canadians who stand to lose their jobs.

When deregulation was introduced in 1987, it promised increased competition which would bring lower prices, better service and a stable industry. Instead, Canada has lost several of its established carriers, almost 9,000 highly skilled jobs and has two airlines facing huge operating losses and a massive combined debt load of $4 billion, thanks to destructive, predatory policies of this government.

We, on this side of the House, have been warning the government that an airlines crisis was imminent, given the effects of deregulation and high operating costs and taxes. Yet the government has tried to portray this merger as a private matter.

This government must reregulate to ensure the industry operates in a Canadian-controlled, competitive market environment, maximizing affordable, accessible and safe air travel for Canadians.

* * *

PERSONS CASE

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, the annual Governor General's awards in commemoration of the persons case will be presented on October 20, 1992. The awards commemorate the lengthy political and legal battle that culminated in October 1929 with women winning the constitutional right to be recognized as persons.

The persons case was an historic milestone in women's efforts to achieve equality of opportunity in all of society's endeavours.

In 1979, on the 50th anniversary of the persons case, the Governor General's awards in commemoration of the persons case were created to recognize the outstanding contributions toward promoting the equality of women in Canada.

To date there have been 71 recipients of the award. This year's recipients are of equally impressive calibre. The awards publicly recognize the history of women's advancement in Canada. I am sure I am joined by all members of this House in saluting the efforts of the awards recipients past and present.

* * *

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, on a day when Parliament is about to adjourn for so many weeks, it is incumbent on the Official Opposition to raise once again the plight of youth unemployment, running at about 20 per cent across this country and in my home town even higher than that.

It is unacceptable and unthinkable that the Government of Canada would allow unemployment to run so high and not take any remedial measures. This country has had a series of youth programs to meet high unemployment in the youth in past decades and in more recent times through Katimavik, the Company of Young Canadians, and various other summer and winter employment for young people.

From the benches of this side of the House, once again we raise our voice to ask the government to take remedial action to deal with this social problem that is so acute and so impending on everybody. Take the necessary action and reduce youth unemployment in Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Canadians have watched with great concern developments in the international currency markets over the past 48 hours. Now the Bank of Canada has responded by increasing interest rates for the second week in a row.

Is it the view of this government that this crisis marks the end of declining interest rates in Canada? What plans does the government have while we are still in a

recession? We still have 1.6 million Canadians unemployed and interest rates appear to be on the upswing.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the opposition did not stand up for the last 19 weeks when bank rates were dropping each and every week.

The interest rate increase today of 20 basis points is a reflection of the interaction between the exchange markets and the money markets here in North America.

We do not expect with the settling of the situation in Europe interest rates to rise significantly. I might say to my hon. friend that with the rise in the bank rate, we do not think this will precipitate a rise in the prime rate or the mortgage rates that are being loaned to the public today.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that unlike the government, this party has been standing up for the unemployed for a long time.

Yesterday in the House of Commons the Prime Minister took great delight in quoting International Monetary Fund projections for Canada's economic growth and inflation rates. One IMF forecast he neglected to quote was the forecast for unemployment in Canada.

The IMF says that next year Canada is going to have the highest unemployment rate of all G–7 countries. In light of this fact, will the Acting Prime Minister and the government introduce a major job creation program in Canada, as has been requested by the Leader of the Opposition for the last number of months, to get this economy working again?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, artificially priming the economy is not the answer. That has been tried before and it has not worked. I might remind the hon. member, since he is talking about the IMF and about employment, that he neglected to mention to the House and to the people watching today that the IMF projects that the largest employment growth taking place in Canada will be dramatically much larger than in all the other G–7 countries in the report.

• (1420)

I might also draw to my friend's attention the quote from the IMF report yesterday. "Canada's economy should rebound more rapidly in 1993 than any of the other major industrialized nations". It goes on to say: "A solid foundation for a strong economic expansion seems to be in place", the report said about Canadians, citing "a wide margin of unused resources, substantial progress in reducing the structural budget deficit, an inflation rate that is the lowest among the major industrialized countries and sharply lower interest rates".

That is good news. We believe in good news, not pessimism.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. minister has availed himself of the opportunity to refer to international reports.

I am sure this minister and this government are aware of a report released this week by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development which advised industrial countries to increase spending on public works to help get the world economy moving again.

In light of this report and in light of the thousands of jobs it would create, why is the Government of Canada dragging its feet on creating a national infrastructure program for this country which would put thousands of Canadians back to work? Why is it dragging its feet?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister have made it very clear that in co-operation with the provinces there is a plan now to work on the national highway system.

The ministers of transport are meeting today in Quebec City to discuss this issue and to work on those plans that the federal government is committed to. I am sure that announcements will be made at the appropriate time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Acting Prime Minister.

While the government is spending millions of dollars on a subjective advertising campaign touting the benefits

of free trade with Mexico, Statistics Canada informs us that manufacturing shipments dropped over 2 per cent in July alone.

Why does the government not include in its advertising campaign—the brochure that it sent to everyone across the country—the fact that we had a $2.1 billion trade surplus in 1983 and that today we have a deficit of nearly $30 billion? Why would it not tell the truth once and for all?

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend's question gives me the opportunity to report to him Statistics Canada revelation this morning that we have had our sixth straight month of increased exports for Canada.

Two further statistics emerged. This sixth straight month means that we are running about a $19 billion surplus this year. We will be having the highest surplus that we have ever had because of it.

Finally, when one looks at numbers more carefully and when one looks at the manufacturing sector, what happened in 1991 since the trade agreement, compared with 1988, is that manufacturing as a proportion of our over-all exports has increased from 24 per cent to 26 per cent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, the minister would have everyone believe that things are going well by giving us positive statistics, but I would like to give him one so that he can explain it to us.

If the statistics that he is giving us are true, why have 27,000 manufacturing jobs been lost since the free trade agreement was implemented? A quarter of these jobs have been lost in Quebec in the last three months.

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member of something he may not have noticed. There is a world-wide recession going on which has reduced the manufacturing output of virtually every country in the world including Canada.

I should have taken my hon. friend with me this past summer because every week for 19 weeks I opened a different plant across Canada that was expanding or increasing its capacity. These plants had two characteristics. First, they were manufacturing plants. Second, they were high-tech plants and, third, they were all exporting about 80 per cent of their production.

This part of our economy is growing. It is helping to lead us out of what has been a very difficult economic period.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my questions are related to the North American free trade agreement and I would like to direct them to the Minister for International Trade or a spokesperson today.

Recently Carla Hills admitted to the Senate finance committee in the United States that some industries in the United States would lose jobs because of the North American free trade agreement.

Yesterday another high ranking U.S. official told the Senate that 11 industries including the steel, chemical and refining industries would find substantial incentives for relocating facilities to Mexico.

With the Americans being this candid, will the minister stand and inform the House whether or not his government has done these same kinds of studies and notify all Canadians if the same industries will be affected in Canada?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Hockin, I wish I did not have to do the hon. member's homework for him.

We have published market development studies on NAFTA. All of them indicate very significant opportunities. This market is only 1 per cent of our exports so it is not going to make a tremendous difference overnight.

Let me just tell him that the market development studies are there for him to read: telecommunications equipment, electronic components, tourism, hotel and restaurant equipment, shipping documents, customs regulations, oil and petroleum industry, machine tools, forestry, harvesting, automobile industry and agricultural equipment. I think there are 22 different reports here.

Every one foresees increased export opportunities for Canada.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I hate to upset the minister on a nice, quiet Thursday, but he did not answer my question regarding my research and I am shocked. The minister speaks about one page in the report. I want to address another specific question to the minister and I hope he answers it.

The North American free trade agreement has called for a 62.5 per cent content for all manufacturing of automobiles sold in North America without tariff restrictions to be built in North America under this agreement. There is nothing in this agreement to stop the flow of capital for a new capital investment in the North American agreement to be attracted to Mexico because of low wages.

What has the government decided to do as policy to guarantee that the existing jobs here in Canada in the auto industry are not shifted to Mexico because there is nothing in this agreement to stop that from happening?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I have told my hon. friend this before in the House and outside the House, but currently 86 per cent of all our imports from Mexico in the automobile parts sector have no tariffs against them whatsoever. If the Mexicans were going to put us out of business on the automotive sector, they could have done it last year, the year before, or this year.

The other 14 per cent of the tariffs are minimal. The problem we have with Mexico is that it has tariffs against us. It has quotas against us. This agreement over 10 years gets rid of those tariffs and almost immediately gets rid of most of the quotas.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, the only documented authoritative research production that I have seen was done by Professor Harley Shaiken at the University of San Diego in California. He points out a simple fact at the end of his research. All in costs for automobile production and parts production in Canada are $32 U.S. per hour. All in costs for the United States are $36 U.S. per hour. All in costs for Mexico are $4.80.

Have the government and the minister insisted on a fair and level playing field and, to maintain the investment in this country on that basis, have the government and the minister insisted that Mexican wages come up to ours rather than ours going down to theirs?

• (1430)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am going to see if I can find the article of last May. The chairman of Siemens in Canada, a large auto parts and electronics producing company, gave a very interesting interview in which he said that he was going to concentrate most of his expansion in Canada rather than in the southern United States or Mexico. He said the reason he was going to do it was that labour was only about 13 per cent of the cost of the production of his product.

What makes his product competitive is technology, skills and labour turnover. He finds that his labour turnover rate is about one-tenth in Canada of what it is in Mexico or the southern United States.

As a result of that he has confidence in this country. He projected 9,000 jobs for his firm alone in Ontario. Instead of expanding in Mexico or the U.S., he has chosen Canada.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for whoever is acting for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

A new school year has just begun but for many young Canadians rather than lining up to pay tuition fees they will be lining up for welfare or to register for UIC. Thousands of students lack the funds to continue their education.

What does the government plan to do to help these students continue their post-secondary education?

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 believe that a similar question was asked of the minister of employment yesterday. The minister did underline the fact that Canada is probably the second country in the world that invests the most in education with respect to the many students we

have in Canada. Therefore I do not think we should have any shame.

With respect to whether or not there is more to be done, obviously we have the training programs in place to which my hon. colleague seemed to allude when he said they would be waiting in line, a program that was delayed for more than a year by that party.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon the House of Commons will be adjourning for the referendum campaign.

I would like to know from the minister what the government's agenda will be to deal with the unemployment problem over the next six weeks. Specifically what does this government plan to do to help the 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed?

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 government did not wait for a referendum campaign to put the programs in place in order to deal with that situation.

The hon. member should take the time to look at the programs and to look at the increase in the funding of those programs that was put in place by my colleague, the minister of employment, over the year, notwithstanding the obstruction of that side of the House.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In Cape Breton the unemployment rate is over 22 per cent. Many would say it is much higher. A great number of people are going to face a very bleak winter. The government has had appeals to increase the amount of job creation funding. If they do not have an increase the money is going to be exhausted before the end of the fiscal year.

Will the government recognize the difficult situation that exists and increase job creation funding today?

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 I have indicated to another college on the other side of the House, the minister has already increased the funding in the last budget, notwithstanding the fiscal situation that Canada faces in a world recession. I am sure the funding that was provided, again notwithstanding the obstruction for over a year in putting the program in place, will deal with those situations.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the government has done nothing. I am going to suggest something the government can do without it costing anything.

Those who are receiving unemployment insurance cannot attend university or training programs because they would not be available for work, but there is no work. Will the government, at least during this period of high unemployment, and particularly in areas of very high unemployment, allow those who are on unemployment insurance to attend training programs and university so they can at least have the training to make them available for the work when it does occur? It will not cost the government anything. Will the government do that?

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I inform my hon. friend that program is already in place under the fee payer program. I suggest that he contact his constituents and ask them to go to the Canada Employment Centre and apply under the fee payer program. He will be surprised how successful that can be.

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NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism who I believe is acting today for the Minister for International Trade.

Water is clearly a good as that term is used in the NAFTA. It appears as item 2201.90 in the draft tariff phasing schedule. In the absence of any specific exemption for water from those sections of the NAFTA which limit or prohibit government restrictions on the exports of goods, such as those in article 309, Canada's policy of

preventing large volume fresh water exports will run afoul of Canada's commitments under the NAFTA.

Can the minister identify any provision in the NAFTA, not in Canadian policy but in the NAFTA, which would exempt a government restriction on fresh water exports of any kind from those sections of the deal limiting governments' rights to control exports of goods?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his very academic and somewhat convoluted exposition. I assure him very briefly that under NAFTA large scale exports of water will be the following: zero.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, as water is clearly included in the tariff schedule as a good, and since the minister seems unable to point to any provision in the NAFTA exempting Canada's policy of prohibiting bulk fresh water export, in light of the NAFTA what steps can the minister take to ensure that Canada's no-bulk exports policy will always prevail over American thirsts?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his party raised this issue over and over against the FTA when the FTA came forward. It was phoney then and it is phoney today.

Here are the provisions under NAFTA: as in the FTA, only water packaged as a beverage or in tanks is covered in NAFTA and water itself was not discussed during the NAFTA negotiations with the United States and Mexico.

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GIANT GOLD MINE

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Labour.

It has been four months since the strike began at the Giant Gold Mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The federal mediator has long since flown the coop. Negotiations have been halted. All this government's efforts have clearly failed to resolve the crisis.

The government has obviously taken a holiday on resolving this crisis. Will the minister or the acting minister act responsibly and meet with the union members who are anxious to get back to the bargaining table now?

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, in response mediators have met with both sides, but they have not been able to come to a resolve. We all know that the length of this work stoppage is certainly causing concern to the community.

I would also like to advise the member that a request from the union has been received re appointment of an industrial inquiry commissioner. That is one of the latest developments in this situation.

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same acting minister.

This has been recorded as one of the most violent strikes in Canadian history. Replacement workers continue to be flown in while striking workers and their families continue to struggle. The strike is taking a devastating toll, as my hon. colleague has indicated, on the community and the economy.

These people are asking for the minister's help. Will the minister act on the request, finally take the necessary action and call for an industrial disputes inquiry now?

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the minister has received a request from the union for the appointment of an industrial inquiry commissioner. The appointment of an industrial inquiry commissioner under section 108 of the Canada Labour Code, Part I, is rarely if ever done in protracted collective bargaining disputes.

• (1440)

I want to tell the hon. member, who is greatly concerned and interested in this dispute, that it is being looked at in great detail to see if that can be a consideration to hopefully help with this problem.

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CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport or the parliamentary secretary.

On June 12 the Minister of State for Transport told this House categorically that no jobs would be lost in the town of Prescott due to restructuring in the coast guard. Since then it has been announced that 20 per cent of the coast guard workforce in Prescott will be eliminated.

The minister also announced that she would write to all coast guard employees in Prescott to reassure them that their jobs would continue in Prescott.

What is the minister going to say now that these jobs will no longer exist in Prescott, after I and the public were given assurance to the contrary?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I do not have full details of the situation. I will refer the hon. member's question to the minister and she will get back to him in due course.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, these confused messages we are getting are little comfort to those who are seeing their lives in such uncertain terms in the town of Prescott. Living with this uncertainty has gone on plenty long enough.

I want to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport this question. Could I get some assurance today that the restructuring of the coast guard in Prescott will be reviewed, based on the assurance I was given on June 12 in the House that no jobs would disappear. It has now been announced that 20 per cent of the coast guard employees' positions in that town will disappear early in 1993.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to give the hon. member my assurance that I will direct his worthy concern to the minister for her consideration.

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RAILWAYS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Members of the House will recall that this summer I released an internal CN document which pointed to a great many of the troubles it is experiencing as a result of deregulation and free trade.

The document spoke about the possibility of further consolidation with Canadian Pacific. It talked about selling off the CN Tower as one of the ways of solving CN's financial problems and hinted at things having to do with privatization, et cetera.

Will the Acting Prime Minister make a commitment in the House today that the government will not do as it has just recently done with the troubles in the airline industry, and that is simply take a hands–off approach and allow the two Canadian railways to disappear or to merge, or in some other way to become other than what they are.

Will it take a hands–on approach, finally see the error of its ways, re–regulate and strengthen the Canadian transportation industry, and particularly rail?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continually wants to rush backward into the past. The government is permitting the airline industry, the two companies involved which are privately owned, to work out their problems. We are assisting them where we can reasonably do that.

In the case of Canadian Airlines we agreed to purchase three aircraft from it, which will help it with its cash flow problems very considerably. After that it has to work out its own problems the best way it can. It is responsible for doing that itself.

With respect to other elements of the transportation industry, and the two railways in question, the government will observe its public obligations. The National Transportation Agency will carry out its duties and I know of no emergency that is affecting the two national railway lines at the moment.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, a past in which a great many people, in fact tens of thousands of people, had jobs on the railway when it was regulated, and when the government had a commitment to maintain it, does not look so bad to me or to a great many of my constituents, I can tell you.

It is not just a question of the past, so–called, so caricatured by the minister, it is also a question of the future and the fact of rail as the environmental choice when it comes to moving goods across long distances. This government is allowing that mode to deteriorate by virtue of its lack of action.

When will the minister make a commitment to the future? Instead of sitting on its hands, when is the government going to do something about revitalizing the rail industry in this country by regulating it so that it can be the preferred mode?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is a real example of a modern day Luddite. The main energy source for the railways used to be coal. At that time you had to have people shovelling coal to keep the coal in the engines. Fewer people work for the railways today because they are no longer powered by coal. They use diesel oil. You do not need people handling shovels to put coal into the engine.

The hon. gentleman wants to blame the government because the world economy changed, its energy sources changed from coal to oil. That is what the hon. gentleman is asking us to do.

I remember the cries that came from the opposition when the car shops closed in Moncton. As a result of our government policies and regional economic development, Moncton today is booming with new energy, new opportunities seized, because of the help given to them by ACOA. The car shops are long gone, but Moncton is doing better than ever.

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PRODUCT LABELLING

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, my question today is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In the United States when a person buys cosmetics, skin care products, sun tan lotion, et cetera, they know exactly what they are getting because the ingredients are listed on the labels. This is important for a person who is allergic to certain ingredients.

What is being done in Canada to ensure that Canadians will have the same information?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. Many Canadians suffer profound, untoward side effects from cosmetics.

A cosmetic is neither a drug nor a food. Therefore, there is no legislation to force companies to list the ingredients. However, I have to say that over the past five or six years there have been many concerns brought before the Department of National Health and Welfare's health protection branch with regard to specific labelling of cosmetics.

In the United States it was enforced in 1977. We issued an information brochure in 1989. The minister does have it under review and is consulting the industry, the consumers' advocates and the people of Canada.

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JOB TRAINING

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Last spring over 1,000 workers were laid off at Denison Mines in Elliot Lake. At the same time that these workers were being laid off, the government was slashing its local employment training programs by some 75 per cent.

Why is the government willing to spend millions of dollars to provide income support through the unemployment insurance program, but flatly refusing to provide any training? These men and women are coming into UI benefits now, but there are absolutely no funds. Why is the government refusing to provide training dollars for this community which has suffered so much?

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows in the last budget that funds for training and retraining initiatives under the Canada manpower act have been expanding on a continuous basis. We have been increasingly finding the money with the help of the Minister of Finance to do this.

It is really unfair for that member to say that unemployed people are not given the opportunity to take further training for new jobs. That is happening and it is happening right across the country.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely, categorically wrong. The training dollars in the Elliot Lake manpower office have been slashed from $2.5 million to $600,000, a 75 per cent cut.

• (1450)

Some hon. members: Shame.

Mr. Foster: At the same time, 1,000 more people have been laid off at the uranium mines alone.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary, speaking on behalf of the minister, when new moneys are going to be put in? Will it be January 1, when the UI training dollars become available?

I want a commitment from him that he will provide at least $1 million more additional training dollars to that CEIC office January 1. Can he give that commitment this afternoon and give these unemployed workers some hope? Can he do that?

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. friend, and I would like to reiterate what I just said, that this government is committed to helping as many Canadians as possible to get the training they need.

This commitment is shown in the $3.5 billion available this year. This is a $450 million increase over last year. More than 190,000 UI claimants received training under section 26 during 1991, of which 39,000 were fee payers. In 1992 it is expected that about 300,000 UI claimants will receive training under section 26, of which 85,000 will be fee payers.

There has been an increase of some 46,000 fee payers over last year. Demand on the government is extremely high this year. We know that. We cannot help train everyone, but we are attempting with the dollars that we have and with the increases we have put in place to do the very best we can possibly do.

We are doing that right across the country, not only in Elliot Lake.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Conservative MPs on the House consumer committee put an end to what was left of accountability by killing hearings on the proposed CP–Air Canada merger.

I want to ask the consumer and corporate affairs minister if he has figured out what he intends to do to defend air travellers against monopoly pricing and whether he will share his thoughts with this House.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): I think that at this stage the Bureau of Competition Policy and its director have all the necessary resources to examine the issue of competition in the airline industry, Mr. Speaker.

Canada's two major airlines have announced they are planning a merger. So far, no formal request has been submitted to the Bureau of Competition Policy and this was confirmed by the bureau's director. One cannot examine something that is not yet on the table. The Bureau of Competition Policy will take all necessary steps to ensure that competition is maintained in this country, but the proposed agreement must first be finalized and submitted to the bureau.

In the past, we have always acted very prudently because the Bureau of Competition Policy is a quasi–judicial body that acts independently from the government. I do not intend, and I hope my colleague does not intend to suggest the government should interfere with the bureau's work.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): What I intend to do is to ask the minister about his government's policy for defending Canadian consumers. Canadians want to know.

The minister keeps hiding behind the Bureau of Competition Policy, but Canadians want to know what the government's policy will be on maintaining competition. Or has the minister not had enough time to think about it yet?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): I do not think that rhetoric of any kind is helpful to debate. I imagine the hon. member knows the Competition Act, so he also ought to know that the director of the Bureau of Competition Policy acts independently of the government.

I do not intend to interfere with the work of the bureau's director. I said, and so did my colleague, the Minister of Transport, that as soon as a definitive merger plan is submitted by the airlines, it is our responsibility to let the National Transportation Agency and the Bureau of Competition Policy make a complete and exhaustive study of the merger plan and ensure that Canadian consumers are protected and competition is maintained.

We intend to do just that, and we do not intend to interfere with any of the duties of these two bodies.

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[*English*]

VETERANS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Communications.

The minister will know that veterans' organizations right across the country are incensed about the CBC production *The Valour and the Horror*, co-produced with the National Film Board.

Veterans' organizations have caused a hearing on this matter in the other place. There have been objections right across the country but the film and the material are now being distributed to all comers by the National Film Board; to every school and every library. Whoever wants it can rent it, can get it.

I was wondering if the minister would stand up and announce in this House he is going to interfere with that distribution, certainly at the present time.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as with all National Film Board productions, *The Valour and the Horror* is also available for purchase and rental in thirteen NFB public distribution centres across the country.

As producer and public distributor of films and videos, the National Film Board has complete autonomy in its creative decisions. I think that since it was created, the board has made a name for itself on the basis of quality and Canadians are very proud of the National Film Board's production.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The Secretary of State's chief of staff is on record as having threatened a women's organization by withholding its funds unless it shuts up about the referendum. All Canadians have a right to express themselves on this very important issue in our free and democratic society.

Will this government state clearly that this kind of intimidation by senior government staff will not be tolerated? Will it guarantee to put a stop to this intimidation immediately?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Secretary of State I would like to assure my colleague that he in fact is meeting at this very time with the Fédération des femmes du Québec to clear up any misunderstanding which may have come about as a result of that conversation.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the tape we heard last night did not leave any room at all for any kind of misunderstanding.

We know that many groups which receive government funding will be campaigning on the yes side, which is the side that I will be supporting. There is a democratic principle at stake here, a very important democratic principle about freedom of expression and the right to state your position.

I would like to hear that the government will immediately put a stop to the kind of intimidation that was clearly stated for the public to hear.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that there will be no intimidation.

As parliamentarians and ministers, we have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Canada that moneys voted by Parliament are in fact used for the specific purposes within the criteria that is required.

That is what the minister is going to assure himself of and I am sure will clear up any misunderstandings on this matter.

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IMMIGRATION

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Employment and Immigration whom I have advised that my constituent, Nuru Haider, has been told by immigration officials to leave Canada early next month with or without her Canadian born 15-month old daughter and to return to

Kenya where in the past she has been assaulted and gang raped by the police.

Is the minister prepared to allow Ms. Haider's husband, who is a landed immigrant and who has a job here, to renew the sponsorship of his wife that he temporarily withdrew or alternatively, will he issue a minister's permit on humanitarian and compassionate grounds? This is much more than just a refugee issue. This is a women's issue.

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 will take notice of the question of my hon. colleague and transmit the information to the minister of immigration who I am sure will get back to the hon. member as quickly as possible.

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• (1500)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Finance.

The House and Parliament are adjourning later today until late this year. The Constitution is on the front burner of Ottawa and the country. Winter is approaching and we have an economic recession that is painful for all Canadians. It is merely going along its way without any sensitive and substantive response from this government.

Now that Canada enjoys the highest unemployment record along with another country of the G–7 and next year that award will be solely ours, how can this government be indifferent to the economic pain of Canadians and when will it begin to stimulate and kick-start Canadians on putting them back to work so that this country can once again resume its rightful position in terms of economic prowess?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I guess the hon. member came a little late to Question Period because that was the same question which was asked by his colleague who is sitting right in front of him in the House.

Let me repeat what I said to his hon. colleague. What he fails to mention is that Canada is going to experience growth next year. It has been projected to have by a very wide margin over the other countries in the G–7 the largest employment growth.

We have been commended by all those who have watched the activities of this government of getting interest rates down in mortgage terms, some figures we have not seen since the early 1950s. The hon. member says results have not happened. Housing starts are up, resales are up rather dramatically, so there is activity in the marketplace.

Jobs have been created. Jobs in the manufacturing sector have been created in the last few months which are very important. There is activity in the country. This fall, we expect to have a modest growth and into next year, very substantial growth, the largest in the G–7.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Indian Affairs.

Mr. André Tremblay, one of the Quebec government's top constitutional advisers, revealed at a Quebec Chamber of Commerce committee meeting that the minutes of the first ministers' meetings held in Ottawa and Charlottetown contain secret agreements on the aboriginal question.

Can the minister confirm or deny the existence of such agreements?

If she confirms their existence, can she tell us whether the government intends to make these agreements public so that Canadians, Quebecers and native people can make a fully informed decision in the referendum on October 26?

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think that in the coming referendum cam-

paign, we will have more and more of this kind of rumour or public statement from either side of the issue.

Members of this House should have enough experience and maturity to believe those who are worth believing. The coming referendum in Quebec is a great victory for Quebec and a great victory for Mr. Bourassa. I think we should go on that basis and stop believing what anyone might say about anything.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre (p. 13284); and the amendment of Mr. Dingwall (p. 13278).

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, this is a motion for the adjournment of the House so that members can return to their ridings to participate in the referendum campaign.

It is an opportunity to reflect on the situation that we find ourselves in and on what has happened this last week as we prepared ourselves to go back to our ridings for the referendum campaign. What happened this week is a good example of what is wrong with the situation in which we find ourselves. At the same time as the three leading political parties in the country have managed to come together to co-operate with respect to the yes side in the referendum, in the same week, we see legislation before the House which in my view is part of the problem.

The problem is that at the same time that we have been talking about building up Canada through the pursuit of national unity and new constitutional agreements, renewed federalism, all that sort of thing, the policies of this government have been leaning on the other hand to the destruction of Canada as we have known it and have therefore reduced the resolve of Canadians with respect to the future of Canada. In other words, the Canada that people might once have been stimulated to save, the Canada that people might once have been excited about, felt good about, is a Canada that hardly exists anymore as the result of the policies of this government.

I think this is one of the reasons why initially we find a general lack of enthusiasm for the yes side in the referendum, because people do not feel good about the country. One of the reasons they do not feel good about the country is that the country has been so transformed negatively as a result of the policies of this government over the last eight years.

You cannot ask people to respond as if they are a community when all the while with the other hand you are tearing down those things which have tended to build up community in Canada. You cannot ask people to act as a community when with the other hand as the government has it has been damaging national institutions, in some cases getting rid of them altogether, damaging national symbols and in some cases getting rid of them altogether.

It is in effect saying to people that we are not a community. There are no borders. As a result of free trade, deregulation and things like that notions of community, notions of acting for the common good are antiquated, are romantic notions.

The government over the last eight years has really acted to discredit the very instincts, the very notions that it would now like to have there as a resource in the yes campaign.

Take for example earlier today when I rose in the House to ask the government a question about Canadian National on an issue I raised this summer about the document I received which called into question the survival of CN. I asked the minister a question about that and I was hardly taken seriously. In fact the minister called me a Luddite, as if I had some inappropriate preoccupation with the past when I talked about the need to reregulate transportation and to strengthen Canadian National and for that matter to strengthen the entire railway system.

I think this is part of the problem. The fact is that particular question of mine and others like it are not even understood any longer by the government. They are not even understood by members opposite.

This last week, for instance, we saw the final vote on the bill which brought an end to the first universal social program in this country, the family allowance, ironically

the night before the funeral of Paul Martin Senior, one of the architects of that particular program.

We saw today the introduction but not the end of the debate concerning an extension of the drug patent laws for 20 years so that the multinational drug companies will be able to make more money as a result of their inventions. In so doing it will bring an end to the kind of drug laws we have had in this country for so many years whereby generic drug makers were able to much more quickly get on the market and produce cheaper imitations of the same drug. This has been a characteristic of Canada.

It is one of the things that people have taken pride in; their health care system both in terms of medicare and our generic drug laws and various things like this. No matter where we turn, whether with respect to our health care system, our transportation system, our education system—and the list goes on and on—people feel that somehow the Canada they were attached to is disappearing. Yet while that is happening they are being asked by the government to save Canada, allegedly by voting yes in the referendum campaign.

• (1510)

I intend to vote yes in the referendum, but I do it only in the sense that I want there to still be a Canada to rebuild when that happy day finally arrives and the government on the other side is defeated. Then we can begin to put together the pieces that have been scattered all over the floor by the government opposite. That is, unfortunately, the context in which we find ourselves.

One of the other things that has been at issue this week as we adjourn has been the government's strategy and position with respect to the North American free trade agreement. Tapes have been released which show that the government in its private conversations does not intend to sell the deal on its merits, but rather it intends to malign and attack the enemies of the deal in an *ad hominem* way. *Ad hominem* is one of the first fallacies you learn in first year philosophy. An *ad hominem* argument is the resort of scoundrels. Instead of attacking the person's position on something you attack the person rather than the argument.

Obviously the government has adopted an *ad hominem* strategy when it comes to the NAFTA. Rather than defending the agreement on its alleged merits, instead it intends to attack the opponents by referring to them variously as crypto-communist, NDP, Liberal, pinko or whatever other names it might have for people who are opposed to the agreement.

Actually this kind of rhetoric and name calling points up a dimension of the debate about the free trade agreements that is neglected, in my judgment, and the fact is that these agreements and the debates surrounding them are philosophical arguments. They are ideological arguments. It is a mistake to try to sort them out in terms of whether it is a good deal or a bad deal or whether this tariff has disappeared or access will be had to this or that market on whatever terms and conditions.

What we are debating is the appropriateness of the entire philosophy which underlies the world view of the free traders. The world view of the free traders is basically that there is no such thing as community and that there should not be in place the capacity of communities, whether those communities are understood as provinces, countries or whatever, to act in the interests of the community against the workings of the marketplace.

That is really the crux of the matter and that is why we in the NDP, unlike our Liberal colleagues, are so committed to the abrogation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and to not carrying through with the North American free trade agreement because the philosophy which these agreements assume and reinforce are so contrary to our view of the role of the marketplace in society.

We believe that the marketplace has a role, but it is a role which should be constrained, regulated and controlled for the common good. That is completely foreign to the kind of one dimensional ideological world view that is taking over the world, or at least North America, with the passage of these various free trade agreements.

The timing could not have been worse for the North American free trade agreement in terms of this other task we have before us, that is of trying to get people to see the wisdom of saying yes to the Charlottetown accord. There are so many Canadians who are so angry about the North American free trade agreement and what it represents as the next stage in this destructive process I have talked about, that they are finding it very difficult indeed to separate their anger about that and

make what I think is the wise decision about the Charlottetown accord.

Yesterday our House leader, the hon. member for Kamloops, asked the Prime Minister if he would stop this massive advertising campaign on the North American free trade agreement. If there is going to be an advertising campaign in support of the Charlottetown accord, if those ads are accompanied or complemented in the same hour or in the same day by ads in favour of the North American free trade agreement and all this pomposity with respect to prosperity that we get on the radio and TV, et cetera, people are going to be so angry that they are not going to be able to hear that other message.

All we asked for was a cease-fire so to speak. Obviously we are going to continue to talk about the North American free trade agreement and the government will continue to think about it in its own way, but what we asked for was a temporary end to that advertising so that while we are trying to get people to think about the Constitution we are not going around poking them in the eye with respect to the North American free trade agreement.

I thought that maybe just once, just this once, the Prime Minister would see the wisdom of that and agree to call an end to that advertising campaign. As we said, it would only be on a temporary basis. Though I would like to see it ended forever because I think this kind of advocacy advertising, before Parliament has passed something, is politically wrong. It is an affront to democracy. I feel like the Soviet Union disappeared on the other side of the world and reappeared here with respect to propaganda.

There was a time when this kind of advocacy advertising, when it was first tried by the Liberals during the constitutional debate in 1981, was thought to be terrible by everyone. The really scary thing is the way in which we have become kind of resigned to this. We have become kind of resigned to the fact that the government will spend millions of our own money trying to persuade us of things that have not even been passed by Parliament.

People fuss for a day. The media pays attention for a day and then it is over. It is really no big deal. What are we sliding into here when all of us seem to be resigned to the fact that this is the way governments work now, that their advertising budget continues to grow and grow while Canadians find themselves unemployed and families find themselves unable to make ends meet? Just think how those millions of dollars could be alternately and more wisely and more compassionately used.

As I say, we have raised the matter but it does not seem to go anywhere. The Prime Minister gets up and says that this advertising is purely explanatory in nature and does not take sides, it is just to provide information. There is a big yawn and the matter goes no further. This is truly mystifying and I think truly scary in the long run.

A number of members here today have mentioned, in a variety of ways, the plight which a great many young Canadians find themselves in. They are either unable to find jobs or, having gone back to school, are unable to find the part-time employment that they need in order to carry on. Certainly the kind of summer jobs that existed when I was a student are no more. I have had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the student union at the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg. They have had conveyed to me their concern about the declining ability of students, particularly students from middle to working class backgrounds, to make a go of it at university.

I raise this because when we are talking about the referendum and the future of Canada, the people who have the greatest stake in it are young people.

• (1520)

They are the ones who are going to have to live a long, long time with whatever the consequences are of whatever Canadians choose on October 26.

One of the things that might motivate them on that day will be whether they feel the country and the leaders who are asking the young people to have confidence in them, the leaders who put the agreement together, have enough confidence in the young people to truly invest in their future, in the quality of their education, in their accessibility to that education. It is one thing to have a lot of high-falutin phrases in the Canada clause and in the social and economic union about quality post-secondary education but it is another thing to put your money where your mouth is and make sure that young Cana-

dians, regardless of their circumstances, have access to that high quality education.

In that respect, I cannot think of anything that struck me more strangely and more offensively than learning this week—and maybe I should have known this before, maybe others know it—that the Prime Minister has his teenage son in an American private school. I do not make any apologies for this. I cannot think of a symbol that is worse for Canada than for people to know—better it should have been kept a deep, dark secret, one we never knew—that their Prime Minister sends his child to an American private school. For one thing it is enough that it is private. Second, it is even more offensive that it is American.

Every once in a while I am tempted, like a lot of other people, to think that maybe I am just old-fashioned to think about the class society and that maybe divisions are disappearing and we are all just one big happy family. Every once in a while I get smacked in the face with reality. This story about the Prime Minister's educational strategies for his children reminds me of where I come from, where a lot of my constituents come from, how great the gap is, and I guess how great the gap will always be between us and them.

There are ways that the government could proceed if it were serious about trying to allay a lot of the fears that Canadians have which are preventing them from thinking clearly about the referendum.

The final suggestion I would make, and I put it on the record here, is that the Prime Minister should consider, privately for now, that if in the course of the referendum campaign it becomes obvious that his personal unpopularity is standing in the way of Canadians voting yes for the constitutional package, he should do the right thing and promise to resign if people would vote for the package. If he would put the country ahead of his own personal political ambitions, it would go a long way toward alleviating a lot of the fears that Canadians have and some of the calls that I have had that the Prime Minister is getting in the way of people feeling good about what they otherwise should feel good about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to an order made earlier this day, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the amendment moved by the Official Opposition.

The question is on the amendment. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 239*)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Assad
Black
Blondin-Andrew
Caccia
Clancy
Duceppe
Ferguson
Gaffney
Gauthier
Hopkins
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laporte
Maheu
Mifflin
Mills
Nystrom
Stupich
Wood—39

Arseneault
Berger
Blaikie
Boudria
Callbeck
Dingwall
Duhamel
Foster
Gagliano
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter
Karpoff
Kindy
MacLellan
McCurdy
Milliken
Nault
Saint-Julien
Taylor

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bernier
Blenkarn
Boyer
Cadieux
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Corbett
Darling

Andre
Belsher
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Champagne (Champlain)
Clifford
Collins
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dick

Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Fee
Ferland	Fontaine
Friesen	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Guilbault
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks	Hockin
Horner	Jacques
James	Jelinek
Joncas	Kempling
Landry	Langlois
Larrivée	Lopez
MacKay	Marin
Mayer	McDermid
McKnight	Monteith
Moore	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reimer	Richardson
Roy-Arcelin	Sparrow
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle	Vien
Weiner	White
Wilbee	Winegard—70

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Baker
Chadwick	de Cotret
Harb	Heap
Oberle	Reid
Rompkey	Thacker

• (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, we have had an interesting round of debate on the earlier motion and we are now engaged in a debate on the adjournment of the House through to the call of the Chair.

We have the opportunity to debate, among other things, the linkage of the economy to the constitutional issue. We have heard a number of points made on that and I just very briefly wish to comment on them. The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond suggested the rules of the House of Commons had been changed last year so all of the opposition days for the autumn would be lost. That is not consonant with the facts. One opposition day has already been added to the schedule and others will be added in proportion to the number of days we sit.

He also referred to what he called the remorseless use of streamlined closure rules to muzzle debate in this Parliament. I would point out to him and to the public listening that no closure rule has been used for well over a year in this House. Time allocation motions have been used, but even they were not used for a 14-month period from the time of the change of the rules until June of this year.

I wonder if this hardened stance on the part of the Liberal House leader relates to a rejection of the further reforms contemplated by the House of Commons. He said we had killed family allowances in Canada. In fact, $2.1 billion is being added to family benefits. That amounts to $500 per family for the working poor. Those family benefits will be received by 85 per cent of all families.

He commented adversely on the economy and ignored the international monetary fund figures for 1993, which show Canada leading the G-7 countries with 4.5 per cent growth next year and 2.2 per cent employment growth, the highest in the G-7. Canada has the lowest interest rate among those countries and the lowest inflation rate. The government has been congratulated by the IMF for holding firm in difficult times.

This motion does not propose to send Parliament away for an indeterminate period. The opposition House leader suggested that Parliament would not sit for 364 days. I suggest, with great respect, that is misleading the House and the Canadian public. What is contemplated in the resolution is the flexibility to have Parliament called back when it needs to be called back, including sufficient eventualities during the referendum campaign itself. I suspect if my friend opposite were to poll members of his own caucus, he would find they want to get out and campaign on the yes side. I suspect he does too, as he stayed here in 1980 as a matter of duty.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party wishes to campaign and does not wish the House to be in session during the referendum campaign. Of course the referendum, has everything to do with the economy. Premier Getty of Alberta commented yesterday if Canada disintegrates we would be moving from G-7 to G-77.

I do believe my friend opposite was contradicting himself and defeating his own argument in his earnest but hapless attempt to emulate his mentor.

I think none of us would ever forgive ourselves, nor would our electors who care about Canada, if we did not

do all we could to promote the positive result on October 26. I am sure most colleagues would agree with that.

Therefore I would move:

That the motion be amended by adding after the word "Chair" in both paragraphs, the following:

"but no later than November 16, 1992".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I therefore declare the motion in order.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, this is a small gain. It is a change of attitude on the part of the government. The date of November 16 is better than maybe, we will see the Chair will decide. Let us say we are not unhappy that the government finally agreed on a date. November is better than no date at all.

• (1610)

The Liberal caucus was concerned whether the government had really given some thought to the problems experienced by Canadians, and whether it was not recognizing its inability to act and to try to find solutions to the national problems regarding the economy and the national unity. The inability of this government to submit concrete proposals to alleviate the problem of poverty in this country is nevertheless obvious. Indeed the government has demonstrated its inability to propose aggressive economic measures to correct the mistakes caused by its administrative incompetence.

The economy is something important because it is an integral part of this element in our country which wants it to work, to prosper and to be united. At a time when our country is experiencing serious economic problems the government says: "We will wait before talking about these issues, before implementing concrete solutions".

This is why Liberals proposed coming back immediately after the referendum, on October 28. Our motion was rejected. I say as I said earlier that it is not great to come back on November 16, but it is nevertheless better than coming back God knows when.

I want to remind the hon. members that the Liberal caucus had made an offer to the effect that the House would come back every week during the referendum campaign as we have done in the past. We could have sat perhaps three days, with the guarantee—at least from the party representing the Official Opposition—that no delaying tactics would have been used to try to embarrass the government. This would have given the government the opportunity to propose useful economic measures to help Canadians find jobs and, in some regions of the country, improve economic conditions.

It is difficult to talk about unity to a hungry person. It is extremely difficult to talk about national unity to an unemployed person. It is impossible to talk about national unity to people who live in a region where the unemployment rate is somewhere between 30 and 40 per cent. Perhaps it is time to reflect on that and realize that a dynamic and strong economy is what Canada needs right now.

[*English*]

We agreed that we should be in the field with the troops to win the referendum. We must win this referendum. It must be a yes win. What we have to lose is too important. The real issue before Canadians is not whether there are in the agreement legal terms, commas and all kinds of concepts that most of us fail to understand, the issue before the Canadian public is whether we have a future together in this country. That is the issue in this referendum.

We agree that we want to be in the field with the troops to win this referendum. The future of the country is too important to most of us, not the shape or the form of the future but the future together. That is what we are talking about. That is why we say we have to be out there supporting the yes side. As far as I am concerned, in Ottawa—Vanier and in the national capital there will be an active committee that will be felt, will be seen, will be heard and I hope will be understood. The question is very simple: Do we have a future together? The answer is yes.

Let us look at the record of this government in this session.

Mr. Milliken: We will get depressed.

Mr. Gauthier: It will be very depressing, but that is reality. My friend from Kingston and the Islands is right. It is depressing. One must look back and see what happened so that one can move forward, correct and possibly improve things.

An hon. member: Let's go back to the Trudeau years.

Mr. Gauthier: I heard a comment, "Let us go back to the Trudeau years". I was here during those years. I do not apologize for that at all.

Mr. Mills: It would be a lot better than what we have. He would win every seat in the country.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I will pass over that remark because that would open up a beautiful debate which I do not want to have at this time because it deals with national unity and the sentiments expressed by people against a personality.

[*Translation*]

From May 1991 until today we have passed 72 government bills on third reading, 2 government bills from the Senate, and 4 private members' public bills.

During this same session 60 per cent of the House's time has been spent on government orders, while less than 8 per cent of the time has been spent on Private Members' Business.

On behalf of the people of Ottawa—Vanier, my constituents, I have debated such contentious matters as the fiscal arrangements between the federal government, the provinces and federal contributions for post-secondary education and health.

I have opposed the harmful changes to the Canada Assistance Plan and the lamentable budget presented by the Conservative government, which as we know resulted in the closure of the Science Council of Canada located in my riding. I have opposed the abolition of the Court Challenges Program and the end to universal social programs that the government imposed yesterday with closure.

They are so ashamed of their policies that they must impose limits on debate, for fear that Canadians will see that they are intellectually bankrupt.

The Conservatives' favourite target, public servants, was not spared in this session. Besides closing many Crown corporations, resulting in many layoffs, the government forced public servants back to work and initiated an unfair pension bill that is still before the Senate and being discussed.

The advent of free trade with the United States and Mexico, the worsening Canadian economic situation, the growing number of unemployed, welfare recipients and homeless have made Canadians lose confidence in their system of government.

There is high price of gasoline, the closing of postal stations, the cuts in funding for the housing program and the abolition of the co-operative housing program. Last Saturday I inaugurated a housing co-op, the last one in my riding, because this government has abolished the co-op program. This program first began in Ottawa—Vanier, in 1971. I have had the honour to preside at the opening of a dozen affordably priced housing co-ops. Now the Conservative government has abolished this program, which was a good one.

There is the privatization of Telesat, the lack of attention to pollution problems in the national capital region. The Rideau River in my riding is polluted and the government has done nothing. We have petitioned and urged it to take concrete action with the province of Ontario, but nothing has been done.

If there was something more positive in this session, it is the constitutional consensus among the federal government, the provincial and territorial governments and native peoples. We have debated it in this House and I have given my opinion on it. I think I have taken a fairly clear position in the debate. I am for the referendum.

All Canadians agree that we are quite fed up talking about the Constitution. That is true, I admit. I know what I am talking about because it happened to me again yesterday. Someone told me that he would vote no in the referendum. I asked him if he had read the package. He said no. I told him that was too bad.

• (1620)

Uninformed decisions do not make good decisions. Therefore I urge Canadians to contact their members of Parliament or the committee to request information on what we are dealing with here. There is no need to pay too much attention to the wording, to the form of the agreement. Let us look at what it is intended to achieve. Its purpose is simple: to determine whether or not we want to remain united. Do we or do we not have a future together? That is the question. The wording is not that important. I am not familiar with constitutional drafting. What can I say? Not every one is excited to the point of spending their days and their nights drafting constitutions. We are sick and tired of talking about the constitution. Let us move. That is a good idea. On October 26 we will decide our collective future. I hope it will be a

positive decision. At any rate I pray to God that it will be, for our sake, because we stand to lose too much.

[*English*]

I want to talk about the economy because I really believe we cannot talk unity to Canadians who are hungry, who are badly housed and who are unemployed.

Those on the government side, and I heard them today in Question Period, say that the recovery from our prolonged recession is on the way, but I am not convinced yet. I wish it was but look at the facts.

Growth has been very low; 1.7 per cent in the first quarter of this year and even less in the second quarter. These are not the kinds of figures that are going to provide us with a strong recovery and the government knows that. Our growth is fuelled chiefly by our exports to the United States.

This means our economy is still extremely vulnerable, with continued growth dependent on the uncertain stability of the American economy as well as those of other major training partners such as Japan and Europe which are—just listen to the news today—having their own economic problems these days.

Yet our exports are the only hope at this time for growth. If there is no growth, there is no expansion. If the philosophy of the private sector is that we must cut expenditures because we have to make some profits and by cutting expenditures they cut staff, that does not create jobs. They must expand. We must give them that confidence. They must acquire this renewed confidence in this country. Once this referendum is over we must see some renewed investments, some stimulants.

In late July of this year the Bank of Nova Scotia presented its depressing outlook for our economy and said that the Canadian economy is going through the worst four years since World War II and we will probably have to wait until 1994 to regain the jobs lost since the recession began in April 1990. It is not me saying that; it is a respected bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia. What has the government done toward new job creation I ask? Nothing.

Another sign of weakness in the economy is that pre-tax corporate profits have fallen 50 per cent since 1988, which is much greater than the 30 per cent they fell during the recession of the 1981-82 period. Tory times are tough times, as I hear one of my colleagues reminding me.

The fall in profit means that job creation will continue to be slow for some time and the government still sits on its hands. Furthermore, debts are at a record level relative to disposable income, with the average household using nearly 10 per cent of take home pay to pay off debts. Consumers are taking their time to pay off their debts before they are willing to spend more. It is unlikely they will ever return to the spending levels of the 1980s.

There has been no relief, and none is in sight, for the jobless with the Tories at the helm. Unemployment is at an eight-year high of 11.6 per cent; 1.6 million Canadians are unemployed, and that does not count those who have abandoned all hope of ever finding a job. Nineteen per cent of students who have graduated from our universities and our post-secondary schools cannot find jobs. Those are alarming statistics.

During July, full-time jobs decreased by 129,000 while part-time jobs increased by 100,000. This decline in full-time employment was the eighth decrease in the previous nine months. Last month, the economic forecasting firm Informetrica recommended that Canadians should complain more loudly to the federal government so that it will do something about the disgraceful level of unemployment. Informetrica believes that the jobless rate will not improve before 1996. That is three and a half years from now.

Are Canadians supposed to give up working for three and a half years? We all know that the longer one is out of the labour market the more difficult it usually is to re-enter it. As unemployment benefits run out people are forced to turn to welfare, since there are few jobs available.

In 1991, 8.5 per cent of the Canadian population, that is two to three million people, were on welfare. Does this government not believe that this is totally unacceptable in this country?

The National Council on Welfare recently pointed out that the number of Canadians on welfare is rising, partly as a result of changes that the Conservative government has or has not made in job strategy. Unemployment legislation is not encouraging at this time.

In my riding of Ottawa—Vanier there are many poor children and many families receiving social assistance. Tax statistics for 1990 show that the lowest income earners are both single parents and couples of Ottawa—Carleton. The over-all area of the national capital. It is discouraging. The demand for welfare in Ottawa—Carleton grew by 42 per cent last year. This is supposed to be fat cat city. This is supposed to be Ottawa, the national capital, the fat cat city. There was a 42 per cent increase last year in welfare cases. As of March there was a case-load of 29,428 individuals or families on welfare in this area. This year the increase is expected to be about 24 per cent. All together about 12.8 per cent of the population will receive some sort of social assistance. It is depressing.

These living standards are particularly damaging to the future of children. I know that the members care for children. A report published by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa—Carleton in September 1990 found that 14 per cent of children in this region were living in poverty, based on the 1986 census. That amounts to more than 19,000 children in this area. We can imagine that the situation has only worsened given the length of this recession.

In the city of Vanier in my riding the rate soars to 31 per cent of children living in poverty. That is truly unacceptable by any standards, by any Canadian standards.

However, all the government offers to these people is legislation like Bill C-80 which was passed last night, with time limitations imposed by the government so that we would not have time to explain to Canadians what it was all about.

Bill C-80 will change absolutely nothing for the poorest families. Single mothers on social assistance will receive no additional benefits from Bill C-80. In Ottawa—Carleton 33 per cent of single mothers with children live in poverty. In my riding 20 per cent of my families are single parent families, mostly run by women. They have a hard time making ends meet.

I beg this government to come up with policies that will help the poor, that will help the badly housed, that will help the unemployed, and to do it quickly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said it would be important to be in the field during the referendum campaign. I could not agree more, and that is exactly what the members of the Bloc Quebecois will do. We have to be given the chance to speak freely even so.

No later than yesterday the Fédération des femmes du Québec denounced a decision by the Secretary of State of Canada about the delay in the annual grant payment to the federation—

• (1630)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I shall remind the hon. members that the questions and comments must relate to the speech made by the previous speaker. In this case the motion before us deals with the adjournment of the House. Therefore I ask the hon. member to speak to the point.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, we talked about how important it is for all Canadians to vote on this issue. My colleague said in his speech: "Read the documents before voting". I figure I am on the right track.

Yesterday some people were told they would not get their grant unless they formally agreed not to take an official stand in the debate. They were told: "If you are being fed by those who champion a cause, it is just too bad. You have to make choices in life".

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who has the floor is waxing eloquently on something that is not very relevant to the subject matter at hand or is in response to the numerous very thoughtful comments that have been made by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier.

I am wondering if the Chair would take under advisement, not in any way to prejudice the hon. member from making interventions, the rule of relevancy and would adhere to it.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I shall once again call for the co-operation of the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie in speaking strictly to the point.

Mr. Duceppe: Let me repeat word for word what my hon. colleague said. Of one of my constituents who wanted to vote no he asked: "Did you take the time to read the documents?" I guess there are people who have and who want to make themselves heard. Some did, like Alliance Québec, and they get grants from the Secretary of State. Others would like to, but they are told they are threatened about loosing their grants."

I would like my colleague to explain how he expects us to be able to go into the field. He did talk about going into the field to discuss the national unity issue with all Canadians. How can this be done? Are we committing ourselves, as Canadian parliamentarians, to abide by the Quebec referendum act?

Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

As I read over government orders, it occurs to me that what is being debated is the adjournment motion. However, I fail to see how the hon. member's remarks fit in with the present adjournment debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am willing to show some flexibility in this case because the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie did refer to comments made by the previous speaker. I would ask him to conclude.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I will finish what I had to say. The hon. member talked about unemployment and a number of government bills that were not necessarily relevant to the adjournment motion. I imagine his comments did not bother members opposite, although mine may be less palatable.

Since the Secretary of State said today it was «to respect Quebec's referendum bill". I would like to ask the hon. member whether he agrees this legislation should be observed by the government and in fact by all Canadian parliamentarians who intend to speak in Quebec and should therefore comply in every respect with the guidelines of Quebec's Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Pierre-F. Côté.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, it will be a pleasure to answer this question, and I welcome the opportunity to do so.

If I understood the adjournment motion correctly, this is supposed to be an open debate in which members may raise a variety of subjects or issues. That is what I did during my speech. I talked about the economy and national unity. I think the question is relevant because it concerns a matter I raised in my speech, namely whether the Charlottetown agreement should be supported by all Canadians. I think it should. I know the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie does not agree, but in a democratic society he has that right. I do not agree with him either, but in any case the Charlottetown agreement is a compromise. If we look at the definition of the word compromise in the dictionary, we will see it means an arrangement in which mutual concessions are made.

Mutual concessions were made, and I think that should be sufficient. As I said several times in my speech, the issue is not whether these are the proper legal or constitutional terms but whether we really want to live together and have a future as Canadians, and that is what I say when people ask whether the answer to the referendum question should be affirmative or negative. My answer is affirmative. We should have a future as Canadians.

To answer the hon. member's specific question, I think he is speaking on behalf of a group in Quebec that complained when an assistant to the Secretary of State called to say that he expected the group to remain neutral in the referendum campaign. I do not know exactly what terms were used by this person, but I heard the story today on the national news.

I would not like to see anyone gagged in this debate, a democratic debate in which I expect my colleague and I will often disagree. I often disagree with him, but we respect each other as individuals, and I think that is democracy.

I am not worried about the fact that some members do not like the question. I am not surprised since they are bent on destroying my country, but I cannot help that. They will try to convince Canadians they are right, and I hope they do it democratically. However, I think the hon. member will be very disappointed in the results, because the yes group will win.

As for his specific question, I am a member of the opposition, so I cannot speak for the government. As far as I am concerned, I do not think anyone should be gagged. Just because they are receiving government grants is no reason why they should not speak out. The minister might have more information, but this is not my province. I am from Ontario, and I would be concerned if this happened in my own riding. I realize he has the right

to ask the question, but I think he realizes it is not up to me to provide the answer.

[*English*]

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to listen to the excellent presentation made by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier.

I wanted to ask him something in addition. There was something he left out, and I am sure he left it out because of time constraints. I have a question, well I will not be greedy.

How does he feel about the timing of the GST on top of all these things that he mentioned? How are his constituents reacting to that?

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, they hate it, they hate it, they hate it in every language, official or unofficial. They would love to have an election on the issue.

All I can say to my colleague from Newfoundland, as chairman of the public accounts committee, is that I wish the government would have the guts to do an evaluation of the GST program as a financing tool of government. I think it would find out that it would be rejected by 90 per cent of Canadians and it would find other means of maybe getting the revenues, but not the GST. It is a bad tax and we know it.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to address this motion of adjournment.

There is a basic question that I want to begin with. Why is it that my party wanted to stay longer, wanted to return during the referendum, and wanted to come back sooner? There is a very simple answer, and my colleagues would agree, which is that there is work to do. There is a great deal of work to do.

[*Translation*]

There is a lot of work to do, but I will concentrate on the economy and then go on to the Constitution and the referendum.

[*English*]

Let us talk of the country today. By all standards, by all evaluations, people would agree that we are in serious difficulties. Unemployment exceeds 1.6 million. Student unemployment this summer was 17.7 percent. It was the worst summer that students have ever experienced. I know that things are tough everywhere but that does not make it easier for Canada.

There are now 2.2 million people on social assistance programs.

• (1640)

It is over two million Canadians who need to take advantage of those to find the basic benefits of living. We have food banks which will nourish over two million Canadians this year. There will be two million Canadians who go to those food banks.

There may be some who go more than once, obviously, but that is an astronomical figure. It is much, much too high. It is totally unacceptable. What is worse is that roughly 40 per cent of the people who will have to go to those food banks are young people, 18 years of age and younger.

If you look at the poor in this country, it depends upon whose statistics you use, you have between four million and five million poor. They are people who are living at the level of poverty or below the level of poverty. That is really, really unacceptable.

The majority of those particular individuals are women. More than one million of those people are children. There is work to do. There is a great deal of work to do.

In my province of Manitoba we have one of the worst problems in Canada with respect to poverty for children. We have thousands of homeless people in this country, and they need to be attended to.

I come from a background of education and I take a great deal of interest in what is happening in our country.

[*Translation*]

About 30 per cent of young people have dropped out of school now. They do not know exactly where to go and what to do with their life. That is another challenge for the government. I know that there have been many initiatives and many efforts have been made to correct the problem, but we know very well that there has not been much success.

[*English*]

I wish my colleagues would come to my office in Winnipeg at 238 St. Mary's Road and examine some of the files of people who have come in with concerns. I have some people with double degrees, masters degrees, young men and women who are extremely competent, highly motivated and who are skilled but cannot find a job.

Some can find very short-term jobs at extremely poor remuneration. I had a student of roughly 30 years of age with a masters degree in economics who had a six-week contract working at $6 an hour during the summer. That is all that could be found in the city of Winnipeg.

I have a number of other cases like that which are just as painful for me. It is extremely difficult to try to assist. I cannot create jobs. I cannot create the conditions under which jobs in fact happen. Therefore, I ask the government to look at this and to come back, hopefully in this session, with some new ideas, a bit of enthusiasm, energy and creativity so that we can get the country back to work.

I have talked about the unemployed. I could talk about the people who are on social assistance, who feel badly because they want to work, but they need the profit from those programs. They feel as if they have been forgotten. They feel as if they have been stigmatized, as if they can no longer make a useful contribution to our country.

When citizens start to feel that way it is a very difficult process to reverse.

[*Translation*]

There are men and women in that group who are really very committed, who would like to work and want to work and want a better future for their children and their families, but there are very few opportunities and very few jobs out there.

[*English*]

When we talk about work to do, there are a number of things that we could do co-operatively over the next few weeks if we wanted to. We could not only examine the unemployment insurance programs, the unemployed, the training and retraining programs that are perhaps needed, the creation of jobs for those who want to work, the social assistance programs, how we deal with the provinces and whether or not the caps that we have imposed on the social assistance transfers to provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario are fair, we could examine our veterans' programs to ensure that they too are getting the very best of what they ought to be getting.

One of the things that we have forgotten about our veterans as they grow older, some of the difficulties that they have experienced during the wars are becoming increasingly acute and troublesome. There are some adjustments that need to be made there.

We could at the same time look at people who have disabilities, quite apart from the fact that they are very unhappy about having been left out of the current constitutional proposals. They were initially in the government proposals. They are among the poorest of the poor in Canada.

If my memory serves me correct, they were talking about three million-plus people. What are some of the things that we ought to be doing, could be doing, should be doing in order to assist these individuals?

What about our seniors, those who have worked to make this country what it is, to permit you and me and many others to enjoy the benefits of a great nation, one of the finest if not the finest in the whole world? Are we treating them as well as we could, as well as we should, as well as we ought to be doing?

I have in my office at the present time a number of cases with respect to immigration. There are some very unfortunate things that are happening. I had a particular instance where a gentleman was being married. He wanted his brother-in-law to come to the wedding and he could not. I had another situation where there was going to be a religious ceremony for a child in the family, the grandparents wanted to come to participate and they could not come. Why could they not come? I guess there was a fear that these people would want to stay in Canada. They had property, they had family and they had all kinds of commitments at home.

We could be reviewing some of those particular laws and procedures to see what could be improved. We could also be seeing, examining and reviewing what is happening to our young people today, our students. I mentioned initially the summer of 1992.

[*Translation*]

I talked about it in the House of Commons yesterday. There was an extremely high unemployment rate of nearly 18 per cent. It was the worst summer ever. What could we do for those young people who wanted to take training or retraining courses, who wanted to return to college or university, who want to prepare for a more promising future in which they would be able to contribute fully to the country's development and to develop not only their talents but also this majestic country of ours?

[*English*]

We could look at what is happening to our young people, why they are feeling as they do and what it is that they need in order to grow and to contribute fully to develop not only their talents but this great country. We could have stayed longer. We could have come back a bit earlier. During the period between now and when we do return we could have spent more time discussing the child benefits act. We could have spent much more time doing that. Perhaps the results would not have been different, but at least people would have felt that they would have been heard. We also could have done so much more with respect to the bill that came forward today, Bill C-91, with regard to drugs and medication and we did not. We did not because we are limited in time.

We really need to address all of those problems and many more. I also believe that we need an economic blueprint. If nothing else, it would be a symbol that government is really trying to respond to the needs of Canadians from an economic perspective.

I want to talk briefly about the Constitution, the Constitution proposals and the referendum. I will be voting yes on October 26.

[I will be at the yes side with great enthusiasm even though I have realized that there are some serious difficulties with the proposals. If we look at it over all, it is a deal that needs to be endorsed by Canadians. I will be speaking as clearly, as loudly and as insightfully as I can about that. However, there are a number of things that we might have done if we had been here. I am really quite concerned that there are a number of unanswered questions. I am not talking about the proposals themselves, but let me ask a question: Can students who are studying in another city vote during the referendum and, if so, do they know that they can and do they know what the process is? What about, for example, these young people who are pages here, many of whom I suspect are from other provinces, will they be able to vote? Will they vote here? Will they vote at home?

What about students who have gone to universities in other countries? A young woman came into my office roughly three weeks ago who said: "I am going to graduate school from one of the American universities, but I want desperately to vote on referendum day. Will I be able to?" I am trying to follow that up.

While I am quite concerned about the groups that I have mentioned, there is another group of people who may be forgotten. There are possibly thousands of Canadians living and working abroad. Will they get the opportunity to vote for their country on referendum day? What about people who are living in other countries but are still citizens of Canada or visiting other countries and still citizens of Canada?

These are some of the questions that I would have liked to address during this period of time, and perhaps I can do so through other means, but clearly the House would have been an appropriate one.

I just want to raise a couple of other points. There is information out there that is required. I talked to a number of individuals about these constitutional proposals and the referendum bill. They heard from a fair number who would be supporting them. They indicated so and told me why. There were a fair number who said no and told me they could not because they did not understand them. They had no material and that is a real problem. I know there are efforts being made. I know it is easy to criticize, but at the same time it is so absolutely essential for something that is simple, readable and objective to be distributed to Canadian citizens.

• (1650)

I have no real fear. If they get the information, if they feel it is from a credible source, they will say the right thing on October 26.

Another thing we could have done if we had been in the House of Commons during that time and if there had been exaggerated claims on either the *oui* or the *non* side, we would have been here to bring about a bit of check and balance. We could have said: "Whoa, just a minute. That is not quite correct", and we could have played that kind of mediator, arbitrator, judgmental role and I say it in a positive sense. Because we will be gone, we will not be able to do that.

I would like to complete my remarks by simply saying the following. I congratulate the students and the universities who will be involved with the Unity Train with regard to the constitutional proposals and with respect to referendum day. I think it is a wonderful initiative and I am particularly delighted that it is the young people who are meeting this head on. I call upon the young people of Canada to make sure that those who are older than they are do not let them down. I want them to stand up and to speak out for this great country.

We of a certain age tend to see the world perhaps somewhat differently than the young people do. I hope they will stand up and tell us what they think. I hope they will do so with a generosity, a spirit and an openness of heart and mind that will motivate their parents and those older than them to see the world a bit more from their perspective. I think very often they see much more clearly than we do.

I also want to commend the Ethnocultural Council of Canada for having said yes. I recognize that they have certain concerns. I hope we will make a genuine attempt to respond to those.

I want to point out how delighted I was to have received a fax message from a little organization *qui s'appelle réseau*. Translated I think it would be network.

[*Translation*]

It is a Manitoba women's group that speaks for women who are ready to say yes to these constitutional proposals, knowing that there are always weaknesses, with this accord or any other. They are looking at the whole thing and thinking of Canada's future. They told me and the others that they would support the agreement.

I will conclude with a wish.

[*English*]

My wish is that when the Government of Canada returns, when the House of Commons reconvenes that the government will have an economic blueprint, a developmental plan that will give hope to Canadiansm, and hopefully that will be done subsequent to a yes vote on October 26, *un vote pour le oui*, and we can start rebuilding this great nation and ensuring that it remains number one in the world.

[*Translation*]

I am now ready to answer questions.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague from St. Boniface on his remarks. I believe that he has touched upon something that many Canadians are talking about right across the country, not just our youth. I know in my riding I am experiencing a lot of difficulty because of how many people feel about all the elements of the *entente* or the accord, whatever you want to call it, the consensus report. It is not an accord obviously because none of the premiers really signed it.

I am beginning to sense a real backlash in the city of Toronto. I make no apologies for having my own doubts about it.

I noticed I was not recorded as abstaining the night of the vote. I did not quite understand that. If we do not explain all elements of the accord, and if all of a sudden a sense of distrust builds in the community, then the vote the Prime Minister wants is not going to be achieved.

At this time I am not sure if I agree with the Prime Minister's proposal. I am concerned about something and would like to ask my colleague a question. I agree with the idea of the referendum. I agree with the sovereignty of the people, but do you not think the accord will be in danger unless we explain all elements of the accord and what they mean, and stop branding Canadians as anti–Canadian if they decide they do not agree with the accord.

Mr. Duhamel: I thank my colleague for his comments and his question.

Yes, we must explain the accord. The great challenge is to explain it so that Canadians believe whoever happens to be explaining it is telling the truth.

That is a real problem because politicians from all political parties are really quite suspect at all levels of government. I said a few days ago I hoped somehow we might have a third party say, this is what it is all about. That is not as easy as it sounds either, because there are third parties who think rather differently.

There has to be a sincere attempt to explain it the way it is, not oversimplified and yet not overcomplicated. It is essential for people to realize there has been a sincere attempt by the first ministers of this country with the four aboriginal leaders and the leaders of the two largest opposition parties, to come forward with a set of proposals that have a reasonable chance of responding to the grievances of Canadians. There is no guarantee. That is the message I personally want to get across. I will try to explain it as objectively as I can. I will try to say I am not sure I could have a better deal. I would love to say with honesty that I could have, but I do not believe I necessarily could have under the circumstances. This is a fair attempt to bring the country together.

I called upon the young people of Canada to stand up and make sure their views were heard, because they tend to see the world perhaps a bit more clearly with fewer biases. I recall an elderly person who called me and said she hoped we politicians were not about to start destroying what Canadians have worked so long to build. I asked this person to stand up as well and contact her friends so the seniors could remind us what we have.

Perhaps it would be a coalition of as many people as possible. The young and those who are older could get together and try to build a bridge to ensure this country continues.

If we do not get the information out clearly, quickly and in a way that is understood, and if people just lay back and say it does not matter, then I really fear for our country because it does matter.

I am going to vote yes. I pray it will never happen, but if this country does not stay together, I want to be able to go to bed every night and say I did what I could. I said yes, to try to keep my country together.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question related to the economy.

The Prime Minister of Canada said in this House two days ago the Constitution and the economy are co–mingled. I agree with the Prime Minister. I think that was factually correct.

• (1700)

The problem I have is that right now the economy of this country is in the intensive care room from coast to coast. It seems to me when the economy is in this shape, to shut down the nation's boardroom is totally irresponsible. There are situations evolving week to week and day to day. Never mind the low interest rates because there is not a bank in Canada right now that is helping small and medium sized businesses. The minister does not have to listen to me. He can go out and talk to small businesses across this country. We can have 5 per cent interest rates, but if the banks will not lend it out what good is it?

The Conservatives look at the interest rates but they do not see what is going on in the country. In my city where there are 600,000 people out of work they wonder why we are shutting this place down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 5 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier this day, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put all questions necessary to dispose of the amendment moved by the government and the motion.

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 yeas have it.

An hon. member: On division.

Amendment agreed to.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next vote is on the main motion.

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 will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to an order made earlier this day, the House shall now proceed to debate the subject matter of Government Business No. 12. There are three minutes remaining in the questions and comments.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for my colleague from St. Boniface. It has to do with the economy and is very specific.

We are asking the people of Canada to trust this government over the next 30 days. We are asking them to trust that this document is great.

Do you think it is right to ask the people of Canada to trust this government when it is shutting this place down and our economy is in such disastrous shape?

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I certainly could not say I have been asked to trust the government over the next 30 days, and I do not say that in a partisan way.

The Prime Minister, the first ministers of this nation, the two leaders of the opposition, and the four aboriginal leaders have asked us to trust that this is a reasonable option.

With all due respect to my colleagues, and I have great admiration for some of them, I could not trust the government if it was their document. The document has been endorsed by all the other parties and therefore I am willing to say it has a reasonable chance.

I do not like the idea we are leaving. I hope we can come back if we need to. I agree there are two sides to this coin, the Constitution and the economy, and I use the following analogy.

If my wife and children were in a situation where they thought they might want to leave me, I would have a lot of difficulty worrying about my job. On the other hand, just because I have a good job does not mean to say they are going to stay with me.

There are two sides to this coin and I think we have to deal with this referendum, but we need to deal with the economic situation the moment we get back. It is critical we do so because whatever we gain on October 26 will be lost, assuming we get a yes vote.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on this adjournment debate as well. I want to state a number of concerns on behalf of my constituents.

Last week in New Westminster I attended a memorial service honouring Pauline Jewett, who was my predecessor here in the House of Commons for my riding. She represented her constituency before me with pride, commitment to this country and honour. Sadly she passed away this summer.

At that memorial service I reflected on Pauline's career and her tremendous accomplishments serving the people of Canada and the constituents of our riding. Many of those accomplishments originated right here in this Chamber.

I also reflected on Pauline Jewett's vision of our country. Pauline was first and foremost a committed Canadian. She loved and believed in the potential of this country. She believed in the potential of our people. She believed in the Canadian gift of understanding and, as some say, the Canadian gift of tolerance. Yet today the constituents from the riding Pauline represented, the constituents of New Westminster—Burnaby, like those in every other riding in Canada have grown increasingly disillusioned about this country and our federal government.

I find the vision of hope and tolerance Pauline Jewett identified as the Canadian way has now been pushed to its limits. At the very time this country should be stepping forward, it threatens to step back and I ask why. What has happened?

The answer lies in the sad legacy of this federal government and the harmful policies it has been pursuing in our country. The fact is that Canadians feel deserted by their federal government. But when I look back on the federal government policies I have seen implemented in this House in the last four years, I understand why Canadians feel this way. I understand why my constituents are so concerned, because I see the effects of the Conservative government policy and the

residue of past Liberal administrations right in my own community, at home in New Westminster—Burnaby.

I am concerned for my constituents when I see the federal government sign the North American free trade deal. Without any debate in this House of Commons, a tripartite agreement has been signed. For my constituents in New Westminster—Burnaby this means productive working people who form the very foundation of our economy could now be competing with Mexican workers who earn less than a dollar an hour.

I am concerned for my constituents when I watch the federal government make Canadian jobs our number one export, thanks to the trade deal they negotiated with the United States.

For the constituents of New Westminster—Burnaby, many of whom work in the forest industry, this deal has meant they have had to witness the Tory government stand by while the U.S. slaps restrictive countervailing duties on our wood products. Yet when we tried to rectify this disastrous mistake, when we on this side of the House put forth a motion to end this loss in the workforce, what happened? Both the Liberals and the Conservatives voted against us. The trade deal continues and the job losses continue.

I am concerned for my constituents when I note that thanks to federal government policy we have record unemployment. Food banks have been our only growth industry. My constituents in British Columbia look to the government for help in retraining and for job creation programs. To these people who want to work this government says its fight is with inflation, it has no money to create jobs or it cannot do anything to stimulate the economy.

I am also concerned this federal government has made huge cuts in transfer payments to the province of British Columbia. The federal government has produced propaganda documents like *Learning well, living well* and *Prosperity through competitiveness*, which encourage Canadians to seek further education. At the same time these documents are produced, our children are being turned away from universities, from colleges and from vocational schools right across this country.

• (1710)

When the need for post-secondary education has never been higher, Douglas College in my riding has had to turn away record numbers of potential students, students who qualified, because the federal government is not backing up its competitive rhetoric with competitive dollars.

I am very concerned that this federal government has also cut the federal co-op housing program and cut back drastically on social housing programs. In my riding many residents of Burnaby and New Westminster will now remain on waiting lists for affordable housing. This decision means the loss of thousands of jobs building new units and renovating housing. It comes at a time when housing has never been more expensive for the average resident.

The residents and the workers of New Westminster—Burnaby are concerned for the Fraser River which flows right through our community. We have learned recently that the changes made in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans policy, mismanagement, and the lack of enforcement have contributed to the disappearance of 1 million salmon from our salmon stocks in the Fraser River.

I was pleased to hear, just as I entered the Chamber, that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has named Peter Pearce and Peter Larkin to head an investigation on these missing sockeye salmon. We must resolve the discrepancies in the numbers of fish entering the river, reported catches and the number of fish that made it to the spawning grounds. Those numbers are so much lower than expected. We must ascertain why these sockeye runs did not meet the projections that we were told about.

This is one of B.C.'s major industries. We cannot afford in British Columbia to have happen to the salmon fishery what has happened to the cod fishery in Newfoundland.

What about taxes? My constituents, like all constituents in Canada, are upset about their increasing tax burden. Unfortunately I must tell them some simple truths about this government and its priorities. The sad reality is that instead of lessening the tax burden of hard

working individuals, this government has chosen to help others.

This federal government allows business entertainment deductions costing taxpayers $1 billion a year. This federal government continues a Liberal loophole which allows Canada's wealthiest families to hide assets from taxation in private trusts. This federal government continues to shift the tax burden away from profitable corporations on to the backs of hard working individual taxpayers. This is a shameful record.

Finally, the constituents of New Westminster—Burnaby do not understand how this federal government can spend $4.5 billion on 50 submarine hunting helicopters and yet at the same time tell us that there is no money to build our crumbling infrastructures right across this country.

I received a letter from the mayor and councillors in Burnaby expressing their concern for our community's aging infrastructure and pointing out exactly that $4.5 billion for helicopters could be much better spent on building up Canada's infrastructures.

There is also no money, we are told, to help the unemployed retrain and find work, no money to help the disadvantaged have access, no money for single parents to have child care and no money for women to have equality. We are told there is no money to put food in the mouths of the hungry. Yesterday we saw the end of Canada's first universal social program. We saw the end of the family allowance program in this country. Again the reason was no money.

At the very time that Canada needs to step forward, at the very time Canada really wants to step forward, at the very time we need modern solutions to complex problems, this country's modern needs are being remedied by Conservative witch doctor economic theories that already have failed with previous Liberal administrations and have already failed in other countries in the world under Thatcher and Reagan.

Is it any wonder that my constituents in New Westminister—Burnaby are concerned? What this government must understand is that the Canadian people are an investment. They have worth. They have value. Yet some here with the power to make a difference choose not to.

I am appalled when I hear this federal government say it can do nothing more to help Canadians. I am appalled that this government does not invest in our most precious resource, our people, our children. I am appalled that other party leaders choose to say nothing and offer no solutions merely because they are ahead in some polls.

When they choose to do nothing, they do not deserve to be our federal government. We do not want governments that choose to simply shrug their shoulders or leaders who keep their heads ducked low. We do not want governments that choose to turn their backs on all but a few. We do not want governments that choose to sell our sovereignty.

The constituents of New Westminster—Burnaby want to see a society that is the sum of all its parts, not just a few big cogs. They believe a society is judged by how it treats all its people, not just the privileged few and they believe the federal government has a moral obligation to help to empower Canadians and to help those who are unable to empower themselves.

To do so, we ask that the tax burden be shifted off the backs of those who work the hardest, suffer the most and are the hardest hit. We want to protect those social policies which are the foundation of our national identity, like medicare, pensions and the universality of all of our programs.

We want a federal government that will fight each and every day for women's equality, for eliminating violence, for ensuring pay equity, for breast cancer research, for reproductive choice and for electing more women here to the House of Commons.

The federal government cannot be detached from its policies. The government cannot be ignorant of the human face to the numbers that it crunches. There are essential issues in our society which must be addressed. These are issues such as jobs, social programs and the environment which require immediate attention.

These are the key issues that, when we return to this House of Commons, we must all address.

We are adjourning tonight. Many of us are going back to our communities in order to work on the referendum. The majority of us in this House will be working on the yes side of the referendum. I sincerely hope that when we return in November we are still talking about the

national dream that is Canada, the national dream that we hope to leave for our children who follow us.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great care to my hon. friend's intervention in this debate.

I appreciated first of all her reference to her distinguished predecessor whom we will all miss. I had the privilege of serving in one Parliament with the late Pauline Jewett and developed an immense respect for her and for her respect for the truth even when the truth hurt her own cause.

I wanted to ask my hon. friend a couple of questions about some points that she made in her speech, the first with reference to the North American free trade agreement which she suggested had been signed without debate in the House. That is substantially true but it is the normal pattern of treaties which the Government of Canada enters into.

My hon. friend was here in December 1988 when we debated the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement. We had extensive debate prior to the November 21 election and we could say that was the free trade election.

I can forecast for my hon. friend that there will be a very extensive debate on that subject once the treaty comes for ratification to our Parliament and to those of the other two participating countries.

I do hear from parliamentary colleagues in Mexico and they are puzzled. They ask why a social democratic party in Canada would be opposed to the idea of a partnership with a country such as theirs which is seeking to bring itself closer to the economic level of Canada and the United States. Would that not be good for all of us and would this treaty not provide for it?

• (1720)

I believe the treaty would provide it, but that social democratic party, being my friend opposite's party, seems to take the view that immediately there would be something of an unlimited labour pool among the three countries and that we would be competing with Mexican wage rates. My hon. friend made that very point. She said that we would be competing with Mexican workers who are being paid $1 an hour. My understanding of the treaty is that would not be the case at all. It would be a partnership.

My second point is that my hon. friend said there had been huge cuts in transfer payments to British Columbia. I do not believe that to be the case. I believe what has happened is that the rate of increase of the transfer payments to British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario is being held at 5 per cent.

Does my friend, being a good social democrat, not agree with the principle that the wealthier provinces, her province, mine and the province of Ontario, have a responsibility to accept a slightly lower rate of increase—and 5 per cent is not bad in these times—so that more can be allocated to the poorer provinces, which is the case?

My final point is with reference to Bill C–80, which passed the House yesterday. The reason for the changes in those family benefits is not that there is no more money. In fact, $2.1 billion more in family benefits is being allocated under these changes so that there will be $500 more per family per year for the working poor in Canada. In the spirit of the late Pauline Jewett, I am sure that my hon. friend would see it as her duty to convey those truths to her constituents.

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, my friend opposite raised a number of points that he listened to when I was speaking and took issue with. I would say in terms of the trade deal with the United States there was debate in this country and in this Chamber before this free trade deal was signed with the United States. There was an election, he is right, fought on mainly that one issue. There was debate in every region of this country. There was discussion in town halls, at political meetings and everywhere across the land. It captured the national news every night.

In the case of the North American free trade deal, there has not been any of that discussion. There has not been an opportunity in the House to debate this issue. There has not been an opportunity for the people of Canada to debate this issue. I am confident that having had the experience in Canada, the last four years of the trade deal with the United States, Canadians do not want the North American free trade agreement. That is why this government is spending so much money now on propaganda on this deal, advertising on radio and television. It knows Canadians have experienced first hand the effects of the trade de al that this government signed with the U.S. They have experienced huge job losses. Up to a half a million manufacturing jobs have disappeared from this country, some of which have been replaced

with jobs in the service sector; McJobs, flipping McHamburgers. Canadians know they do not want to continue on that course.

I would agree with the member in terms of working in the underdeveloped world to raise the standards of living there. I would agree with him if this deal had anything at all to do with that but it does not. The European model, in which are shared common standards and common wages, is altogether different than this North American free trade agreement. The European model does have something to go for in that venue. It will set minimum wages and minimum standards in the environment. The North American free trade deal includes none of that.

The member spoke about the transfer payments to my province of British Columbia, the cutbacks. There have been cutbacks; $166 million less has gone to the province of British Columbia for health care alone by the changes that this government made in the Canada Assistance Plan. I want to tell the member opposite when he talks about sharing with Canadians, British Columbians have shared with the rest of Canada since we entered Confederation and British Columbians are committed to the principle of sharing across this land.

However, the poor in British Columbia are just as poor as the poor in any other section of this country and the battered women in British Columbia are just as black and blue and beaten as the battered women in other parts of this country. They are deserving of the support of this government in terms of transfer payments. It is a very weak argument that he presents.

Family allowance is our oldest universal social program. In 1984 the Prime Minister of this country said that universal social programs were a sacred trust, not to be tampered with. This is tampering with a capital *T*. It is eliminating the universality of the family allowance program. The new child benefit program is not indexed to the cost of inflation and will be worth less and less every year with fewer and fewer families being able to benefit from it in future years.

It is the Machiavellian plan of this government to cover fewer and fewer families as the years go by. At the beginning of the new year, 1993, suddenly some families will receive a bit more in monthly support payments. However, what those families do not understand is that at the end of the year when they probably would be expecting the child tax credits and other credits through the income tax system, those will no longer exist.

I would bet right now with the hon. member that he will have had his election before the folks find out the truth of this program.

Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to speak in the House before it is adjourned.

This has been a short session of Parliament, but perhaps may have been one of the most important. With the debate of the referendum question and the approval it received in both Houses, Canadians from coast to coast to coast must now do some soul-searching in preparation for the October 26 referendum.

We must look deep into the soul of our nation, see its true value and see it for what it truly is. It is a gift that we cannot afford to lose.

I have voiced my support for the referendum question and my acceptance of the Charlottetown accord reached on August 28. I stand firm in my belief that the constitutional deal reached by federal, provincial and territorial governments and the representatives of aboriginal Canadians is not a perfect deal, but it is a deal that will allow us, as Canadians, the opportunity to reorder our constitutional priorities in a way that will reflect better who and what we are as a nation and, most important, what we will become.

I am committed to return to my riding to campaign for the referendum, urging my constituents to vote yes. As a member of the Western Arctic, I am satisfied that the aspirations of northerners and aboriginal peoples will be met through this agreement as it has not been done before.

We now have the inherent right to self-government and the pre-1982 conditions for the creation of new provinces. I am very proud to say that northerners and aboriginal peoples have made a significant contribution to what will become the renewal of Canada. The great white north is a unique place and is truly Canadian. Canada is a northern country.

A young friend of mine named John Bethel from Edmonton once told me that the very first time he ever went to the north was when he truly felt Canadian. He was on his first trip to the north. I have travelled from coast to coast to coast in this country and I am always reminded of how very few Canadians have ever experienced the north, and conversely, how very few northerners have ever experienced other parts of Canada. If you leave it to Canadians to discover one another, a lot of comradeship and a lot of loyalty to the country is expressed.

The north, in and of itself, is untouched and its overwhelming beauty is something we want to share. Its rugged geography is something that challenges the physical ability of any Canadian that ventures into the north. The pure, clean air and the respectful relationships that northerners have with the land and nature is something to be shared with this country.

• (1730)

While there is a possibility that the constitutional crisis may be over, this is not true of the economic crisis. For people living in the north, where is the road to economic recovery? Where is the road to resources that Diefenbaker started? Not one mile has been added since we have had this new government.

This does not seem to be the government that has the answers for our country or for our part of the country. Highway infrastructures remain to be put in place and the impending airline merger will deliver but another devastating blow to an already fragile economy.

Northerners remain isolated from the rest of Canada, from the mainstream transportation routes and economy. Northerners do not have the luxury of choosing between the bus, the train and even travel on the highway by car from one community to another as most other Canadians do. Many times we are solely dependant on the airlines.

We cannot afford to isolate our communities, cut off our economic business and tourism ties and decrease our standard of living. The government must ensure Canadians, especially northerners, that air travel will remain accessible and affordable. It is and should be for Canadians living in the remote regions of this country a very basic guarantee.

Because the House is adjourning, I would also like to focus on another critical issue that affects my riding, I would like to take the opportunity to urge the government to take the necessary and responsible action to bring about an end to the Giant gold mine strike in Yellowknife. The strike is now reaching into its fourth month. There has been violence and extensive vandalism. People are losing their homes and their families are suffering. There is many a sad story to tell of homes that are now vacant, of the lost dreams of those people who wanted to make the north their home. Those people are no longer in the north. They have gone elsewhere to look for other opportunities because they had no choice. This unhealthy atmosphere is affecting the whole community of Yellowknife and its local economy.

The union wants to get back to the bargaining table and the workers want to get back to work. There is no mediator. The mediator flew the coop. Management refuses to move on the dispute. These people need assistance and federal government intervention.

At one point I asked for anti–replacement worker legislation. The most provocative thing to do in a strike is to bring in replacement workers. It undercuts the morality and the ethics of a good workplace regime. We asked for a meeting with the minister and were refused. We have now asked for an industrial disputes inquiry. A resolution is urgently needed. We cannot afford in our already fragile economy another situation that will affect individuals, their families and their children.

As this House adjourns, the First Nations people have made great progress in this constitutional round of talks but there are many outstanding issues that have to be dealt with. The government continues to overlook a very critical aboriginal issue.

If members remember, in the summer of 1990 we had the Oka crisis. Many Canadians thought we had closed the door on the Oka crisis but they should know that it has not been resolved. This government continues to stall in its efforts to expedite a solution to the long–standing issue of purchasing property south of Route 344 in the village of Oka in exchange for the Pines.

The inability of this government to settle the issue contradicts and reneges on the Prime Minister's promise to consult with aboriginal peoples and respect for the fiduciary responsibilities of the Crown toward them will be built in the process from the start. This the Prime

Minister outlined in his four main pillars. This is not a real estate deal as may be the intention of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Minister of State for Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This is a land settlement and the federal government must uphold its fiduciary responsibilities and resume a fair negotiation process as had been agreed to in the framework agenda.

The conflict between all parties involved must be resolved so that the relationship may be re-established to discuss issues that are so important to the community of Kanesatake, such as the issues of justice and policing, and much needed and promised funding to establish a healing program. The crisis was such that the community needs this healing program urgently. The department has yet to deliver on its commitment for funding.

I want to deal with another issue that has a direct reference to the Canada clause. The Canada clause states:

> the aboriginal peoples of Canada, being the first peoples to govern this land, have the right to promote their languages, cultures and traditions and to ensure the integrity of their societies, and their governments constitute one of three orders of government in Canada;

In effect, this statement renders the requirement of the extinguishment clause outdated.

The extinguishment clause is extremely divisive and should be abolished, if not for its contradiction to the Canada clause then for the moral and legal travesty that it is.

In my community and in my riding there was a major comprehensive claim that failed. One of the reasons the claim failed was that people were asked to cede, release and surrender their aboriginal rights and claims to their land, in fact all of their rights. This is totally unacceptable. What has happened now is that we have a very fragmented process in which smaller groups are going for regional claims within which there are further divisions, in some of them not in all of them.

The human rights commissioner said two years ago: "It is not an exchange. Whichever way you cut it, it is extinguishment. It is the release, the surrendering and ceding of rights".

It is an outdated, colonialist method of governing and it is unacceptable in light of the intent of the Canada clause, as well as the over-all agreement.

The federal government, specifically the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Department of the Environment, must also uphold its responsibility to support the hunters and trappers of Canada. The government has done nothing to support the Indigenous Survival International group, which has put forward a proposal to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs that has not been responded to. It has asked for money to train trappers on humane ways of trapping. The British Parliament, which is in another country, has a lot of impact on what happens to our hunters and trappers.

The British Parliament has identified 13 species to go on the endangered species list. Twelve of them are Canadian and have a direct reference to how aboriginal and northern Canadian trappers will maintain their livelihood.

There is a need to educate and inform aboriginal trappers and others of the potential implications for all trappers that may result from the European ban.

Aboriginal trappers need an opportunity to make informed decisions about their future involvement in the fur trade. If not, they may be placed at a disadvantage in comparison to their non-native counterparts, who are better organized and better informed. Both DIAND and the Department of the Environment must play a key role in the education process.

I believe that we have reached a critical juncture in Canada, a point at which we will never be again if a no vote prevails. We have reached the point at which we are now by consensus. The chemistry of individual leaders and heads of governments will never be at the same point it was at in Charlottetown.

We have gone beyond the point of debate. I know in my heart and in my mind as a Canadian and as a responsible politician that it is time for the question to be put forward to the Canadian people. Thus we have the referendum.

The referendum is about choice. People will have the opportunity to take possession of the future of their country. I know this in my heart because there have been a number of times throughout the constitutional process

that I have stood alone on a number of issues. I stood alone when we discussed the issue of the Triple-E Senate, because there was not always unanimous consent.

I stood alone on the creation of new provinces because not everybody believed in a bilateral process. I stood alone in questioning the issue of distinct society because even months ago, six to seven months ago, people thought the debate was over. I felt as one individual that I fought hard during that opportunity given to me to make the appropriate changes. I feel the time for debate is over, because this country now needs a yes.

• (1740)

I also stood alone when we talked about massive decentralization of powers to the provinces because I felt, as a strong federalist, that I could not see the emasculation of government and the gutting of the core of our government. I am a believer in a strong central government, but I believe the time for debate has lapsed. The time to fight was during all those conferences, the first ministers' meetings, committee meetings, and high-level negotiations. Now is not the time for debate, now is the time for decision making.

We have gone through numerous rounds on the Constitution. Now is not the time to question the details, because I believe the minor deficiencies of this deal do not outweigh the total good that it will do for this country. I believe that we will not ever again reach a point at which as many people who are responsible for negotiating and making those decisions will come to the same mind on these issues. I believe that we can do a lot worse, and we may if a no vote prevails.

I believe that because I have been there. I believe that because I have taken a stand on principle, because I believed in a strong central government, because I was willing to hold tight to the belief that a Triple-E Senate spelled fairness and equality for all provinces in this country and in all parts of this country.

That time has gone. This is not a debate about the past, this is a debate about the future. Now is when our country needs a yes, when the north needs a yes, when the future generations of Canadian men and women depend on a yes, and when aboriginal peoples in Canada need a yes. I believe in my heart that a no vote is a no to all the things that I have aspired to since I became an elected politician.

I have worked hard because, inasmuch as I fundamentally disagreed with the Meech Lake accord, I felt that politics is the art of the possible. If it were possible to amend Meech Lake I was willing to accept Meech and amend it. It was never amended, the amendments did not pass. We had failure during Meech Lake.

I look at this deal and I see Meech plus, I see Meech amended. It has the criteria for me and for what I was given and mandated to do when I was sent to Parliament to achieve constitutionally. It has done that for me I believe, in terms of how I fit into Canada as a politician, how the people in my riding fit into this. We have achieved something far greater than we were able to achieve in previous rounds. I do not believe that I as an aboriginal woman, for instance, can put my own individual rights ahead of the collective rights of my people.

There is a no committee of aboriginal women. I believe that no and that injunction they seek flies in the face of everything that I have worked for, along with aboriginal men in leadership, along with other men, along with other leaders, along with all the people who have struggled to reach this critical point. We are at a juncture at which we cannot go backward, we must go forward.

If we say no to Canada, if we say no to this deal, we say no to the opportunity for our people to better themselves, for our people to become autonomous, for our people to have the dignity, the respect and the equality to make their own mistakes after 125 years. We say no to the Northwest Territories that has gained a concession it wanted. It has gained something. It has gained the opportunity to become a province if it so desires on a fair and equal basis.

This country is a great country, but the instruments of governing are not perfect. People who run governments, leaders who head governments, are not perfect. We as a conglomerate of individuals who constitute Parliament are not perfect. We try to find the highest level of consensus. We try to find common ground.

This is one time when I appeal to the people of Canada. If they vote no they vote no to many of the things that we have achieved. We have not achieved everything and we may have lost some things, but I think the gain is far greater than the loss.

I appeal to people in the north, because not coming out to vote is like a no vote. It delegitimizes the right to speak out afterward. They feel their rights have been sold out. They should come out and express that because a referendum is about choice.

I think it is equally devastating when people do not vote. So Canada, I appeal to you to vote, come out and vote. Remember that this question is bigger than one individual. It is bigger than one group. It is all of the components of what constitutes Canada. I ask you on October 26 to come out and vote yes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I know you are a good navigator, you have just demonstrated it.

I think you would find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

> That, five members and two staff persons of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries be authorized to travel to British Columbia for three days in November or December in relation to a study on west coast fisheries issues.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that we on this side of the House in the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party, give consent to the motion in a magnanimous way.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I would confirm that we support the motion, in particular because one of our colleagues, in fact, called for the trip during Question Period earlier this week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mifflin): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mifflin): 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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre (p. 13284); and the amendment of Mr. Edwards (p. 13278).

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I feel it is important to speak on this debate.

Frankly I feel the Canadian people are being severely short-changed by their government and by their Parliament. We in the opposition feel that the duty to Canadians is not being adhered to at a time when this country is experiencing difficulties greater than any difficulties it has experienced since the Second World War.

We have sat for the better part of two weeks. It is the government's intention to resume the sitting of the House on November 16, which will mean that we will be sitting for one month prior to the Christmas break and House rules state that we will not be coming back until after February 1.

It means that in the past seven months of this time of trouble and uncertainty for this country, this House will have sat six weeks. I cannot condone that. As a parliamentarian I feel we are making a terrible, terrible mistake.

Canada's attitude to politicians is bad enough now. I would venture to say in the minds of Canadians that politicians have now slipped behind loan sharks in their estimation. We are going to sit for six weeks in seven months at a time when this country is looking for direction, is looking for answers, and is looking for cohesion and leadership to deal with the serious—and I cannot stress that too much—problems of this country. We are abandoning, we are jettisoning our responsibility. Our House leader stated, and I agree with the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond completely, that we recognize the importance of the referendum debate. We must win this referendum debate. We must keep this country together. If we do not win the referendum debate, and to anyone who feels he or she wants to vote no, then I say to that person, conceptualize in your mind where you see your province after the referendum because certainly it is going to mean the break-up of Canada.

• (1750)

That is not defeatist. I do not feel I am defeatist. I did not support Meech Lake because I did not think it was a complete analysis and consideration of what we needed in this country. Not having supported Meech Lake, I want to say right now that we are on a precipice. We must decide whether we want to keep this country together.

I say that as an Atlantic Canadian. I defy anybody to see in that proposal anything for Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canadians are great Canadians. They are true Canadians. They have fought in two world wars, the Korean conflict and have continued to support this great country. They will continue to do so.

Atlantic Canadians recognize that the time has come not to say to this government that we support your thinking because Canadians do not support this government's thinking. The time has not come to say to the premiers that we think they are doing a great job because we do not think they are doing a great job.

The time has come when Canadians want to say we believe that this once again can be the country we know it can be. Even with this government's attempt to suppress its greatness, it is still the greatest country in the world. The potential for further greatness lies only in leadership and caring by its elected government. This can come with a change of government.

Most of all, what Canadians are now saying is that we need, each one of us in our hearts and together, to recognize that we need to save this country, that unless we together can support this country, it is going to split apart.

This is not something mechanical, a piece of paper, a little piece of inventory. Watch the national news concerning Yugoslavia and what is happening to that once great country. I am not saying Canada is going to be another Yugoslavia, but I am saying that the greatest sickness in this world is not AIDS, it is not heart problems, it is not cancer. It is prejudice. It is prejudice and sometimes fear.

When we combine the fear of the unknown, the fear of uncertainty with the baser instincts of humanity, we are going to have an ugly situation and we are going to go from something that is sublime to something that is ridiculous. We are going to go from the greatest country in the world to something that is not going to be even a reasonable facsimile of what this country is at the present time.

I say to people who have watched the news and who have seen the dead eyes of the children in Somalia, who have seen the parents of these children not being able to move because they are too weak, who now cannot live even with nourishment. They have done this so that all the food that they have possessed will go to their children. Their children are walking orphaned.

There is a story of a young boy, 8 years old, and his sister, 12, who left their parents because their parents could not even move. They walked toward the camp in Kenya. Somewhere along the way the boy and the sister became separated. Two weeks later that eight year old boy walked into the camp in Kenya.

We can mount a sophisticated, complete and utter devastating war such as the one we waged in Iraq and yet we cannot get food to starving people in Somalia because we say the government is on our side; we have to be careful of the warring factions and people are stealing it.

I say those excuses are not good enough. We in the Canadian Parliament are showing our concern for our country, for the economy and for the world picture. We are adjourning. We are going to sit for six weeks and seven months. Boy that is dedication, that is really getting involved in what is happening in this country and what is happening in our world. It is a disgrace.

We would agree to pair with the government. We would even agree to there being only 10 people on each side of the House. If members feel they have to be in their ridings—and we all have to be at some point to negotiate and to win this referendum—then for heaven's sake we encourage them to go there. We encourage them to become involved in this tremendously important debate, but we say keep the House going. There are other concerns.

We now have an international monetary crisis. Because of the problems in Germany and because of the cost and the inflation resulting from incorporating 17 million additional Germans into the whole German Republic, there is now inflation in Germany. It has raised its bank rate. Money is flowing from the other European countries into Germany because the investors get a

higher return on the money they are investing. There is a tremendous drain of capital from Britain, Italy, France and the other countries in the European Common Market. They are in a state of financial chaos. Hopefully it will be resolved very shortly, but it will hurt Canada and the United States because money is international. It transcends borders; it transcends governments. It is a very touchy thing.

Our interest rates were at their lowest point two weeks ago and were really no stimulation to our economy. Manufacturers are just hanging by their fingertips, hoping this recession will soon end. They are hoping they can withstand the recession, and when the economy starts to go up they can start planning for the future. They are worried. They were worried even when we had our lowest interest rates. Now that the interest rates are going up, it is going to discourage a great many of these people.

It is going to worry those who have to renew mortgages, although our mortgage rates now are lower than they have been for some time. These are concerns that we have to address because we are the Government of Canada. We are the people representing Canadians. We have to be able to address these concerns. Things come up so quickly and they have to be addressed.

Canadians do not even feel comfortable in our large cities in being able to walk the streets. Yet what are we doing? The Minister of Justice promised us new legislation concerning young offenders. Are we going to be able to deal with it in the six weeks we have before February 1? Are we going to be able to do this or is it once again going to be another stall? Is it going to be another pronouncement that is going to try to entice the Canadian people into thinking the government is doing something when in effect it is doing absolutely nothing at all. It cannot do anything if it is not here.

What about urban crime? What about the prevention of crime? What are we going to do? We hope that the Standing Committee on Justice will pursue this in November. The minister has planned a symposium for March at which he wants to hear feedback. We have child pornography in Canada, we have prostitution, we have 10 and 11 year olds taking guns to school and we are going to want to get some feedback in March on these problems. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is not performance. That is not serving the needs of the Canadian public. How can we serve these needs when we are only going to be here for six weeks out of a total of seven months? This is incredible. We want to deal with the referendum, but we do not want to jettison our responsibility for every other concern that the Canadian people have. Is this government saying that it can only deal with the referendum, that it cannot walk and chew gum at the same time? This is incredible, absolutely incredible.

• (1800)

The people in Atlantic Canada are not going to be satisfied with this. We are going to have the worst winter in Atlantic Canada that we have had in my memory. We have had, even with this House sitting, the government turning its back on us. We have had the fisheries collapse. We have had the tourist industry drastically, drastically reduced. We had the government take away our passenger rail service in eastern Nova Scotia and now it wants to sell the rail line to the private sector in eastern Nova Scotia. It has cut back our airline service drastically.

Mr. Milliken: It is selling Canada down the drain.

Mr. MacLellan: It has allowed the container boats to leave Halifax in large numbers. It has completely ignored the needs of our post-secondary education and our health care when dealing with transfer payments and equalization payments.

Mr. O'Kurley: That is not true. That is just not true.

Mr. MacLellan: It has. The reason is that it is convenient. We have only 32 seats in Atlantic Canada. The government can say: "We do not have to worry about Atlantic Canada because it does not have that many seats". I am telling you that the people in Atlantic Canada are first-class Canadians. There is only one level of Canadian in this country and that is first-class Canadian.

As soon as we recognize and we dictate a group of our Canadian public to be second-class Canadian citizens, we are abandoning the principle role of Canada that all people are equal. People who have been here for four or five generations, people who have just arrived in this country, people who live on the east or west coast, the northern territories and central Canada, all Canadians are equal. That is not the way it is becoming. That is not the way this country is being run at the present time.

Mr. Milliken: We should have an election.

Mr. MacLellan: There is an elitism that just permeates the establishment in this country and the greater number of Canadians are gradually, gradually falling away from the prime level of importance in the eyes of this government. Oh, sure there are overtures made for instance that there are going to be things done in our justice system: We are going to deal with urban crime; we are going to deal with the Young Offenders Act; and we are going to deal with poverty and unemployment. But we cannot deal with those if we are only going to be here for six weeks out of seven months. We cannot deal with them if the House is not sitting even if this government wanted to.

We cannot afford it. There is more than one way of a country completely decaying. Constitutionally is only one. Neglect for those in need is another. There is neglect for the regions which depend and want the assistance of their federal government and the people who cannot help themselves. The people of this country are now being told that their needs are listened to but because of the debt we cannot help them. I am telling you that it was not the poor and the disadvantaged in this country who caused the debt. It was politicians. I will be absolutely clear that the poor and disadvantaged in this country should not pay the price for the mistakes of the politicians in Canada. However, these mistakes and these needs cannot be addressed if this House is not sitting to deal with them. How are we going to deal with them if we are not here?

I wish the government and all parties well in the referendum. I just hope and pray that we will be successful. It is vital, but there are other things too. They may not be coming to a head, they may not be coming to a focus in the next five or six weeks, but they too are vital. Although they may not have the immediacy, they are vital because they represent the needs of Canadians. If these needs are allowed to slip and if they are put off, Canadians suffer and Canada suffers. The fibre of the country, our belief in ourselves and what we as Canadians want for ourselves and for children suffer.

I would ask the government to reconsider its motion.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have immense respect for my hon. friend who has just spoken. He is well known in Parliament and elsewhere as a fair and just man, so I was startled by some of the things he said.

The first point that I would like to make by way of commentary is that there was an implication—I know my hon. friend did not say it explicitly—in his remarks that the government ceases to function if Parliament is not sitting. That of course is not the case because the administration of government goes on, initiatives can be followed through, policies can be executed and indeed they will.

My hon. friend has a genuine concern for the poor and disadvantaged. He has demonstrated that in a distinguished parliamentary career. That is why it troubles me a bit that he seems to suggest that such elements as urban crime, which is a real problem, and prostitution, which again is a real problem, are not being recognized by the government. In his fairness, I think he will acknowledge that there have been more justice and Solicitor General initiatives by this government in the last 18 months or so than in the past number of years, including into the previous administration, and each one of them is a step in a progressive direction. At least I think most of those initiatives have had the general support of my friend.

The hon. member mentioned cutbacks in transfer and equalization payments. We had an exchange earlier with the member for New Westminster—Burnaby in which I pointed out that her province of British Columbia, rather than having been cut back in transfer payments, has been limited to a 5 per cent annual increase, as has my province and as has Ontario in order that more can be freed up to benefit provinces such as Nova Scotia.

Before I conclude, there is one other point. I think I heard my friend say that the government had cut back airline service to Atlantic Canada. If that is true, I would like to hear how the government cuts back airline service since the government has been accused of the sin of deregulation. I do not know how a government can cut back if it is not in the regulating business and it has got itself out of the ownership business as well.

My fundamental question to my friend, and I will conclude with this, is if the no side wins will we have a country, with or without all the ills that my friend points to and which genuinely do need to be addressed? The final point arising out of that question is would he or would I be able to look ourselves in the face if we neglected to do everything within our power to persuade our voters to vote yes in the referendum?

• (1810)

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I hope that I can deal with all of the points brought up by the hon. parliamentary secretary, who is an excellent member of Parliament and I know is concerned about the future of this country.

I want to address the first point he made wherein he said that the government is still going to be here, is going to be sitting even though Parliament will not be. That, as the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has said, is not a relief to Canadians. Also, it is not representative government in that the people who elect their representatives expect their representatives to be present. If the point of view of their representative is defeated in the House of Commons, then so be it, that is the way the parliamentary system works. But the point of view is put forward. I think that is very important.

Also, the government sitting is not going to help get criminal justice legislation through. It is not going to be able to put the legislation before the House so that it can be dealt with, because you need to have the consideration of the House of Commons in order to put this legislation through, to deal with it. The government may conceive in its own mind what it wants to present, although I do not know of it having done so, but it can. It is not going to be presented if the House of Commons is not sitting.

The other feature, of course, is that a lot of what was done in some of the better legislation of the Minister of Justice—and I talk about the gun control bill and the replacement of the rape shield provision—was done in conjunction with groups and with all members of the House of Commons. Our committees met and they went over it and as far as gun control, before there was a bill that the minister withdrew. Then there was a special committee to consider the subject. They submitted their report and then a new bill was presented. They were pleased to do it. It does not matter to me. The minister can take full credit for it. That is not important. The fact is there is good legislation there.

There are parts of the criminal justice and solutions to our problem, they are there. However there are holes that have to be filled, and some of these holes I have mentioned on some of the subjects I have talked about.

I agree, the government *per se*—and this is one thing I will agree with it on—did not specifically cut back airline service. It did, however, privatize Air Canada. By privatizing Air Canada, Air Canada ceased to be an airline that had to be represented in all parts of the country, that had an obligation to service in Canada. Air Canada was formed because this is a vast country with a small population, and the population is centralized. If we are going to offer Canadians first-class service, if we are going to have Canadians feel that they are not second-class citizens, they must have a service that warrants that. The privatization of Air Canada has had an effect.

If this country votes no, certainly it will be devastating. If even one province votes no it is a setback. I would say to anybody that if they feel their place is in their riding to do this, fine. I want to say to a member of Parliament who feels that they are doing what they can through their yes committee or through whatever else they have to do, and still has extra time, that there is a place here in Ottawa where they can get together and deal with the other concerns of the Canadian public. I do not think the two are mutually exclusive. I would have hoped that the government would have done this. However, it chose not to. Maybe in its interest it really believes that we have to give it full flight and that this cannot be done, we cannot meet here. I do not understand that, frankly, and that is the reason for my concern.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys a short question because I support him when he talks about the frustration of having the House of Commons in a six month period only open for seven weeks. I do not think most Canadians will buy that. We are talking about going out and discussing a constitutional agreement which is inextricably intertwined with the economy.

Does my colleague think that because the House is not sitting and because this government has so little trust, as he stated in his speech, knowing that this document is just loaded with economic meaning, there is some danger that good parts of this document might end up

suffering a backlash because of the low trust of this government?

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Certainly the record of the government is a direct factor in the referendum debate. I think all of us, certainly on this side of the House, have a duty to ask Canadians to please not confuse their feelings toward this government with the greatness of this country and what we share as Canadians and what we can make of this country.

I say to Canadians that this is important. I also say that Canadians know the difference and there will be an understanding but it is going to take a moment of reflection not to connect the two.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys. He always delivers a very thoughtful presentation. This evening without notes and with great feeling he delivered an excellent presentation and I am sure we are all proud of him on this side of the House.

An hon. member: Absolutely. Right on.

An hon. member: I think we should extend the hours a little longer.

An hon. member: Unanimous consent to extend the hours.

Mr. Mifflin: This is encroaching on my time. I will quickly move on to the subject at hand which is essentially on the same note as the previous speaker.

I will be going to my riding. I have voted yes for the referendum and for the question and I will be doing as much as is required to ensure that those who want to vote yes will have the opportunity and those who are thinking no will certainly have the choice to speak with me, discuss the issue and discuss the fallout for this country as a result of a no vote. This is not the time or the place to spend time talking about that because I really do have other issues.

Running a country is a question of priorities. You cannot do everything so you have to do something and you have to do something in order of priority. I would say this is probably the highest that we have ever had. If you equate yes and no to keeping the country together, as I do, it is the highest priority.

We are all fairly educated, experienced people of an age when we know the difference, more or less, between right and wrong. We can do more than one thing at a time. I believe that we can campaign for the referendum and still run the business of the House of Commons at the same time. It may require that we operate with 20 members rotating from time to time or 10 members or 15. I do not know what the formula should be but I do believe that the Canadian public is going to be dismayed if it finds that its House is shut down until a month before Christmas and then is not going to open for another month after that. There are too many things going on in the country right now that are left hanging.

• (1820)

It reminds me a little bit of a ship in a storm. The navigation has gone somewhat berserk. It is foggy. The engines are not working properly and it is almost apparent, not inevitable, that the ship is going to founder on the rocks.

What does the ship's company do? What does the captain do? He does a lot of things, but one thing he does not do is abandon ship. He tries to do what he can. He tries to repair the engines. He tries to have a seaman's guess at where he is and take his ship out of harm's way.

I would say with a certain degree of agreement in this House that we as a country are very much standing in harm's way right now. I believe we have to come to the rescue of the country to prevent it from going further into harm's way and by putting the constitutional debate behind us and getting on and running the country.

That is very important but I believe it is also important to run the government other than administratively to have the opposition have the government accountable for the things that it is doing. I want to give one example and it is an example that I am very familiar with. I do not need to read any notes and I do not need to quote any figures.

For eight years the government has been running the fishery in this country. It is not an easy job. I am not going to stand here and say that it is an easy job. There are a lot of variables and a lot of uncertainties. However,

bad decisions have been made and mismanagement has been there.

From the early part of February when the northern cod cut-backs and the moratorium that would eventually come were announced by the government, this opposition day after day questioned the government, caused it to go back to the drawing board, asked it to think of compensation, suggested some ideas of compensation, wrote letters to the government and spoke with its constituents. Eventually on July 2 a compensation package was put forward.

I can guarantee that the opposition's role in that particular issue was very important. It was important enough that a compensation package was delivered. It was not perfect but that is not the issue here now. The compensation package was delivered.

There are a lot of people who still concern themselves with whether they are eligible and if they are eligible why they have not been compensated. There are certain areas of concern in the fishing industry such as vessel owners, who I am very concerned about, who have to maintain their vessels alongside. I am not talking about very small boats, I am talking about 65-footers costing upwards of $1 million.

They had to pay the loan. They had to pay the light and they had to pay the power and all the other bits and pieces to maintain their vessels alongside. They need special compensation. They have not been looked after.

Those involved in the trucking industry related to the fishery cannot change their system to do trucking for other sectors. For one thing, the other sectors are not there because of the economy of my province right now. However, they are not geared that way so they as well are out of work because of the northern cod moratorium. They should be looked after.

There are the small fish handlers and the smaller processing plants that buy fish or take on fish. The larger plants that depend on the northern cod to keep going take fish from these smaller plants to make sure that the peaks and the valleys are looked after. They are as related to the northern cod as those who have been compensated.

I know the minister is looking at that. My point is that it is the opposition that calls the government to account that helps the government run the country. It might not like it that way, but that is our system of parliamentary democracy.

There are a number of things that Canadians are concerned about right now and I am going to list them. I will not have time to speak about all of them. When I go back to my riding I can tell you I will not be faced with a number of people standing on the border of my constituency asking about the referendum,. I will create interest in the referendum, but my constituents are interested in the economy. They are interested in jobs. They are interested in what is happening to our social programs, particularly with what has gone on in the House this week with the demise of the family allowance program. They are interested in investing in people and in what the government is doing for them. They are interested in who cares for the underprivileged and poor; the people who do not have jobs or money and have children to look after and no place to go. They will ask me: Who cares for me?

There is concern for the youth. I have said many times the future of our country depends on our youth. I can tell you they are disillusioned. I will come back to that.

I mentioned the question of trust in this House two days ago. There are a lot of constituents out there who have problems with politicians, not just on the government side but on all sides of the House. I think there are reasons for that and I think we can rectify them. There is education and the whole business of parliamentary debate.

As I have said, I will not have a chance to talk about all of these, but let me just say a couple of things about the economy. God knows there have been enough speeches about the goods and services tax in the House. I do not intend to make another one this evening, but the goods and services tax was described by a number of people as the most unpopular tax in any country at any time. It did not take a Ph. D. in economics to figure out that whether or not the government needed the GST when it was causing the country to be in a recession, it went ahead and not only allowed the GST to happen, but pushed it through. Extra senators were brought in at a cost to the government of $30 million, to say nothing of the other

aspects of it. It was so intentional at a time when all the red flags were hoisted saying: "Don't do it. For God's sake don't do it now. Wait until the economy changes".

What happened? The government went ahead and did it. What does it mean? It means every single person has to pay $787 more a year to live. It means a couple with the average 1.2 children spends $2,375 a year more to live. That is a lot of money when you have no discretionary income, no job and no money coming in. Where do you find the money? What a time to introduce the goods and services tax.

I am not going to speak about the free trade agreement tonight, but last election we were speaking hypothetically because we did not know what the free trade agreement was going to do. We now have some evidence of it, four years later, and I do not like what I see. I have no problem with free trade, but this agreement has not been a good one. I have heard all kinds of figures mentioned about the number of jobs we have lost because of free trade. It is upwards of 1.2 million. Now if even half of those people are related to free trade that is too many.

I could go on to other aspects of the economy, but I want to move on to the business of jobs. I have the terrible distinction of having a riding that has the second highest unemployment rate of the 62 unemployment regions in Canada. I think northern Manitoba has the highest. I am not proud of that distinction and am trying to rid myself of it, but I cannot seem to do it. It used to be when people in my riding did not have jobs they went to Toronto, but now there are 600,000 people unemployed in Toronto and looking for jobs. They cannot go to Newfoundland because they will not find any jobs there. There are over 1.5 million people in this country without jobs.

Is there a better prospect for tomorrow? A very credible organization says next year, of all the G-7 countries, Canada will have the highest unemployment rate. That does not warm my heart at all.

• (1830)

I recall the Prime Minister saying social programs were not going to be touched. It was a sacred trust. In the space of four years we have seen changes in old age security and the family allowance. We have seen a great change in the unemployment insurance rules, which has certainly not been beneficial to my riding. We have seen the beginning of what could be the end of medicare.

I do not want to scare people but I do not like what I see. Payments are being cut to the provinces; the Canada Assistance Program is being capped; people are having to pay for things they cannot afford; we start to think about legislation that would put an end to medicare and those things worry me. I think they worry everybody here in the House.

There is the subject of investing in people. There is a level of anxiety in this country now that is bothersome. It used to be when you went to foreign countries the people would tell you Canada was a lovely country and if they had been here they would say this in spades. They would say they could not wait to go back to Canada. We have people who come to live in Canada. Why do they come to Canada? They come because we have a great reputation. In the last couple of years, in the rare times I have been out of the country, it is not quite the same. People say they do not understand what is happening to our country and wonder what we are doing to ourselves.

We used to think Canada was a great place to live. I submit it is still a great place to live. I am hoping, like all of us here in this House, we will continue to make it a great place to live. I am not suggesting otherwise. I am suggesting there is a very big red warning flag, and people are anxious about it from Bona Vista to Vancouver, and I have been in both places in the last week. It is a level of anxiety experienced politicians tell me they have never seen before.

I do not like using trite expressions, but if you look at the over-all record of this government since 1984, it has not really followed, initiated or encouraged policies that really help the underprivileged. I am going to leave it at that.

I have to say, on the positive side, if you want to see what youth can do, have a look at the 1,200 young Canadians who participated in the unity hockey tournament in Toronto. I was lucky enough to have a team from Conception Bay North in my riding and it represented eight or nine communities. When I was there recently for the summer games, which again was another positive youth-run organization, those who participated and their parents came up to me and said "Mr. Mifflin, we need more of that in this country". That warms the heart.

I give this example to show how positive youth are. Their minds are uncluttered with some of the things we bother ourselves with here in this House. I am not saying

they do not have the experience or are not educated about these things, but they are optimistic by nature. I want to see us doing things to keep them optimistic, but it is very hard for me to tell the youth I speak to that we in the government are optimistic for them when the government cuts back on youth training programs that provide work in the summertime to ensure they have money to go back to university.

An organization that represents 450,000 youth, the Canadian Federation of Students, says it is very disappointed because since 1985 $65 million has been cut from the summer employment program. It might be said that $3 million was put in last year but with the round figure is $65 million. It is very hard for me to say to the youth of this country that the government supports them when this kind of thing happens.

I can give a number of examples on trust, but this is the one I am going to cite. On August 24, 1988, four years ago plus, the Solicitor General came to my riding and gave fantastic reasons why there should be a prison in Harbour Grace. He said: "There are 201 Newfoundlanders who are inmates and we can only put 60 of them in Newfoundland. Therefore we must have a prison in Newfoundland for Newfoundlanders so they can be close to their families and be rehabilitated in the proper manner".

He gave a very stirring speech on that. There are 160. Less than a year later, on April 27, that prison was scuttled, finished. Now that is a lack of trust. I would not trust anybody who did that to me.

The government's record on education speaks for itself. Last year there was a reduction of 2.4 per cent in education at a time when the percentage should be going up.

In terms of parliamentary debate, on every major issue in this House we have been muzzled. We get two days to speak on it and that is it. We are muzzled. On Bill C-80, the demise of the family allowance, we were muzzled. On many other things we were muzzled.

Yes, I will go to my riding. Yes, I will do what is required to assist the yes answer. However, I would prefer that this House continue to sit and that while I am there some of my colleagues would be sharing their time to continue to drive home these points that show that, yes we are our doing our thing with everybody to get a yes vote but after that is over we are going to hold the government accountable for those issues on which I have spoken.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have immense respect for my colleague and I actually have immense respect for many members on the government side.

I was happy to hear in the member's speech his remarks about youth and the unity tournament, because he was right on. We can learn a lot from the youth of this country on how to galvanize and work together. I agree with the member, I wish we had more projects like that with which we could pull the country together.

However, there is something the government side is totally misunderstanding. We on this side of the House are Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Yes, there are many people in our country today who are doing better with the lower interest rates. There are many people doing well because of lower inflation. I think the ratchet on inflation was a little too aggressive but I am not knocking zero inflation. How could anyone do that?

It seems to me that the government does not realize we are not on this side of the House to speak for the advantaged Canadians. We are here to speak for those people in our country who are disadvantaged: the fishery that is in trouble right now, the many unemployed people, the people in my community who have no freedom because they do not have a weekly pay cheque, they do not have a job.

We are here to speak for the small or medium sized businessman who has this expectation in his mind that because interest rates on a poster are 5 or 5.5 per cent he can go in and get a loan, but then he goes in and gets shot down because there is very little money being rented out these days. He practically has to exchange money to get money.

• (1840)

Does the member not think that this government is totally misunderstanding what the constructive role of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition is all about and in fact is showing great disrespect for our legal right to be the watch-dog, to help make this government accountable?

Does the member not think that is one of the reasons that the people of Canada have such little trust today, because the government is not allowing us to do our job?

Mr. Mifflin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Broadview—Greenwood.

His question is a pensive one in the sense that it concerns what causes people to put politicians, as my friend from Cape Breton—The Sydneys said, a little bit below loan sharks. I do not think we are quite that bad, but the point is made.

I am barely old enough to remember with any sort of knowledge and intensity of the pipeline debate. However, I do remember the flag debate. At a certain point in time the flag debate had to be closed, but it went on for weeks and weeks and weeks.

Mr. Milliken: Months.

Mr. Mifflin: It went on for months. At that time, when closure was announced the whole country was up in arms. People said: "Why are we stopping this debate?"

In response to my hon. friend's question, since 1984 this government has invoked closure or time allocation 50 times. That is 50 times in eight years.

Mr. Milliken: Shame.

Mr. Mifflin: Do I believe that this is one of the causes for the anxiety that I talked about, and lack of trust that my friend talks about? Of course it is.

Canadians elect parliamentarians to come to debate the issues. They do not elect us to be muzzled.

Mr. Mills: Right on.

Mr. Mifflin: We spend two days talking about a bill like Bill C–80 in which the government says that it is going to give the people $2.1 billion in five years, but it does not tell them that it took $3.5 billion away from them the five years before. That is bound to cause a lack of trust in any organization. We are part of that organization and we cannot do our jobs as the Official Opposition because we are not permitted to do so by the government.

If the government wanted more trust as a government it would allow us to debate the issues, and perhaps the Canadian people would understand better why some of these measures are being discussed and why some of these measures have to be introduced.

There are few in my mind that we would change our minds on, but at least we should have the opportunity to debate.

Mr. Mills: Maybe even change the government's mind.

Mr. Mifflin: Not allowing debate is not allowing democracy.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I find that I am among quite a coterie of members whom I respect immensely tonight, none more than the gentleman from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

Twillingate has gone? I wanted to congratulate him on his thoughtful speech, but I did want to take issue with just one point, and that is the question of muzzling.

I want to point out to the House and to those who are watching this very serious debate that this debate now going on is the result of an all-party agreement that it would be totally open-ended. There is no question of muzzling here. This debate will continue until there is no member who wishes to speak, who wishes to intervene.

It is not terribly unusual for that kind of thing to happen, again through agreement among the parties. I do wish to make a small correction to what my hon. friend said about Bill C–80. I think we had three days debate, rather than two days debate, at report stage and third reading this week.

There was considerable debate at second reading earlier this year. On the question of debate being closed off, my friend from Kingston and the Islands says it was closed off. There has been a fairly loose use of words, not by my friend from Newfoundland, but by others about the word closure. I think the record will show that during 14 or 15 months beginning in the spring of 1991 and ending in June of this year, not once did this government use either closure or time allocation to compress a debate and bring it to a conclusion.

Since then there has been some use of time allocation, which is a parliamentary rule which allocates a particular amount of time to the conclusion of a debate. There has been no use of closure. The parliamentary device of closure, to my knowledge, and I stand to be corrected on

this, I do not believe has been used since the early spring of 1991.

Time allocation is used in the House only when consent and agreement on time allocation cannot be arrived at among the parties. That is when it becomes a unilateral initiative of the government. There is a tremendous amount of consultation that does go on. As parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, I spend a good deal of my time consulting with my colleagues from the opposition and trying to accommodate them. I can tell my friends opposite that even today I made a personal error which resulted in an extra 45 minutes of debate for the opposition.

Mr. Milliken: What beneficence.

Mr. Edwards: That is more than had been agreed upon among the parties.

Mr. Mills: Come on, you are talking about Canada.

Mr. Edwards: That is just one example. Just to conclude two points, many pieces of legislation, much of the work of this House, are done in committee, as all members will concede. A great bulk of the work of Parliament is done in committee. Just to use two examples, a good deal of legislation that comes out of this place has had many amendments from all sides that have succeeded. My friend from Davenport is here and I think of the environmental bill of the last year or so. I do not know whether it was 100 amendments, but there were scores of amendments that were accepted and they originated from him and from other members of the opposition as well as from government members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the time has now expired.

Mr. Mifflin: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could make a short response to the hon. member's question to me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time for questions and comments has now expired. If there is unanimous consent I have no problem.

Is there unanimous consent to give the floor to the hon. member?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mifflin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I do not really want to be long. I equally have a great deal of respect for my hon. friend from Edmonton Southwest. He knows as well as I do regarding closure that the rules for time allocation, the way it is right now, give an advantage to the government over the rules of closure. He also knows closure can only be used on third reading.

The other point is that in 15 months, by golly, we have not sat very much. That is probably one of the reasons why it has not been used. Here are the statistics and I think I need them for the record.

In the 70 years prior to this government's taking over, closure was invoked 13 times. Since this government has taken over it has been used 13 times as well; 13 times in 70 years and 13 times in 8 years.

Mr. Edwards: When was the last time?

An hon. member: You have not used it since you changed the rules.

Mr. Mifflin: The rules for time allocation have changed so the statistics, since they are being derived from a different set of rules and different time frames, really mean nothing.

Those were the main points. Let me finish by saying that when I speak in this House on an issue that is important to my constituents and I am told that I cannot speak because I have no time, the government will not allow it, I think I am being muzzled.

• (1850)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would love to continue with the debate that was going on between my learned and gallant colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and my very distinguished colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, but I will not except to say that the government House leader knows perfectly well that since the government fiddled the rules of this House, a year ago May I believe was the date that these changes took place—

Mr. Mills: It is fiddling the country.

Mr. Milliken: —it has made it possible for the government to use time allocation instead of closure which is far faster, and he knows this perfectly well. He also knows why closure is not being used.

Just so that the public understands, in order for closure to be used the debate must have commenced, so there has to be a day of debate and then notice of the closure motion is given and the closure allows for the debate to go until eleven o'clock at night. The government moved it from one o'clock in the morning to eleven o'clock at night. Once closure is moved you have an extended day of debate. Therefore, you must have at least part of a day and a full day of debate, and by full I

mean from the time the House starts until eleven o'clock at night.

Under the time allocation rule, you must have started the debate all right, but then once you have moved the motion the full day is allocated to it. Therefore, the day of the vote is all that is taken up. Yesterday was a perfect example. We had time allocation at third reading stage on the bill, the vote was put on the time allocation motion right after the Routine Proceedings were over at 3.30 p.m. or so and then the debate went on until the normal completion hour for government business at seven o'clock. The vote was put and the matter disposed of. Therefore, it would be much faster. If the government had used closure on third reading we would have been here until eleven o'clock last night debating that wretched legislation and the government would have been even more embarrassed than it was.

There is a good reason why closure has not been used. The government can also use time allocation on two stages at once and that is exactly what it did on that bill. It can use it on report stage and third reading. Closure is not available in report stage unless there is only one amendment because the debate would be prolonged in any event.

The parliamentary secretary, in saying that it has not been used, is playing a cat and mouse game and that is typical of the games that the government plays with the country and with this House by giving some of the facts and concealing the damaging facts.

Mr. Edwards: We are going to hear everything now.

Mr. Milliken: Yes, we are going to hear a little more. As the parliamentary secretary says, we are going to get more of the facts.

I want to go back to 1984 to talk about the government's economic record. It was elected on the promise of jobs, jobs, jobs. We all remember how the Prime Minister paraded around the country, boasting about his capacity for creating jobs and also remember that he was going to eliminate the deficit. That was the highest priority, to get rid of the deficit that the government keeps harping about as the cause of all its current evils. Every time a minister answers a question about the economy it is all because of that awful Liberal debt the Conservatives inherited eight years ago for heaven's sake. They still have not got over that pill and yet they knew about it and they were talking about it throughout the election campaign in 1984.

We have had 32 tax increases since this government took office. Government revenues have increased by over 50 per cent, I believe it is now the case, since it took office and we still have a $30 billion a year deficit. The government says that it has our finances in order. In every budget we hear how the government has things on course. Remember how the former Minister of Finance, now the super minister, used to say he was steering the course, holding the course, and he had this great course. The course has been repeated deficits and a repeated inability to get control over the country's finances, all because of the free-wheeling, spend-thrift ways of the government in times of economic success when the economy was booming.

Now we have an economic mess created by the government's own disastrous policies. It now says the cupboard is bare and instead of having Parliament sit here and introduce new programs which will help the unemployed, which will help fill the training programs that are now empty because there is no money to keep them going, we are left doing nothing and going off to deal with the Constitution yet again. I will deal with the government's bungling on that issue in a few moments.

In addition to the government's inability to get any control, we have had a disastrous financial policy pursued by the Bank of Canada. The government, in conjunction with its friends at the bank, the governor, has decided that a zero inflation target is appropriate for Canada. Today we witnessed what happened in the United Kingdom when a zero inflation target was finally abandoned by the government. It could not continue with it because it was bringing the economy to its knees. International money markets finally brought about the end of that policy. Yesterday we read that the British government lost something like $3 billion on the foreign exchange markets trying to prop up the pound and raise its interest rates by 5 per cent in one day. It lost control. Finally it lowered the interest rate at the end of the day and let the pound go down. They finally realized that this policy was in error. It has taken a long time. This government still has not realized the policy is in error.

What this policy has done is put Canadians out of work. Interest rates have been held artificially high in Canada for too long and Canadians have lost jobs as a very direct result of that.

The additional thing that has done is it has kept the Canadian dollar artificially high so that Canadian exports to the United States are more expensive for Americans to buy. We accordingly have suffered a loss of manufacturing jobs in this country. It has made cross-border shopping more attractive, which has only fueled the recession in Canada as Canadians go south of the border to spend their relatively valuable dollars on American goods.

Had the interest rate been lowered, had the Canadian dollar been allowed to drop, we would not have had the recession that we have suffered through in Canada for the last two and a half years. Indeed, the blame for this whole financial mess rests right on the government side. It has mishandled this from the beginning. It has botched this policy, and it has done it at the very worst time for our country because it negotiated a free trade agreement with the United States and it should have been adopting policies that expanded our trade, not reduced it. Instead of that, we have had the government pursue this high interest rate, high dollar policy, which has curtailed Canadian success in the American market and damaged our future prospects because we do not have the manufacturing industries being established here at a time when they should be to get those exports going.

It has cost us, it has cost us dearly, and it is no surprise that Ontario has lost a great number of jobs.

I will not go into the fact that we have an NDP government in Ontario which is driving investment out of the province willy-nilly, that is only exacerbating the problem. I could go into that at some length, but there is not much point. The people of Ontario know it and they are suffering badly as a result of having that government. Its policies, although not intended to be, are complementary to the policies of the federal government which seem to be to close the province. When my friend from Broadview—Greenwood, speaks of the 600,000 unemployed in Toronto, he knows whereof he speaks and whereof I speak when I talk about the disastrous effect of these policies on the economy of Ontario.

I would like to turn to the Constitution, having done what I could with the government's muddle-headed policies on the economy. I can only say that what it has done on the Constitution has been an even greater disservice for Canada.

The Prime Minister decided early on in his term that he was going to be the great champion of constitutional reform. He wanted to be another Pierre Trudeau or someone along those lines. He felt that he had the ability and somehow the trust of Canadians to come up with something new that would solve all our constitutional problems. No one has created a worse mess in Canada in terms of national unity and our Constitution than this government headed by this Prime Minister.

I regret profoundly, as do most Canadians, that he ever touched this field, that he ever thought that he ought to meddle in this field. If he had kept his mouth shut and done nothing, if this government had let the issue alone and done nothing, we would not be facing the constitutional crisis that seems to have enveloped us for the last three or four years.

We now have a deal cobbled together that the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, to his credit, managed to work out with a group of premiers of greatly varying political views. As I said the other night in the debate on this, I do not think the agreement is a great one. It is the best we can get, given the situation in which we find ourselves today, thanks very largely to this government's own blundering, stumbling and fooling around with this issue.

I want to say that I am prepared to support this agreement, as I said the other day, and in fact in my own riding of Kingston and the Islands I have invited the other three parties to participate in a joint yes committee and all have agreed. We have established in Kingston a yes committee for the referendum, composed of the three main political parties—my Party, the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party. The presidents of all three parties were with me recently and I announced at a press conference with them that we

were working together. They made statements in support. Clearly we disagree; they know full well my views with respect to the fact that the government got us into this mess and the blame I attach to the government for it. But we have all agreed we have to put Canada first in this case and set aside our partisan differences with respect to the question of voting yes. We will have our partisan reasons for doing so, but at least we can agree that a yes vote is essential for our country and we are working toward that goal.

• (1900)

I am pleased that has been the case and I hope the public realizes the reason for our willingness to co-operate in this way. It is not because a great affection exists for the government or because we believe the government handled the case properly. We do believe the future of the country requires a yes vote and in order to minimize the difficulties with respect to that, we have agreed to work together for that purpose.

This week a great Canadian nationalist died. I refer to Bruce Hutchison who wrote for many years about this country. I think there will be many of my own age who in their high school career may have come across some readings by this ardent nationalist for Canada. He spoke about our country and I would like to read a quotation from his book *The Unknown Country*.

This particular short piece was in a high school textbook, I recall. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary remembers it. I am glad he is back. It is nice to have at least one member here to hear on the other side the speech. The quotation is this:

> My country has not found itself nor felt its power nor learned its true place. It is all visions and doubts and hopes and dreams. It is strength and weakness, despair and joy, and the wild confusions and restless strivings of a boy who has past his boyhood but is not yet a man.

This quotation, although out of date—it was published in 1942—nevertheless reflects his ardent feelings for Canada and certainly reflects the present turmoil I think in which many Canadians find themselves as they cast about what their country means to them and what vision they have for its future and worries and concerns about that future.

I think there are some very important changes that have taken place in Canada and I would like to refer to them for a few minutes because I think it indicates considerable hope for the future.

[*Translation*]

If we can win this referendum, we will have to recognize the changes that have taken place in past years, especially the changes concerning language problems. In this country, we have often remained two solitudes, as my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Léonard, said in his speech a few days ago during the debate on the referendum question.

I looked at the figures prepared by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his annual report for 1991. The figures that interest me are those on second-language and minority language education programs. It is quite obvious from these figures, that many Canadians, especially young people, have started to study the other official language in school. That is very important for the future of this country. I believe that the interest in languages, and in the other official language in several provinces, is a sign of reconciliation between our country's language groups.

The figures are very interesting. I am especially looking at the figures for the province of Ontario, for example. It is hard for me to read figures in French, but I will try and if I make mistakes, forgive me.

For example, in 1977-78, there were 1,950,000 students in school. This year in Ontario, 883,000 students, or less than 50 per cent of the school population, are studying a second language.

In 1977-78 the French immersion program had 12,000 students in 160 schools. Last year the French immersion program had 140,000 students in 1,180 schools. That is an incredible increase. Moreover, 67 per cent of the primary school population was studying a second language. That is a real increase in the past 15 years since 1977.

These figures indicate an achievement in Ontario, but the same thing has happened in several other provinces where studying and speaking the other language has become very important.

[*English*]

This importance is something that cannot be stressed too strongly because if there are two solitudes in this country, it is the direct result of our unwillingness to work and study in the other language.

I may have mentioned in the House, I am not sure, that during a trip to South Africa last year I was confronted with a group of South African politicians who were fairly bilingual. These politicians spoke English and Afrikaans, which are two of the principal languages of South Africa. There are also others. It was commonplace for many South African citizens to speak both those languages. In fact, I found it extremely common throughout my visit.

The remark was made to me: "Of course we have to study two languages in school and that is why many of us speak this. Do you not have the same rule in Canada?" I said: "No, we do not. You are not required to take two languages in school. You can but you do not have to". They were surprised at that because they thought of us as a bilingual country.

We have things to learn about what goes on in other places and certainly the effective use of the two languages there made communication much easier. It broke down the divisions that existed in their society, at least in so far as those two language groups were concerned and it allowed them to interact with one another, an interaction that happens all too rarely in our country, exacerbated by the geographical limits of the various provinces where changes occur in terms of provincial policy on education and so on. Those problems are going to be with us for a while. I am not saying they will be over.

In this constitutional discussion we had to try to work out a way of keeping our language groups together, our provinces together with their very divergent interests and aspirations and economic situations, and then try, as the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs said, to cobble together some arrangement that would make the country work.

[*Translation*]

As my colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception said, our country's future depends on young people. I am sure that the figures I quoted indicate a change in our young people's attitude which is very important for our country's future.

• (1910)

[*English*]

I hope that with time we will grow to appreciate one another as linguistic groups, as different cultures, and expose ourselves to the other culture in a way that we have not been able to do because of the language barriers that exist between us.

That aside, we have to try to also cobble together a country that can work economically. The new package that has been put together, while far from perfect and one that could be criticized on numerous fronts, at least leaves relatively intact the economic structure of the country.

Some will say it needed repair worse than some of the other areas, and maybe it did. However, I do not think we are going to get that kind of repair, given the policy approaches of the current government which have done so much to damage the economic fabric of Canada.

The breaking down of our national institutions—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I forgot to look at the time, you were so eloquent, sir. We must now move to the period for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. friend for his contribution to this debate in both of our languages.

Even though he and I disagree on the vast majority of issues, I know he loves his country. He has demonstrated that on many occasions.

I want to ask my friend two questions. One is related to the fact that a leader of an aspirant new political party has suggested that Canadians vote no in this coming referendum and that it will be possible, as he advocates, to put constitutional discussions to one side during the life of the next Parliament.

We do not know what the life of the next Parliament is going to be, but let us assume it is four or five years, which is the customary life of a Parliament. I wish to ask my hon. friend from Kingston and the Islands what he believes would be the fate of Canada if such a course were followed.

The second question relates to my friend's comments about South Africa. I did not know that South Africa has, in effect, compulsory bilingualism, compulsory in the sense of instruction at least. I would like to ask my friend whether he considers that Canada has in any facet of its life compulsory bilingualism. I think voters in Alberta would be interested in his response.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question of the Reform Party to which my hon. friend refers, I know that he has particular problems with that party in his own province.

The rumours are rife that Reform may win some seats in Alberta the next time round. They already have one. The hon. member for Beaver River is—

Mr. Edwards: I notice you are looking over your shoulder, too.

Mr. Milliken: Not in the least. I am encouraging the Reform Party in my own constituency. I invited it to join the yes committee, but I have not received an answer. In time it may yet. I do not know what its approach is. I have not heard. The members of that party may or may not call me, I do not know what they are going to do, but that does not worry me.

I think the leader of the Reform Party is wrong when he makes the statement that this issue will simply be closed for five years. It will not close for five years. I do not think the provinces would agree to allow it to be closed for five years because the constitutional discussions that have gone on have raised Canadians' expectations too much.

That is the problem when you start discussing the Constitution. That is part of the reason why the Prime Minister should never have touched the issue, if he had any sense. Once you start meddling with it, especially when you are not very good at it as we have seen he is not—

An hon. member: It is over his head.

Mr. Milliken: He is away over his head.

Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I rise a point of order. The member knows full well that the constitutional problem was something that we inherited as a government. It was an incomplete constitutional package in 1982. We had no choice but to deal with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is a matter of opinion. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: The fact is that the Prime Minister got in over his head. The whole government got in over its head. Now we are drowning in constitutional soup. If an issue is not raised, people's expectations do not soar. If my hon. friend has any doubts about people's expectations, have them call the head of the National Action Committee for the Status of Women.

It is clear. Her expectations are much greater than his perhaps on this issue or even some of my colleagues who disagree with her. The fact is that the opportunity was there to do something and if it was not done, people feel they have been disappointed.

The expectations in the country are that something will be done, however little. For the leader of the Reform Party to suggest that this issue is just going to be closed off for five years and that nobody will talk about it, is hopeful pie in the sky. It will not happen and it cannot happen.

Indeed I suspect that after this deal is approved, there may be further discussion on this issue. I do not think it will be dominating the national agenda. I think it will be done—

Mr. Mifflin: I hope not.

Mr. Milliken: I hope not too. I am sick and tired of it. As the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception says, it is not something we want to continue with.

The second question that my colleague asked was about compulsory bilingualism. I said that in South Africa there was a requirement that two languages be studied in school. It was not those two. You could take any two. There was quite a choice of languages that one could take.

Were there a second language instruction or requirement in Canada it would not necessarily, if you follow the South African example, be English and French. It might be English and some other language.

I am not an expert in education by any means. I would have thought that a requirement that one study two languages in school for some period of time would not be a bad idea. Then I am not sure that I should, not being an expert in the area, express my view particularly on that. I would prefer to do that. When I was in school, I can tell the hon. member that I studied four languages. I studied

Latin, German, French and English and I enjoyed every minute of it. I would do it again. I must say I have forgotten most of my German and a good deal of the Latin.

Perhaps with help from the hon. member, he can assist me and we can have a speech here in Latin some night.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to hear that when my colleague for Kingston and the Islands goes to his riding over the next few weeks, he will be constantly reminding people of the flaws in this particular package and the fact that this government's economic record is something we on this side of the House do not support. A great concern I have is that people might perceive that the Liberal Party is endorsing this government's entire package. That is something that really bothers me.

One of the things that I have experienced in my city, Toronto, is that about 99 per cent of the businessmen I have talked to in the last four or five days have not read a single line of this document. It is in my riding office and I beg the business community of Toronto for once to try and take some time to get involved in this. For me, the people of this country are supreme. If the people of this country want to vote for this package, then I am not going to get in their way.

I resent the governments—

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, the member started out by mentioning that the Liberal Party did not endorse this particular package. I am somewhat confused. Is he talking about an economic package or he is talking about the referendum constitutional package?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Your attention please. I will be pleased to give the floor to the hon. member for a question or comment or for a speech but it is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the hon. member exactly what I said. I said that there are some Liberals in Canada—the Liberal Party of Canada because there are some of us in the Liberal Party—who have real problems with this package and I am one of them. I am undecided because there are many things in this package that I cannot get the answer for yet. I have talked to some of the best constitutional lawyers in this country and I think I have a right to ask questions about certain aspects of this deal. For the government to say that I am anti-Canadian or anti-Canada because I am asking questions about this package—you have insinuated that many times in this House today. If you want to clarify it, that is great.

• (1920)

There are going to be a lot of Canadians who vote against this package in every province of this country. If they vote against this package, we should not call them anti-Canadian or anti-Canada. We should stop saying they are going to be responsible for the break-up of Canada. We are not a bunch of mobile homes here that are going to be moved off.

My question, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry, the time for question and comments has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, we in the opposition on this side of the House think that tonight's debate is very important. We believe that the House of Commons should not adjourn, because issues like unemployment, the economy, personal security and many others affecting the national welfare require this House to continue working in September and October. It is really too bad that the government has decided to adjourn for more than six weeks.

[*English*]

This motion reveals one thing very clearly: the government is out of touch with Canadians. In a survey published just 10 days ago in *The Toronto Star*, 55 per cent of Canadians surveyed called the economy and the recession their major preoccupations. Employment was also very high. It came at a very high level of 24 per cent. National unity and the Constitution came at a level of 11 per cent.

This is a clear indication that the mind and the heart of Canadians is focused on matters other than constitutional. It very difficult to understand why, in light of this poll, the government would decide to close down the House of Commons for six weeks.

It seems to me that the government is not really so much out of touch with Canadians, but that it is adopting a tactic to divert the attention of the public from pressing economic and social issues and to focus instead on one and only one matter, namely the Constitution, as if we did not have one. Canadians have had a Constitution since 1982. It is a new Constitution by any normal international standards. It has worked well and it has

served Canada well in every part and region of this country.

At the same time, if we look at the picture of Canada, we notice, as other speakers and other colleagues of mine have indicated, that the country is in a mess. Why the government would want to divert the attention of the House of Commons and of the public away from its urgent and pressing economic and social measures is really very difficult to understand. Unless it has a particular scheme in mind, namely that it does not really want to focus on these economic and social matters it is highly regrettable.

This motion to close down the House until November is a real disgrace because it is, in essence, an abdication of responsibility in an attempt on the part of the government to say to Canadians: "We want you to focus on the Constitution and the rest must wait". This is the wrong approach.

There are important matters in this country that require attention. Where will the government be in the next six weeks? Not answering questions in the House that get reported by the media, and which in turn allow Canadians to know the answers to current issues as raised in this place, the House of Commons. The government will be able to issue press releases and engage in a monologue. There will not be a dialogue across the aisle in this House for the benefit of the public, to help them learn what the measures introduced or announced by the government are really all about.

This House will be mute, this House will be silent and the public will be denied the opportunity to have access to valuable information, as is the case when this House is sitting. This is a very serious measure that the government is bringing down tonight.

On this side of the House we should scream bloody murder in the middle of the night because this measure is really unacceptable considering the gravity of the economic and social situation in this country.

The government is closing down the House at a time when the nation is in turmoil on the Constitution, which the public does not understand in its implications and its complexity, for which there is no legal text, on which no study has been conducted to reveal how the proposals will work out in reality and in practice, on which every day in the last few days we learn about revelations, denials, contestations, and rejections at the provincial level, in parts of the country.

It is becoming controversial. Therefore, it would be in the public interest if the House were to sit to allow clarification on some of these disturbing developments that are now surrounding the integrity of the process leading to the referendum date.

The government is closing down the House. Thus, it is virtually cutting off the public from information about what is happening in a variety of sectors. Take the economy, and what is happening there. It is cutting off the public from knowing about what is happening in terms of unemployment and what is being done about it.

It is cutting off information about what is being done regarding the North American free trade agreement, how it would affect our working population and the measures that could be put in place to protect those who will be affected. It is cutting off information and dialogue about the environmental effects resulting from the North American free trade agreement.

• (1930)

It is keeping the public in the dark about the measures, if any, that would be taken in order to reduce the very high youth unemployment.

It is leaving the public in the dark about the long-term intentions of this government with regard to the universality of our social security system, in the light of what happened yesterday when the government muscled through the child benefit bill.

It is leaving the public in the dark about the training of the unemployed, and the shortcomings in that very important sector. It is leaving the public in the dark about measures the government may want to take in order to protect the Canadian dollar in case it may be in danger in the weeks ahead.

It is bringing to a halt any intervention in this House on behalf of the fishing communities on the east and west coasts. It does not permit any interested members, on behalf of the forestry industry and workers, to pursue the issue of our dwindling forest resources.

It does not permit members to pursue our seriously backward energy policies that are being adopted by the federal government at the present time. It is leaving us in the dark about the intention of this government to introduce measures related to water quality.

It is leaving us unable to raise the important question of the galloping increases in foreign control of Canadian business and industry. It does not permit the opposition, on behalf of the public, to raise questions about the lack of adequate protection for those whose jobs are rapidly disappearing, about questions on insufficient social housing, about the increasing costs of drugs and medicines for people on fixed incomes, about violence in the cities, about violence in the streets, about the individuals who are abducted despite efforts on the part of the police, about drug education, about the slump in the construction industry, you name it.

From this list, and I will elaborate on some of these points, one cannot help but conclude that it is the height of irresponsibility on the part of this government to close down this House over the next six weeks.

I am looking forward to the questions by the parliamentary secretary, to hear from him how he justifies that particular fact. It is the height of irresponsibility for this government to say to the nation that unemployment is not going to be on our agenda during the next six weeks.

Youth unemployment is at 20 per cent in Toronto, where the member from Broadview—who also has raised this issue on several occasions—and I come from. At 20 per cent it is an issue that now has got to be put to sleep. The repercussions of the North American so-called free trade agreement are going to be so severe on thousands of workers, and their future cannot be discussed and raised in this Chamber for a month and a half because the government has decided that this country does not have a Constitution, because this government has decided that Canadians are unhappy about the Constitution.

Have you received a letter from one Canadian saying he or she is unhappy with the present Constitution? Has anyone stopped you on the street imploring that we need an amendment to the Constitution because there is something profoundly wrong with it and we need a redesigned Senate? Show me one Canadian who goes to bed at night worrying about the composition of the Senate. Show me one and I will give you a special diploma for finding that person. It has become ridiculous.

Let me elaborate a little bit on some of the topics I just raised. When it comes to fisheries, we know there are hundreds of communities on the east coast in particular, but also increasingly on the west coast, which are facing a very serious winter because of the lack of cod or salmon, because we have overfished. What measures are going to be put into place? There are some we need to examine to see whether they are working. We want to know what we are doing for the long term to bring back the missing stocks, to bring back the means to make a living for the communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. We will not be able to say a word on that matter for the next six weeks.

We know there is violence and uncertainty in the streets. There are abductions. We want to raise this matter in the House of Commons with the Minister of Justice to ensure appropriate measures are taken. We will not be able to do that.

We have learned that between June 1985 and June 1992 some $115 billion of foreign investment has come into Canada and 93 per cent of this went to take over existing businesses. Only 6 per cent was invested to launch new enterprises. This is a devastating statistic. It is a very serious matter. We want to investigate it.

We learned the merchandise trade surplus with the United States was $48 billion in the three years preceding the free trade deal. In the first three years after the free trade deal was signed, it has slumped by $6 billion to $42 billion. In other words, we have lost $6 billion worth of trade in three years. During the same years, Canada went from a surplus of $11.5 billion in the current account to a deficit of $11 billion. There are a number of items which require the examination of parliamentarians and must be raised in this House.

We have an 11.8 per cent rate of unemployment in Canada in the adult population, which is by far the highest of the G–7 group.

In terms of foreign ownership, some 30 per cent of Canada's top 65,000 corporations are foreign owned. These are vital statistics that make the question of the Constitution appear almost irrelevant because we have to come to grips with them. In light of the issues surrounding us from coast to coast, from the economy to social matters, from trade to the environment, we are going to witness a situation whereby the Government of Canada is going to operate without the scrutiny of the public made possible through the daily operations of the House of Commons.

• (1940)

This is an unacceptable decision, which we on this side of the House reject in the name of the Canadian public.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened again with interest to my friend from Davenport who always makes a reasoned contribution to any debate.

I just wish to focus on one point he made. He challenged us to name one Canadian who went to bed at night worried about the Constitution.

I will try to describe which Canadians do that: there are Quebecers shut out by the Trudeau Constitution; 2.5 million Albertans and millions of others across the country who are heart-sick about the disgraceful anachronism that is our present Senate; 790,000 Canadians of aboriginal origin who will at last be reconciled to ordering their own affairs; Francophones outside Quebec and Anglophones in Quebec; Canadians who care about social goals and objectives; and finally, and this may surprise my friend, students of Canada, the unemployed of Canada, the under employed of Canada; people whose economic lives are impacted by things my friend will say are the errors, omissions and commissions of the government, but which are contributed to in large measure by the constitutional uncertainty that besets us.

Now I think my friend will say we brought it on ourselves because we initiated it or mismanaged it. The fact of the matter is, not only was Quebec left out of the Constitution, these other aspects of our Constitution that have truly been dealt with in this Canada round, imperfectly as they may have been dealt with, have been dealt with by the 17 participants as effectively as possible at this time.

I would challenge my hon. friend with the same proposition I put to the member for Kingston and the Islands. If we were to tell Mr. or Ms. Canada to go to sleep and not worry about the Constitution, does he honestly believe we could live through the life of another Parliament not dealing with the Constitution and still keep the country together?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his question because it gives me the opportunity to reply. The unemployed, the people he referred to who are having a difficult time and those who cannot make ends meet are not the victims of the existing Constitution. They are the victims of the wrong economic policies adopted by this government over the last few years. They are the victims of the decision of this government to focus all its energies, attention and time on the Constitution at the expense of economic issues. The fixation with the Constitution has brought about the current problems, not the fact that we have a Constitution that is not working.

The hon. member likes to engage in accusing the former Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, of constitutional shortcomings. It was a Constitution which his party supported. He was not in the House at that time and therefore he may not recall it, but it received the support of his party and of his current Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. It must have been a pretty good Constitution, if it generated the support of the Progressive Conservative Party at that time, I submit respectfully.

The question that worries Canadians today is related to their ability to make ends meet, not to how many senators will represent them in the upper chamber. That is the question that preoccupies Canadians. Those who have jobs are worried about whether they will have jobs under the North American free trade agreement. Those who do not have jobs are worried about the fact that they may never again get jobs. Those are the issues that are preoccupying Canadians today.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that Canada is hurting and that we would like to see the economy much better than it is, but I think we have to put in perspective where we are internationally in relation to the rest of the world.

Obviously, if anyone has watched the television screen, listened to the radio or read a newspaper in the last 24 hours, he or she would realize that we are in pretty good shape in this country in relation to what is happening in Europe. In fact we are in pretty good shape in relation to what is happening in the United States.

I will cite a number of those statistics when I rise on debate, but I have a question for the member. A headline in *The Financial Post* of today, the September 17 edition, read: "IMF sees Canada leading rebound". For those folks at home, the IMF is the International Monetary Fund.

It simply states that of all the nations in the world Canada is best positioned to lead the world next year in economic performance. In fact we will come pretty close to leading the world this year in economic performance. That is not rhetoric. It is fact that every one of us in this House, regardless of political stripe, should be proud of.

We are not alone in this recession, but the member would have to admit that we have the fundamentals in their proper perspective. We are in a position from which we can indeed lead the world. The member should recognize that and accept the fact that we have done a pretty good job through some very difficult international times.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely grateful to the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte for his question.

He may draw comfort from reading *The Financial Post* headline on the International Monetary Fund, but that headline is of very little comfort for a mother who is trying to raise two children alone, for someone whose meal depends on the food bank around the corner, for someone who has just lost his or her job, or for someone who knows that his or her job may be lost in the near future because of global competition.

They will not be impressed by the headline the hon. member saw in *The Financial Post*: "IMF sees Canada leading rebound".

• (1950)

It is a good headline for those who have good jobs with good salaries, but it is not comforting reading for the 11 per cent of adult Canadians who are unemployed or the 20 per cent Canadian youth who are unemployed. To them, the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, is an abstract notion. If it is known to them, they also know how many of these predictions have not turned out true. That is another aspect that has to be kept in mind.

I urge the hon. member to come down to earth and put himself in the position of those who are suffering because of the wrong economic policy of this government obsessed with inflation, a policy which has managed to bring down inflation and at the same time to kill the economy. This economy is not rebounding despite the low levels of inflation, which tells me that the government put its foot on the brake so hard to stop inflation that it killed the economy in the process. That is why I say the economic policy of the government is wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The time for question and comments has now expired.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we will be leaving this House for the next eight weeks. That is the subject of debate tonight, as we shut down the House. This has to be the most important eight weeks in the history of this country. Each and every member will leave this House and go back to their individual constituencies to take part in the referendum vote on October 26.

I know there is disagreement on whether or not we should be here or back in our constituencies. There will always be disagreement on that. I guess even those of us on this side of the House can debate whether we should be here or back home.

When I am back home I will be holding meetings throughout my riding. Most members on both sides of the House will be doing that, but obviously some will not. In fact today we put the final touches on the dates of those meetings in what is a very rural riding. We will have 15 public meetings in total which will be very much non-political. We will invite all the community leaders and citizens of the individual communities within Carleton—Charlotte to partake.

In those meetings we are going to step through the referendum and the constitutional agreement reached in Charlottetown on August 28 and discuss their merits so that when we go out to vote on October 26 we will understand what is in that package.

The only way we can do that is to be back in our constituencies and work as hard as we can to get the message out, to explain that package. As I stated in this House on Tuesday of this week, although the question is quite simple the proposals or the agreement itself is somewhat complex. It is incumbent upon all of us in this House to do our best to explain those proposals, to explain the agreement that was reached by the first ministers, the aboriginal leaders, the territorial leaders and the Prime Minister on August 28. We are going to do our very best to explain that package. However, there

will be questions and there will be debate on whether we should be here or back home.

I want to put what is happening in this country this very day in context or to explain it the best I can. The member who just spoke, I guess being as generous as I can, pointed out some of the flaws in our country. Indeed we have a number of them and we will admit to those, but I think we have to use real facts and real statistics when we are on our feet in this House. We cannot depend entirely on emotion to get our points across.

Some things have been mentioned in the House this evening with regard to what is wrong with Canada. They have stepped through the environment, fisheries, energy programs, unemployment insurance programs, and the child benefit package that we just debated in the House this week. We can step through each and every one of those and argue that we should be back in the House in the next eight weeks talking about those types of things, talking about the unemployment rate and talking about the fisheries.

However, we have dealt with those matters. We have packages, programs and legislation in place today dealing with those matters. They are not perfect. They will be refined from time to time. When we come back in November we will probably be taking another look at some of them in the House.

We have not forgotten those issues. We have not forgotten the fishermen in Newfoundland. We have not forgotten the cod fishery and the devastation that the lack of that resource has brought about in Newfoundland.

The minister of fisheries announced in the House the most generous package ever announced by the Government of Canada to deal with that very problem. We could agree that it is not enough and it will probably never be enough, but we have dealt with it.

In terms of the environment, Canada leads the world internationally with our green plan. It is the best in the universe. In terms of energy, I cannot speak with much authority in that area, although we do have the parliamentary secretary to the House leader with us this evening who can speak with authority in that area. We have an energy program, a package and a vision for this country that will work in future years.

We have an unemployment insurance program that was overhauled by this government in attempts to deal with the realities of the work place in Canada. We are doing those things. We have not forgotten those things.

The member talks about single parents, mothers and the jobless in Canada. We have not forgotten those people. We debated the child benefit package or that child benefit legislation that will replace the old family system, the child tax benefit system and the other accompanying tax benefit programs in a very constructive way. The package that was supposed to deal with certain realities out there was a very confusing mess.

When we talk about that we have to focus on what we did in this House as a government. We brought in a package that addressed reality. It addressed the people who need assistance from the Government of Canada, those lower and middle income working families, those poor families who need assistance. We have looked at that legislation and we have a package of which we can be very proud.

If there are other glaring realities that we have to deal with when we return to the House, we will deal with them. However, let us not be confused by some of the rhetoric that has been evident here this evening.

I mentioned earlier that Canada is positioned to lead the world next year in terms of economic growth. That fact is recognized by just about everyone outside the country. Every country in the world recognizes that this country called Canada has done the things that were necessary to move it along the way in terms of economic growth in future years. We have done that and we can be very proud of that.

When I cite those statistics I am not doing it in an abstract way. The member can criticize me for using that in a very abstract fashion, but it is not abstract. It is talking about the very thing that creates jobs in this country, the jobs we want to see. We have gone through some difficult periods and we will probably go through more of them.

• (2000)

When you form the government you have to do the things that you feel are necessary, and we have done them. Now we are being recognized internationally for having done those things.

If we want to get into comparing our record with the record that the previous government had in this country, I will stand up any day to compare. That is not what it is all about here this evening.

This evening we are going to be leaving this place. We are going to be leaving this place for eight weeks to discuss the very future of this country and whether we have a future. I think it is time that we left the politics of this issue behind us and leave here tonight in a spirit of generosity to go out and do the thing that is incumbent upon us to do; namely, talk about the good will of this country, the future of this country, what we have achieved in the mere 125 years that we have had as a country. We must go out and do our best to encourage Canadians to take a very serious look at the proposals we have before us, at the agreement that was reached in Charlottetown on August 28. I think it is incumbent upon us to go out in a very serious and dedicated way, explain those proposals and hope that Canadians reflect on them in a very genuine way between now and October 26 and be prepared to go out and support a renewed Canada on October 26.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): I want to start off by saying that I had the opportunity this morning to attend the funeral of Paul Martin Sr. in Windsor at Our Lady of Assumption parish church. As I listened to the eulogy that was delivered by my colleague from LaSalle—Émard, I was struck by many qualities of Paul Martin Sr., particularly by my colleague's description of how committed his father was to his riding. He said that in the last few days he came to a new realization that looking after his riding was more important than anything else he ever did. That was one of the reasons why Paul Martin Sr. throughout his entire life basically lived in his riding.

The respect that his community had for that dedication, for that service, was certainly exhibited today because there were literally thousands and thousands of people there who participated in this very, very special moment.

As I was listening to my colleagues this evening and as I was trying to figure a way to communicate to the government, I want to remind it of what Paul Martin Sr. was all about.

He was all about looking after his constituents. That is precisely why we are standing here on this side of the House tonight saying to the government that we really wish it would not close this House down for the next eight weeks. It is not just the next eight weeks. We have hardly been here since the third week in June. We have been away all but a couple of weeks. We are talking not sitting nearly five months of the year.

I know that I have been emotional tonight. I am emotional because I have been listening to my constituents all through the summer. I have many constituents who are doing well. I want to say to the member for Carleton—Charlotte that I had a barbecue in my backyard this summer and I had one of the most positive economists in all of Canada, Tom McCormack, give a speech saying how Canada was going to be better in the 1990s than it was in the 1980s.

I am not speaking tonight as someone who is negative. I am not speaking tonight as someone who is trying to put a sting on the government. I am here tonight to say to the Government of Canada that I have many people in my riding, in my city, and I know this condition exists right across the country, who are like patients in the intensive care room of a hospital.

There are men and women, single parents with children who do not have a job. Without a job you have no freedom; when your son or your daughter comes to you and asks you for money to buy a new pair of shoes for school or to buy a new blouse or whatever it may be, you do not have any money. In my city, in my riding, there are many people like that.

They are counting on me to be in this Chamber, trying to move the government, stimulate the government, to come up with some hopeful bridge until we get to the point the IMF talks about. We are not there yet. Until we get there we should be in this Chamber dealing and working for those people in our ridings who are disadvantaged.

I have listened to people in the last two months from the business community when this Chamber was not sitting. I do not want to sound emotional. I want to sound reasoned. Believe me, there are thousands of small

businessmen in this country right now who are not sure if they can meet the payroll this Friday.

In my riding, and I am sure they say this to the members opposite, they say: "Please, get into that House of Commons and shake up the financial institutions of this country to help us over this period". That is what they are saying to me.

• (2010)

It is a pretty frustrating feeling to think that I have lost the last 60 days in trying to represent them in this House and now I will lose the next 60 days. It makes you wonder, what does an MP do? What I am doing here? At times it makes you feel totally useless.

From 1980 to 1984, I had the opportunity to work for Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. I never agreed with everything that Mr. Trudeau said. He let this place debate. We used to have debates in this place three nights out of five until ten o'clock in the evening. It was a forum where members of Parliament could come, represent and call on the government, to say listen, I have constituents who need attention. I have patients in the intensive care room and they do not want you to say; "hey, sorry, we are not working tonight. We are going off duty". Hey, I am dying. I am about to lose my home, maybe it is my business, and we are going to say; "sorry, we are shutting down".

It is not right. I really, really believe that it is not right. In 1980, when we had a referendum here, we did not shut the House down completely. We debated. All through the referendum, we listened to the opposition when we were in power. Quite frankly, I am concerned. This debate has not reached the debating point yet because it has really been a yes hustle at this moment. I am not a constitutional lawyer. I for one have a lot of unanswered questions on this document. The member said to go back to your constituency and explain the agreement.

I can tell you right now, and I have talked to some of the best constitutional lawyers in this country including the former Prime Minister, this document is full of ambiguities. It is full of contradictions. If it is true that the people of Canada do not trust their politicians, in other words if the central issue is trust, then before I give an answer I am going to try and find out what it means and that is fair ball.

I would like with your permission to deposit with the table tonight a set of questions that I have on the document which hopefully, seeing as the place is closing down, I could present to the government. Hopefully, it could get them answered for me in the next 72 hours so it could help me do my job. With your permission I would like to deposit my unanswered questions on the floor of this House of Commons on this matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is necessary to have the unanimous consent of the House to table a report or a paper in the House of Commons.

Is there unanimous consent to table the paper of the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I thank the acting government House leader. I will give him an undertaking that if I get the answers to the questions I have put forward here, some of which I asked at four o'clock in the morning last week, and if I can satisfy myself that I am doing the right thing, I will campaign alongside him without any difficulty.

I say to the government that I am having great difficulty with this accord, this *entente*. That is another reason why I really feel that it is wrong to shut this House of Commons down, this nation's boardroom, when there is so much going on in this country.

This morning went I went to my front porch to get my *Toronto Star* the heading said: "11 per cent unemployment".

An hon. member: That was your first mistake.

Mr. Mills: The member is right, it was my first mistake. I should stop reading newspapers. However, this was the simple fact, 11 per cent unemployment. These are Statistics Canada numbers.

I am having a real problem with this idea that we are only going to be here for seven weeks in six months when I see so many people who are in economic pain. Governments should understand that part of our responsibility is to make the government accountable. By the government organizing this Parliament of Canada in a way that it has effectively shut down the operation for almost six months of the year by the time the Christmas period is included, I think the people of Canada are going to get very suspect about what is going on. The people of Canada are lying in the weeds right now. You can do all the polling you want but I am not sure that these polls are accurately reflecting what is going on.

In my community there is a deep, deep sense of mistrust about the way the government is managing the economy of this country. Failing to stand up to defend its agenda, to promote its agenda in a forum of debate, makes the people of Canada suspect and I think it is going to make it very difficult to sell this package.

It was four years ago that I was given the trust of the people of Broadview—Greenwood. Quite frankly, I do not know why we are not having an election. The four years are up. I really admire the skill of the people who surround this Prime Minister. I have said many times in this House that the machine of communications around this Prime Minister is superior. We are not even talking about an election when the four years are up. This government has no mandate to be doing what it is doing right now. Maybe the government's plan is to somehow orchestrate an election in the next three or four months. For all I know, this could be my last speech in the Parliament of Canada. It might be and it could be, I do not know, but I do know this: I can look at every one of my constituents in the eye and say that the four years you gave me I did my best to fight for you when you were in a disadvantaged state.

• (2020)

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the member covered a lot of territory. I hope I can touch on some of it with your indulgence.

The member finished by mentioning something in the sense that it could be his last speech in the House and whether or not we would be facing an election. Nobody knows what we will be facing in the next three or four months. Perhaps we could be. I do not know either.

One of the things that we do agree on is that in spite of our differences, we will work the very best we can for our constituents. Whether or not we will be returned to this House, who would know?

I do want to touch upon the comment in regard to when elections are held. He referred to four years as being the tradition, but it is not always. Constitutionally, it is five years between elections in this country, as we all well know. It could in fact be a five-year mandate this time. Only the Prime Minister knows the answer to that one, but I believe that it will be.

Constitutional agreement is very hard to achieve in this country. The member mentioned that in his speech. What is included in this agreement that was reached in Charlottetown on August 18? I am not a constitutional lawyer either, and on that we agree. Neither one of us is. It is almost a shame that it has to be so legalistic, if you wish, and so complicated. I think it would be much better if we all understood exactly what any Constitution meant.

Obviously Constitution-making is like an economist. As one fellow told me many years ago in my teaching days: if you get two economists in the same room, you will come up with three different points of view because one of them will disagree with himself before the meeting is over. I guess that is the same in constitution making. We have as many interpretations as we do constitutional experts, so there will always be that question as to what does it actually say.

I do want to end on this, in all seriousness. I think we would all agree that in 1867 the constitutional-makers of the day did not have it all right, did they? They did not have it all right. I am sure if they had to do it over again, if they could, they would have done a few things differently. We all agree on that. I think we will also agree this time too when it is over that if we could have done some things differently, no matter what we agree on, we would have done some things differently.

This House is made up of imperfect human beings and Constitutions are carved out by those imperfect human beings. I will be the first to admit that there are parts of the Constitution, even as a lay person, as an ordinary Canadian, that I do not completely understand and never will understand. We must have an abiding faith in the sense that the Canadian people have come up with the best possible package that they could come up with. We will have to leave it to those constitutional experts to determine whether it was good or bad.

We owe the Canadian people the benefit of the doubt. We set out for perfection in 1867 and we did not achieve it. What we did achieve in that 125 years is the best country in the world.

That is what we will do this time, given the opportunity, given the chance.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I will make my response short.

I would agree that the Constitution has been serving us well for the last 125 years. Many people have said today that it is regrettable that we even got into it.

In 1981 when Premier Levesque did not sign on we should never forget the fact that 72 or 73 out of 75 federal members of Parliament for Quebec did sign on. We should never ever mislead Canadians about that very important fact. That is point one.

Second, the problem that I am having with this particular agreement is that in less than 30 days we have to absorb it and get expert advice. I am not anti-Canada. I am not anti-Canadian. I do not want to see the breakup of Canada. I really wish that we could go through the process of determining whether it is a good package or not and fleshing it out before we sign in a way that gives the Prime Minister and the premiers a blank cheque.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

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

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here. Once again, I wish that we could do more of this in the next 36 days that we are going to be out campaigning. I am looking forward to the campaign to try to get people to understand the need for a yes vote on October 26.

However, the fact remains that the problems that plague us today are still going to be here. The Government of Canada would like to put them on the back burner while we campaign for the referendum, as well my colleagues from the New Democratic Party do not really want to have any debate in the next 36 days so they can be out in their ridings campaigning for the next election.

We have no problem with campaigning for the next election while campaigning for the referendum. However, the problems that plague us today are still going to be around, such as the 1.6 million unemployed, world problems such as Somalia and Yugoslavia, the fisheries in the Atlantic, or the bill that was just passed by the House of Commons, Bill C-80 which does away with the concept of universality.

Today, we are presently faced with a possible airline merger between the two biggest airlines in Canada, which will no longer have any competition and therefore will not be subject to the limitations in terms of air fares and other things that they presently must deal with as two competing airlines.

• (2030)

As I said, I look forward to the debates, to the campaign on the referendum while at the same time admitting that there should be an opportunity for the members of the House of Commons to debate the issues of today while talking about the referendum.

I would like to start off with the airline merger. My riding is called Nunatsiaq and to travel anywhere in my riding, if you are an Inuit unable to use a snowmobile quite adequately, all travel must be by air. There is not one community connected to another by road, with the exception of one community which has a road in the winter which is from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk, part of my riding.

The area that I represent you can only get to by air. Therefore, it is really a big deal for the people of the north when the two major airlines decide that they are going to merge and do away with the competition. We have another airline, owned by the Inuit of northern Quebec called First Air.

I have to smile. The transport minister, when he was asked about this particular company and said that it was Inuit owned, referred to the Inuit as the Cree. I would like him to have better information on who owns which airline. The Cree own Creebec Air and the Inuit own First Air. That is so the minister does not make the mistake again.

First Air, which is in partnership with Air Canada at this point, being a fairly independent airline, is free to compete with Canadian Airlines which also services parts of my riding such as Iqaluit, Hall Beach, Resolute Bay and Cambridge Bay. There is competition in some of those communities. However, Air Canada by association with First Air competes with Canadian Airlines for those communities in terms of air service in passengers and freight.

Just imagine if the two airlines merge, Air Canada and Canadian Airlines. There would be no need to compete with the airline that you competed previously with. Air

Canada would not have to compete any more with Canadian Airlines because they would be one airline.

What happens is the association with First Air would not be needed any more because there would be no competition any more. Therefore, Canadian Airlines or Air Canadian or whatever it may be called under the new merger would suddenly have no need for our major airline that services Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Hall Beach, Cambridge Bay, Resolute Bay as well as all the Baffin Island communities through smaller engine airplanes.

What happens if Air Canada decides it does not need First Air any more? First Air will not have the means to compete with one big airline in some of those selected communities and therefore will have to cut back on services. If it does, we northerners will all suffer. As I mentioned in the beginning of my speech, the only way to get to those communities is by air.

We could have been debating all this in the next 36 days if we were just able to keep the House sitting while we are campaigning for the referendum.

I hope that if the merger does go through, which, barring divine intervention, it will, I hope that there will be enough safeguards put in place to ensure that the service to the north does not suffer. There is always room for improvement, there is always room to move around, but the air service to the north is pretty good. I hope that if the merger happens there will be some safeguards put in place. We will be trying to ensure that our concerns are addressed by this government as well as by the airlines that are looking at the merger.

I would also like to touch on another area that is plaguing the north and will be very much in the next number of years, the reduction in federal funding for cost-shared social housing in the Northwest Territories. The federal Cabinet has just turned down a request by the government of the Northwest Territories to the Minister of Public Works to keep up the amount of money coming into the Northwest Territories for social housing in the future. As a result, we who were supposed to get 375 units in 1993, SeaLift, will now be getting only 153. There was a housing need survey done just recently. It was established that there is a need for 3,584 affordable, adequate and suitable housing units. This is an increase from 3,136 in 1990. In two years there was an increase of 14 per cent in the need for housing.

Again, all our housing has to be brought in. There is not one tree in my riding that we could cut down to make a house. In the winter we can build igloos but they have a limited life span. As soon as the weather warms up, they are gone. This government should take a very serious look at what it has done to the people in the Northwest Territories by slashing the budget for the NWT in terms of social housing, in terms of public housing.

Just to ensure that the people understand how reflective this is of the north, out of the 17 odd thousand households, 14,536 were visited and interviewed, which is roughly 90.2 per cent of all the households in the north. Only a mere 4.9 per cent refused to be interviewed at all, to talk about a lack of housing.

• (2040)

I think the government would be well advised to take a second look at what they have put through. You have to remember in the north the majority of people need public housing. There is not a very big demand for private housing because of the cost of building a house. It is beyond the means of most northerners to finance the building of a house in the north. Only a few do so, although there is starting to be more. There will always be a need for that type of public housing.

I think you have to also remember it is a very expensive proposition to build a house. Not only do you have to import the building materials, you have to import everything else that goes into the house, such as the plumbing, kitchen, and furniture. You still have to build it. The only thing you do not have to import is the gravel for the foundation and even then we have to import the pipes the house will sit on because that is the norm today.

There are all these items we can debate and here we are adjourning for the next one and a half months because this government and our friends in the New Democratic Party do not want to debate the important issues facing us today.

I would now like to go on to what is happening in the Northwest Territories or the Eastern Arctic in terms of the Inuit. On April 14, 1981, the Inuit voted to create Nunavut which means 'our land'. On May 4, 1992, 11 years later, the Inuit voted on the boundary to create Nunavut. On November 2, 3 and 4, the Inuit will vote to

decide whether to ratify the agreement, in principle, that has been reached by the negotiators between the Federation of Nunavut and the government of Canada.

I believe in Nunavut. I have a pin here that says 'Nunavut and Inukjuak' depicting Nunavut. I know for a fact we are going to get Nunavut sooner or later. However, the negotiators of the federal government, the territorial government and the Inuit have decided Nunavut cannot be without the agreement in principle for negotiated claims being part of it. For better or worse, that agreement was reached some time ago. As a result, the government told us today if we want Nunavut, we have to ratify the claims even if we do not necessarily like what is in the claims. I maintain that all it would take for Nunavut to be created is political will by this government or by the government of the day and the Inuit. I am sure that if the ratification vote on November 2, 3 and 4 does not go through the Inuit, even if they go back to the drawing board to negotiate the agreement, would still be in favour of going ahead with the creation of a Nunavut territory which would not be an Inuit territory but which would be a public government concept.

I would like to quote the federal negotiator, Mr. Tom Molloy, who said that if the Inuit do not like the way the government is following the terms of the agreement they can always take it to court. If the government is not living up to the Inuit's expectations under the terms of the agreement in principle, the Inuit can take them to court. It is not that simple. If we get an agreement we know that the government will do its best to slow down the process of implementation. But I must also say that this agreement is for our children and the future.

I would like to quote a couple of people. One is a Joseph Aglukark, who is a young man living in Gjoa Haven who says: "The federal government shouldn't be telling us what we can have". He is absolutely right. We should be able to understand what we can have and what we would like to have. The government as well as other people keep saying: "We are paying you. We are giving you $580 million. This young man says: "Within three or four years, they're going to triple what they paid through mining and big game hunters". That is pretty accurate, I think.

Qitsualik says: "The Inuit, who will receive title to 18.3 per cent of Nunavut land, should have received more for ceding their aboriginal claim". What we are doing and what this government has done is made a precondition to extinguish our claim before we even sit down to negotiate.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, this adjournment debate tonight really caps off one of the longest periods that the House of Commons and Parliament will not be sitting in years. In fact, during the period from June 19 to November 16, the House will have only sat eight days. Most of that time, debate has been concerned really with the constitutional agreement which was reached in Charlottetown last month.

The people of this country are extremely concerned with the economic mess the country is in. It is interesting to hear the members of the treasury benches talk about how things will look good in a year or so, according to estimates in the OECD reviews. In fact, over the last four years of the 34th Parliament, and we are almost to the end of a typical four-year term, we have been through an extremely bad time. The economic recession we are in now, which has been going on for some 30 months, is the worst since the 1930s. The impact of the free trade agreement with the United States has been devastating to say the least. It is not just a case of the cyclical downturns we faced in the 1981-82 recession, we are seeing whole sectors of the Canadian economy being destroyed. People have no confidence that the manufacturing sectors will ever return.

• (2050)

We do not see much encouragement in the GATT negotiations. We hope there will be a new agreement in 1993 but clearly agriculture, in particular the supply management sectors, believes it was sold out in the free trade deal and that it will be further reduced in the GATT negotiations.

The whole western grain economy is in a shambles because of the trade wars that are going on between the European Economic Community and the United States. There is the uncertainty of depending on government payments to supplement income when the price simply is not at a level to maintain farming.

The Government of Canada day after day supports the President of the United States, saying it is all the fault of the European Economic Community, while the President, in order to buy a few more votes in the presidential election, spends a billion dollars to subsidize exports of grain.

When the Canadian negotiators came back from the North American free trade deal, we saw the same kinds of problems they agreed to in the FTA, they agreed to in the NAFTA. There was no resolution of the problems of countervail and subsidy. They did not agree to a subsidy code so the problems of countervail will continue whether it is on steel, softwood lumber of other commodities.

There was no agreement on an anti-dumping code. Every other major international trading agreement, whether it is the European Economic Community, the Australian-New Zealand agreement, all have arrangements there for a subsidy code, for anti-dumping code arrangements so that those irritants do not go on year after year and yet our government comes home empty-handed.

The impact of the uncertainty of the GATT negotiations and the impact of hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost in the free trade deal with the United States, combined with a massive doubling of the debt of the country during the eight year tenure of this government has been devastating. Add to that the uncertainty and the adverse impact of problems for the tourist industry and problems for all small business because of the GST, the economy and the private sector is just weltering under the impact of the government's trade policy, taxation policy and fiscal policy. Perhaps the most devastating has been its monetary policy.

In the period leading up to the recession in 1990 we were following a policy of having interest rates at least 5 per cent higher than the United States. The Governor of the Bank of Canada went on day after day, month after month, bludgeoning the Canadian economy. He wanted to lick inflation. He certainly has achieved that but the anguish, the turmoil and the economic carnage of the Canadian economy, nobody has seen anything like it since the 1930s.

When the Government of Canada signs a free trade deal with the United States and then the Governor of the Bank of Canada imposes an interest rate policy that is 5 percentage points above the United States, which in turn escalates the value of the Canadian dollar by some 15 per cent or 20 per cent between 1986 and 1990, there could be nothing but turmoil and hardship and that is what we are in now.

It is not the Governor of the Bank of Canada earning a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year who pays the price. It is the forestry worker in northern Ontario. It is the person involved in manufacturing in southern Ontario. It is the person who tends a small business. It is those individuals, such as the farmers in the west, who have paid the price of this government's monetary policy.

In the 25 years I have been a member, I cannot remember as difficult a time in my district. We have literally lost thousands of jobs. In Elliott Lake, a city of 13,000, we have lost about 3,400 of the 4,000 mining jobs and perhaps another 1,500 or 2,000 in the service sector. That is in a community with very little support at this stage. The government will probably spend $12 to $15 million in UIC payments in that community, and yet there is no money for training. It defies intelligence that the government will not provide training for people receiving quite large UIC payments as income support.

A person in his early 30s who has been earning quite good wages as a production uranium miner may have very few other skills or abilities to get another job. He will be provided with a year's UIC benefits but no training allowance. We had 1,000 uranium miners laid off in Denison mine this past spring. Most of them are coming into UIC benefits now. They had severance pay benefits during the late spring and summer months. Now they are coming into UIC benefits. They should be taking upgrading courses. They should be taking retraining, and yet there is absolutely no money.

I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration about that today and there was simply no answer. Why would the government provide all of this money for income support and no training? At the end of the year, the individual will use up his training or income support and will have no additional training or skills to attract jobs.

This adjournment debate tonight is taking place when we are facing the prospect of a national referendum on the Charlottetown accord on constitutional arrangements. I am sure as we go out to the hustings and work on the referendum, people will want to know why we have done so little for the economy during the five-month period between mid-June and mid-November. Clearly, that is the priority of all Canadians and should be the priority of this government, but the government is slithering away.

I want to make a couple of points about the Charlottetown agreement. It really is a very important historic agreement. It is an agreement that has been reached between the Prime Minister, the ten premiers and the aboriginal peoples. It covers quite a large range of issues. It covers a new Canada Clause, which sets out the broad scope of our nation: our Parliamentary democracy; our equality of peoples; our recognition of the distinctive character of Quebec with its French language and culture and civil law. It sets out the basics of our nation.

This agreement also, for the first time since the 1982 agreement, brings Quebec into the Canadian Constitution. In my view that is absolutely essential, because we know the pressures from the separatists and the nationalists in that province. Therefore, that adhesion to the Canadian Constitution is absolutely essential.

• (2100)

It recognizes the desire of the aboriginal people for a new arrangement, aboriginal self-government. We know that the bands across this country are really held in trust by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. This agreement, although it only sets it out in a broad framework, makes provision for aboriginal self-government.

The Constitution makes an arrangement with regard to an elected Senate. The western provinces and many of the eastern provinces, like those of us in northern Ontario, feel that their views are not always heard. Therefore, this agreement provides for an elected Senate that has equal representation from each province. Although some of us would like to have seen it have stronger powers, because we think that makes it more responsible and more desirable, it is the agreement that was reached between the provinces, the vast majority of which are in the regions outside the two central provinces. It does provide a trade-off in which some 34 new members of Parliament would shift from the Senate, essentially in the central provinces.

Those of us in northern Ontario who saw the loss of one seat back in 1976 welcome the opportunity that perhaps we will continue to have the same representation from northern Ontario, some 11 seats, and perhaps even more with the new provision for some 18 additional members of Parliament from Ontario.

The regime sets out an arrangement for a division of powers that would essentially give a stronger voice for the provinces in areas that have traditionally been theirs anyway: urban affairs, tourism, mining and forestry. That is not to say that there would not still be a federal role but it makes provision for agreements and clarifies those divisions of powers.

I do not personally like to see decentralization of a power because I think that the federal government must have the power and strength to equalize opportunities across the country. However, either we have an honourable compromise between those who would rather see a more decentralized federation and those who want a more centralized one, as this agreement tries to do, or perhaps we will not have a country, at least not one that is unified.

The section with regard to economic union does not provide as strong an economic union as those on our side of the House would like to see. It is my understanding that the NDP premiers opposed this negotiation and so it was not possible to provide for it, but the NDP in some of those provinces will not be in power forever. It is an arrangement that can be changed with the support of seven provinces out of ten, with 50 per cent of the population. It can be amended at some time in the future.

Likewise, I think the Senate arrangement could be strengthened simply by the rules of the House. Perhaps there could be an arrangement so that instead of having a joint session whenever the Senate opposed a bill coming through the House there could be a suspensive veto simply by rule of the House for a three or six-month period, whatever was felt to be necessary to perhaps strengthen the effectiveness of the Senate.

I do not think that this referendum campaign that we are leaving tonight to join will be that pleasant an experience because it could well bring out great divisions in the country.

A referendum was necessary. Three provinces, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta, had it in their rules that there had to be a referendum, so I think that a national referendum was desirable in those circumstances.

I believe that we have to move on. We have to turn the page. We have to settle the constitutional problems. No constitutional arrangement will ever be perfect when you have 10 divergent provinces negotiating with one central government. This covers many concerns such as the concern of a Canada clause to set out the broad scope and the directions of our country.

It puts forward a proposal with regard to aboriginal self-government. It deals with the desire of many provinces for an elected Senate. Clearly the Senate is bound to be elected some day. It deals with the question of the division of powers. It deals to some extent with the economic union.

I would hope that this would pass. It seems to me that we are celebrating our 125th anniversary this year and clearly we have made progress in many things since 1967, in the last 25 years. We are 30 per cent larger. Our life expectancy is five years longer. One thing that we lack is that tremendous *esprit de corps*, that enthusiasm, that confidence we had in 1967.

I hope that this referendum will bring back some of that confidence, that we will succeed in making arrangements for a new Constitution for this country, that we will reach out and form a new relationship across the country so that we can go on to reaching the opportunity that is there for Canada to provide for its people. We have the resources, we have the people. It is simply a case of putting it together in a constructive way.

I hope that will be the result of this referendum. I hope the country will not be broken by it. That would be the greatest tragedy for this country that could ever happen.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my hon. colleague from Algoma on his usual very common sense type of speech in this House and for his great in-depth interest in our country.

He mentioned the Constitution and some of the divisions of powers that are in the new deal. I am wondering how this will help situations such as he mentioned at Elliot Lake.

One thing that we are faced with today is a very slow process in looking after the older workers' adjustment programs and applications that are submitted. I do not know why we cannot move people into those areas to speed them up and help people out.

There is certainly a lack of training funds. Now the employer and the employees have to contribute the full amount to the Unemployment Insurance Commission of Canada.

Does the hon. member not believe that if we had a more direct responsibility from the national government in this country and more solid leadership from the national government of this country we could do a lot more in training those people he is talking about? What we need is some direct action to make sure that the funds are there to do it.

I know that in his area and in my area if we took even half the unemployment insurance payments that are paid out every year we could probably train those people and create jobs for them and have them better employed.

• (2110)

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Renfrew has really hit the nail on the head.

The problem is that we do not seem to have the flexibility in the way that the Unemployment Insurance Act is operated. Clearly, if you are going to have an unemployment insurance scheme in which essentially the employers and the employees put the funds into it, companion to that have to be the necessary training arrangements.

We have uranium production miners who earn very good wages and they are very skilled at what they do. However, when a mine shuts down as we have seen at Denison and Quirk 1 and Panel Mine in Elliot Lake and there are no other mining jobs available, then their skills are totally inadequate.

We had the situation this summer, I think we have it cleared up now, in which the local manpower office was forcing people who were on unemployment insurance to take only 10 hours of training a week. This is prevoca-

tional training at a high school. It was not costing anything but it said it has to be limited to 10 hours.

We got in touch with the director in Sault Ste. Marie and he said as long as they are willing to be available to take any job that comes along, they can go to school. Therefore, we were able to get that clarified, but there simply are not the funds.

Last year at this time we had something like 2,400 uranium miners laid off out of the 4,000 who were there two years ago. We got $2.5 million of funding for that. This year in April and May we had another 1,000 miners laid off but the budget for this fiscal year was $600,000.

Imagine one training course in heavy equipment operation or some of those types of courses in which 12 or 15 people for training are taken. The cost of $600,000 for 1,000 employees being laid off is simply, totally inadequate.

Unless the government is willing to take it seriously, UI is going to run out and then these people are going to go on welfare because they have not the skills and there are no funds being provided. That is why I put the question to the minister today in the House, to demand that the money be put in.

Much of the training dollars now come out of the UIC fund, which I think is wrong to start with but that is where they come from now, some $800 million or so every year. That works on a calendar year, whereas the training from the departmental estimates comes on the fiscal year.

I am hoping that additional funds will be made available January 1 so that some of these people who were just going on to UI will be able to be eligible for training funds and to get out of this trap of UI with no training.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to raise the question about the GATT negotiations.

I know the hon. member's agricultural critic has been following this very closely, as have the rest of us who have large farm communities. I must compliment the members in our party who do not have any farmers in the community but who are still taking a great interest in the agricultural difficulties today.

I am wondering, does the hon. member for Algoma think that these negotiations are ever going to come to an end? Where is Canada going to sit when this is all finished? I would like to have his comments on that because I know we have a lot of farmers out there tonight who are very concerned about these issues. Since the government is closing down the House tonight, at least it should have one last word from a good agricultural critic to let it know what is happening out there before we leave tonight.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, the question of the GATT negotiations are closely tied to the politics of the European Economic Community and to the politics of the United States, since essentially they make a deal and everybody else either accepts it or does not.

The referendum on the Maastricht treaty that is taking place in France this weekend will have some effect on those negotiations. There could be no negotiations during this past couple of months because of the uncertainty of the French government as to exactly what was going to happen in the Europe '92 integration proposal, and it is having a referendum on it this weekend. That has called all of the monetary and fiscal negotiations into question these past few days, with the decision by Germany not to lower its interest rates.

The other uncertainty, of course, is the United States and what is going to happen there. I believe that many of the Europeans will try to negotiate, assuming that the Maastricht treaty is agreed to this fall. It is hard to believe that things will really get settled until after the presidential election which is taking place in early November. Depending on who wins that election, the negotiations will be consummated one way or another.

There is sort of a window between the 20th of January when the president will be inaugurated or re-inaugurated, and March of next year. If there is going to be a new GATT arrangement, the negotiations and the final decision will have to be made during that period in order to meet the fast track arrangement of the United States Congress. An agreement would have to be reached during that period if it was to be agreed to by both the United States Congress and the Senate. Clearly, this is causing great uncertainty.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend from Algoma for that reply on the farm question.

Tonight I have a number of items that I want to raise. Since we must deal with the economy and the problems of the people of this country, the first is the problem of older workers being laid off. I have a number of applications and interested applicants in my particular part of the country, in my riding and throughout the Ottawa Valley.

When one gets the reply that applications will probably not be looked at until next spring, it is pretty devastating news to pass on to constituents, particularly those who have worked at a job all their lives. We want training money and we learn that there is no training money for them, yet the government is making a big issue of re-training people. We all know that we have to train and re-train people from now on, maybe two or three times during the course of their lifetimes.

We are really in a sad plight in this country, and I think it is just horrendous that this House is being closed down tonight with these issues facing the nation.

The training funds that I mentioned, and which my hon. friend from Algoma mentioned, largely come from the Unemployment Insurance Commission funds. We have that famous Bill C-21 on the Unemployment Insurance Act that the government made such a big to-do about and blamed the Senate for holding it up when the Senate was really holding it up for a good reason.

• (2120)

It virtually took the federal government of this nation off the hook by putting them in the position of not having to pay money into the Unemployment Insurance Commission. It has raised and raised again the UIC contributions that employers and employees must pay into that fund to keep it active. This money is also not just used to pay the unemployed as I said before, but also to retrain people.

These are just some of the issues. Sectors of the economy are really hurting. People out there are unemployed who never thought they were ever going to be unemployed in their life. They are in a state of depression and this government decides to adjourn the House for the referendum.

The referendum vote is very important because the Constitution of this country does belong to the people of Canada and they must know what they are voting for when that day comes. There is a big selling job out there to do in telling people what is in that package; good and bad.

Just recently in this country, and in this Parliament, we have paid tribute to two very senior and long-time solid politicians and statesmen, the Hon. George McIlraith from the Ottawa area and the Hon. Paul Martin who represented a constituency in the Windsor area in this House for 33 consecutive years. Mr. McIlraith was here for 32 consecutive years.

They would be appalled to see the government closing down this House tonight. Others have mentioned the short time that we have sitting here in the last number of months. This Parliament belongs to the people of Canada and they expect us to be here tackling the problems of the day. Yes it does add a greater burden on everybody but that is our job.

One thing that is wrong with this place, this Parliament and the House of Commons, is that members do not know one another. We are certainly not going to get to know one another any better if we are not sitting in session.

When I first came here and for a number of years afterwards we had night sittings and the members got to know one another because their offices were closed at night and they were here in the House of Commons. The House of Commons was a place of great importance and the members paid attention to what was going on.

We look at it today and it is a matter of making speeches and sometimes you wonder who is listening in the government and, indeed, within Parliament itself.

I think we should revamp this House. We have had rules revamped before but a system has got to come about whereby the members in this House mix more, the partisanship that we have seen in the House must be toned down, there must be more constructive work done. The leadership must come from the government.

It is not enough to say hello in the hallways and talk across committee tables on Parliament Hill. As you well know, it takes awhile to make good solid friends but when you make friends in the House of Commons you can bridge gaps back and forth across this floor and you can get much more done. Today there is not enough attention paid to the public relations among members here on Parliament Hill.

This House of Commons has to become more meaningful and it is not going to become more meaningful if you are going to close it down, go away for several weeks at a time then come back for a few days, then adjourn for Christmas. When are we coming back in the new year?

Debates and exchanges must take place on the issues facing this country. This is the people's Parliament. People talk about how great Canada has become in the last 125 years, but Canada did not become great in the last 125 years by closing down Parliament in the way that the government is doing tonight.

People talk about serious national issues that arise. Certainly there comes a time of crisis when these finally pile up and they suddenly have to be solved. That is really the position we are in today. These situations quite often come about because of a lack of clear-cut leadership in the country.

In the 12 years between 1848 and 1860 in American history there were a total of four presidents in that 12 year period. They were called the dough-head presidents. They went down in American history as the four dough-head presidents. They were called that because they and their parties would not make a serious decision on any great issue of the day. As a result, they drifted into a civil war in the United States. It was that civil war that had a great deal to do with joining the colonies of this part of North America under the British Empire for self-protection under the Confederation of 1867.

Then we started in earnest to develop links between and among the various regions of the country. I am using this example because the issues of this nation have to be taken absolutely seriously, and we cannot deal with them seriously if the House is not sitting.

We drifted into World War II because none of the great powers would support the League of Nations in those days. Canada was the leading country in the league when it finally folded, and I think that we have always played more than our role in international affairs. We have done so with the trust of other nations of the world. There is a lot that we can do abroad, but there is certainly a lot that has got to be done right here at home.

When things are allowed to drift, as the world drifted into World War II, we lost 45,000 young Canadians who could have been great leaders in this country over the past number of years and into the future. We lost another 66,000 in World War I. A lot of these things happen because of lack of leadership.

I am saying this in an historical sense tonight because, and I do not want to necessarily cast reflections here, I get very impatient when I see Parliament not being taken seriously. We will pay for it and the people of Canada will pay for it. It is not fair to them that this Parliament is not sitting to deal with the things that are really bothering them today.

Blame is always being placed on people in the past. Yesterday, in this House, I was amazed to hear a minister of the Crown still blaming the Liberal government back in 1984 for the problems the Conservatives have had with the finances of this country. That is incredible. It was over eight years ago and they are still blaming the previous government.

• (2130)

During the election campaign of 1984 we all heard from the Tories right across this country how easy it was to handle the finances of this country, how easy it was to solve economic problems, how easy it was to handle the farm problems of this country; all the great ideas that were passed around in 1984. Eight years later they are well on their way to tripling the national debt of this country. These were going to be the wizards of finance of the day.

I mentioned a while ago that the GATT talks are going on and on and on and they are creating a great deal of uncertainty for the farm community of this country. The hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex is in my riding speaking to a number of my farmers tonight. I know there is going to be a lot of concern expressed to him about this difficulty.

I said before and I will say again that farming in this country, fisheries and forestry, from pre-Confederation days, going back to real pioneer days, have been the three main staple crops and underpinnings of the economy of Canada. Even today it is the case but all three of these major sectors of our economy have been in trouble and are in trouble and look as if they are going to have some time yet to come to grips with it. There is no vision in this government today.

I like others want to see the constitutional debate brought to a close for the moment and get on with other economic factors of this nation. However, that is not to say that I agree with everything in it because I do not and I would be totally dishonest if I did not say so.

I think that training programs in this country have to have some national direction if we are going to use those great terms we here from the government quite a bit, competitive with the rest of the world. We must have some uniformity of training in the country and it must be made equal to all people right across the country to receive that kind of training.

We do not want to ever again see the horrendous days that people went through during the depression years of this country when Saskatchewan was almost a broken province. Other provinces of this country were the next thing to being broke. Municipalities were broke.

That is when we brought in the Rowell–Sirois Commission report that I mention quite often in this House. It was the most qualified in–depth study that has ever been done on constitutional issues in this country and on the division of finances within this country.

We are well ready for another real in–depth look at this nation in that regard. If we look back to the situations that brought about that very well qualified, intelligent commission, those people were extremely well picked and they did one of the most in–depth jobs of any commission ever appointed in the history of Canada.

I want to give an idea of some of the things that they actually did. The Royal Commission on Dominion–Provincial Relations, very much related to the constitutional issues that are going on today and the financial issues that are happening today, the Rowell–Sirois Commission as it was best known, had a mandate to examine the distribution of constitutional powers and the financial arrangements of the federal system.

Judicial decision since the 1920s had left the provinces with heavy responsibilities in social fields and the federal government with access to the largest sources of revenue.

The commission's task was to find a new constitutional equilibrium that would distribute revenues and responsibilities in conformity with the needs of an industrial society. Its work was not welcomed everywhere. Premiers Hepburn, Duplessis and Aberhart were loud in their opposition while other provincial premiers worried about the potential centralist thrust of the commission.

In 1940 its major recommendations, which included federal responsibility for unemployment insurance and the establishment of a system of federal adjustment grants to the provinces, were rejected by the largest provinces led by Ontario. But by that date the outbreak of another world war made a rearrangement of federal–provincial revenue sharing a necessity, at least on an *ad hoc* basis. Moreover, by then King had won the approval of the provinces for a constitutional amendment giving Ottawa the power to enact unemployment insurance legislation.

What has happened today? That great bill known as Bill C–21 took the federal government off the hook on its constitutional responsibility for looking after the unemployed in this country in the sense that it gave it a free hand of not contributing to the Unemployment Insurance Commission fund.

What happens when it does that? It simply throws back the responsibilities for the unemployed, and indeed for the training of the unemployed, on to provincial governments where it was before this whole problem happened. That is why governments went broke in the 1930s.

If the economy does not improve the provinces of this country are going to see greater and greater debt thrust on them. Municipalities are going to have greater and greater debt thrust on them. They are at the bottom. They take it when nobody else does it. It is not fair for the municipalities across this country to face that. It is not fair for the provinces to face that. If we are to have a national government in this country, if we are to talk about the Constitution and if we are going to go out and campaign for our Constitution, then it is time the national government of this country, a government of this country, took the national responsibility to do it.

I have difficulty all the way in not supporting this constitutional arrangement to a degree because it does not provide that over–all national leadership we need in this country. I am going to go out and campaign for it, because I hope that in the future a good Liberal government and others in this country will come forward with good amendments to that Constitution, revamp it, and once again make the Parliament of Canada important and let Canadians know that there is a national government in this country, a Liberal government that

will accept its responsibilities and live up to not only the 1867 Confederation Act, the British North American Act, but the one we have today.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I always listen with respect and attention to my hon. friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, and tonight was no exception. The hon. member covered a wide range of topics, and I am going to comment on just two or three of them.

He said that he would like to see more friendship among members in the House. He also spoke favourably of the idea of improving the rules. I hope he will work with me and my friend from Kingston and the Islands in the latest phase of parliamentary reform, which I think the country and certainly parliamentarians would welcome.

On the issue of a friendship among members, he advocated better public relations among members. Of course the committee system helps with that. He indicated that it does not go all the way. Perhaps we ought to have an ice-breaking get-together when we reassemble on November 16 or whenever we do assemble.

The motion that was approved earlier today provided for the House to return no later than November 16.

I agree with my hon. friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke that we would all like to see the constitutional debate concluded. Of course, Canadians share that feeling. The phrase constitutional fatigue has arisen.

On the subject of Bill C-21 and the reform of the unemployment insurance system, I wonder if my hon. friend would not agree that in a way the chief effect of that reform was to return it to what it was originally intended to be, which is an insurance scheme in which employees and employers pay the premiums for insurance against becoming unemployed?

Would he not also agree that hundreds of millions of dollars have flowed through Bill C-21 into training and retraining schemes, and that is an appropriate source for such funds?

I do wish to correct with great respect an impression that my hon. friend may have left with the House and with the country, and that is that Parliament is being closed down. What is happening is that members of Parliament are being freed to campaign on the side of their choice in the referendum campaign. It was suggested by an earlier speaker that members of Parliament would not have an opportunity to deal with immigration issues and that sort of thing. I for one will be in my constituency office dealing with those matters as well as doing the campaigning.

Finally, my friend mentioned the dough-head presidents of 1848 to 1860. I wanted to ask him whether he was alluding to a particular government, to this government. If he was suggesting that this government has not made, in his words, "a serious decision", I would ask him what it is we have been castigated about tonight by his colleagues.

Privatization, sales tax reform, deregulation, free trade, inflation fighting, the abolition of FIRA and the NEP, national reconciliation through constitutional renewal, GRIP and NISA, all have been done through Parliament. Those were all serious decisions and all taken by this government.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest for his comments. I would say that he is certainly one who makes an attempt to build friendships in this place. I have known him quite well and I have a great respect for him.

He talked about the unemployment insurance fund as being a real insurance scheme, in which people pay their fees. However, it is not just the people who receive unemployment insurance who are paying these insurance fees. It is also the employer who pays the increased fees, but the employer does not benefit from that scheme. It is really part of his expenses in salaries and wages.

In that sense, it is not a true insurance scheme and I do not know how it could be. If it was in the sense that he is talking about, the whole onus would have to be put on the worker to pay the total amount of insurance.

Also, in times that are very difficult such as these, I meant that small businesses are having a very difficult time today. They are a big employer and it is really notfair to load them down with greater overhead at a time when they are doing their level best to keep their businesses open and keep their people employed and off the unemployment rolls. In that sense I listed the constitutional responsibility of the federal government to put money into that fund as well and certainly into

training Canadians. You are going to have to train Canadians in the years to come. You cannot throw this burden on the lower levels of government, employers and the workers, day in and day out in the future. There has to be some leadership in the financial management of these programs.

In his comments about closing Parliament down, that is what is taking place. He said members are being allowed to leave to campaign. What is wrong with giving a number of members time off to campaign? This has happened many times before in this House. You can still keep the House of Commons going. All Canadians will understand that all members cannot be here, but we are dealing with the issues of the country.

In my own case, and I am sure in the case of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, we have some good leaders in our constituencies. Just because we are here in Parliament representing them, the whole campaign is not going to fall flat. There are some very good people out there who we will be on our teams. Some of them have come to me already and they will do a good job. I think it will create a great rapport when we get people from other parties helping out with the campaign and explaining to people what it is all about. One member of Parliament is not going to have a chance to talk to everybody and explain this. You need a committee and a program. You need your committee out there telling people what it is about.

Just because the member is in the House two or three days of the week and out campaigning the rest does not mean the whole campaign on the constitutional package is going to cease because the member has suddenly left to go to Ottawa. I have faith in the people I will have on my committee to do that kind of work. I am sure every member in the House can set it up that way.

On the term 'castigation', he maintained I said the government was not making decisions. There are some decisions the government has not made. There are decisions it has made that are absolutely wrong. Just because legislation is passed through the House of Commons does not mean it made a good decision. Canadians have to live with those decisions all the time this government is in power.

I do not think just because a bill passes the House of Commons makes it suddenly correct. There are problems with it and people know there have been bills that have gone through this House of Commons that are going to cause them difficulties. Instead of castigating, I think it is being a reasonable critic of the fact some of your legislation is bad. Many people out there think it is very bad indeed, as the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands says.

Mr. Milliken: They want to give the government the boot.

Mr. Hopkins: I would not want the hon. member to feel badly that I am castigating him just because I am telling him there are many things this government has done that are absolutely wrong, and it does not seem to us they are improving a great deal these days either.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Since no more members wish to be recognized, it is my duty, pursuant to orders adopted earlier today, to adjourn the House to the call of the Chair, but no later than Monday, November 16, 1992.

The House adjourned at 9.47 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 29, 1992

The House met at 5 p.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform the House that pursuant to order adopted on Thursday, September 17, 1992, I have recalled the House today for the sole purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bills without amendment: Bill C-306, an act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other acts; Bill C-351, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Timiskaming; Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act.

* * *

ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

September 29, 1992

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Beverly McLaghlin, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 29th day of September, 1992, at 5.00 p.m., for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony P. Smyth
Deputy Secretary, Policy, Program and Protocol

• (1710)

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

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Chamber of the honourable the Senate.

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

And being returned:

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-306, an act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other acts—Chapter 44.

Bill C-351, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Timiskaming—Chapter 45.

Bill C-55, an act to amend certain acts in relation to pensions and to enact a Special Retirement Arrangements Act and the Pension Benefits Division Act—Chapter 46.

Bill S-7, an act to amend an act to incorporate the Royal Society of Canada.

It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to order adopted on Thursday, September 17, 1992, this House stands adjourned to the call of the Chair, but until no later than Monday, November 16, 1992.

The House adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 15, 1992

The House met at 4.30 p.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I wish to inform the House that in accordance with the order made Thursday, September 17, 1992, I have recalled the House this day for the sole purpose of granting royal assent to certain bills.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bills without amendment: Bill C-46, an act respecting contraventions of federal enactments; and Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act.

* * *

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

October 15, 1992

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Beverly McLachlin, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 15th day of October, 1992, at 4.30 p.m., for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony P. Smyth
Deputy Secretary, Policy, Program and Protocol

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

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Chamber of the honourable the Senate.

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

And being returned:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-46, an act respecting contraventions of federal enactments—Chapter No. 47.

Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain other acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act—Chapter No. 48.

It being 4.48 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, September 17, 1992, this House stands further adjourned to the call of Chair, but not later than Monday, November 16, 1992, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.48 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 16, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF TRI-LEVEL FUNDING PROGRAM

The House resumed from Friday, May 15 consideration of the motion of Mr. Benjamin (p. 10825).

Ms. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the motion concerns the inability of municipal infrastructures to meet the current needs of Canadians with respect to water treatment and supply and to respond to their concerns about the environment and about threats to public health.

Infrastructures must be improved, expanded and modernized. This is indeed a tall order. To do so, it will be necessary to invest billions of dollars and to determine where the money should come from, which will not be easy, considering the economic situation all governments are facing today.

One point that should be made is the fact that water demand in municipalities is unlimited because there is no appropriate control system and no commensurate billing for this resource. Even if we did have commensurate rates without meters the many people who are connected to municipal water systems have no idea of the level of their water consumption.

Installing meters is essential for water conservation and to ensure this resource does not run out. All homes have meters for hydro and gas and most of the services we purchase are measured by weight and volume. A supplier wants to know how much of his product is consumed and users should be able to check their consumption.

The federal government's responsibility for conservation and sustainable development of our water supply is limited to encouraging proper management of the resource and an appreciation of its value. Providing water meters or financing their purchase and installation is not a federal responsibility.

As was pointed out by my colleague, the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden, only 50 per cent of connections to public water mains in Canada have meters. Installing meters across the country would be the first essential step of any nation-wide program to renew Canadian municipal infrastructures. Without the ability to measure water consumption one cannot think of implementing a realistic rate structure to recover the full cost from the user.

• (1110)

Can we think of another multi-billion dollar industry that does not measure the usage of its main product? Can we imagine stopping at a filling station and paying the same price no matter the amount of gasoline desired? It is unthinkable.

Since measuring water consumption is of the utmost importance for recovering the full cost and setting a realistic rate structure and therefore is very important for municipal infrastructure, the minister will look carefully into the measurement of water consumption in order to see whether water meters should be installed in all Canadian municipalities and what benefits would flow from such action. The minister will first consider the current situation in Canada as far as water measurement is concerned and then discuss the costs and benefits.

In Canada only about half the public water service connections are metered. Furthermore, the smaller the community, the less likely it is to measure consumption, although consumption is not measured in large areas of some of the biggest cities, such as Calgary Toronto and Vancouver.

In cities where some connections are metered, 72 per cent of industrial use, 67 per cent of commercial use and only 31 per cent of domestic use are measured. This situation clearly works against any attempt to set prices for municipal water services that reflect their true value. It just cannot be done under such conditions.

Theoretically, consumers are as free to waste water when consumption is measured as when it is not. However, actual experience shows that the opposite happens. Volumes vary greatly between regions where consumption is measured and those where it is not. Households consume between 0.5 and 0.7 cubic metres per day where it is measured and 1.3 cubic metres per day where it is not. This is a universal phenomenon. This difference is due to the drop in consumption, often as much as 25 per cent, after meters are installed and users are charged on the basis of volume consumed.

We should understand that this drop in consumption does not follow an increase in unit cost but is because customers pay for each unit consumed. In Canada the prairies are far ahead of the other provinces in metering consumption. More than 70 per cent of prairie municipalities measure the consumption of all users and only 12 per cent do not measure it at all. By contrast less than 18 per cent of the cities and towns in British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and from 25 to 50 per cent of those in the other provinces measure what they consume.

We can thus conclude that much remains to be done before all Canadian municipalities adopt the principle of measuring water consumption. At $200 per connection it would cost nearly $800 million for equipment and installation to have water meters throughout the country. This is a small one-time expense to control the demand of an industry that brings in $3 billion a year.

Given the debate on water metering in many regions of the country and the size of the expenses involved, we must look into the costs and benefits. Several economic principles underlie the evaluation of water metering. As a general rule when the costs and benefits are thoroughly analyzed to judge the impact of metering on all water systems, including sewage treatment, municipalities find that the benefits far outweigh the costs, which are quickly recovered.

Many cities throughout the world have studied this issue and many very diverse studies are available. These give us a general idea of the economic costs and benefits of metering.

The Science Council of Canada examined the costs and benefits of water metering as part of the water guidelines it is considering for the future. According to one of these basic studies metering is cost-effective if water costs more than 21 cents a cubic metre and installing a meter costs less than $500. These two preconditions are met in most Canadian municipalities.

A 1984 report from the State of California shows that it costs only $80 to install a meter when a house is built.

A 1972 study in the Toronto area reported the results of a simulation of the costs and benefits of metering for the municipality of Etobicoke. Data taken from the simulation show a cost-benefit ratio of 1:1, indicating that metering is economically viable.

A 1980 Alberta environment study dealt with measuring water consumption in cities where water collection, treatment and distribution are centralized. The net benefit, after including all costs, was $29.47 per capita which means that metering is economically advantageous.

A study done in Perth, Australia, on ways to restrict access to water resources calculated the benefits each month instead of at the end of the year as is usually the case. The study produced a cost benefit ratio of 1:62, which again shows that metering makes good economic sense. We can therefore say with almost complete certainty that water metering saves money, not to mention the operational savings for the industry that supplies and treats water.

As well as being cost effective, water metering, combined with an effective rate structure, leads to a sharp drop in consumption. This drop is partly due to the psychological impact of metering, since consumers know that they can reduce their water bills. However, the reduction is also due to an economic factor, namely the rationalization of water consumption since users pay more the more they consume once the meters are installed.

Therefore, installing meters nationwide is an essential first step to restructuring the water industry in Canada in order to make it financially and environmentally viable. The studies done on metering have shown that it pays off. Water meters and realistic rates to recover the full

operating cost can lead to a 30 per cent drop in demand and eliminate the need to increase system capacity.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to support the motion relating to the infrastructure program.

It is important to note that all municipalities and provincial governments have tried to impress upon this government a number of things. First, the state of the infrastructure in this country demands immediate attention. Second, all three levels of government are prepared to work co-operatively and in concert with one another. All levels of government want to put the taxpayers' dollars into a combined effort and pool to invest in our infrastructure. This kind of a program is absolutely essential.

If one looks at the unemployment rate, especially in the construction industry throughout the country, one sees that this infrastructure program is not a frill, is not something we can postpone and do 10 or 15 years down the road. It needs to be done now.

There are good reasons to do it now. Interest rate costs and competitive opportunities now exist and municipalities could get good competitive bids to do water works, sewers, sidewalks, water plants, all the kinds of things we have acknowledged are very important to the quality of our lives.

If we truly believe in the environment, if we truly believe infrastructure is an investment in our people, in our neighbourhoods, in our communities, in people in terms of jobs, then there is no reason for us not to proceed.

I know the government is considering an infrastructure program. In its discussions with the provinces it has talked about highways. The provincial governments as well as the municipalities through their federation of Canadian municipalities have tried to convince the government of these priorities. It is not as if Canada and former governments have not participated in municipal infrastructure programs. In fact they were in place until 1984 when this present government came in and decided that it wanted to have absolutely nothing to do with investing in municipal and urban programs.

• (1120)

The precedent for a federal government to be involved in such a program is there. Canada has always done it. The federal government has always done it. All provincial premiers are prepared to put their taxpayers' dollars on the table. Every municipality is prepared to put every taxpayer's dollar on the table.

The Liberal Party has suggested this program for a great many years and we even had an all-party committee look at the infrastructure programs. I am happy to say that the former minister of housing, the member for Don Valley East and the member for Oshawa from the NDP have supported calling on this government for municipal infrastructure programs.

For some members of the government to suggest it is probably not their business to get involved in infrastructure programs and municipal programs is a bunch of hog-wash. For the member opposite to suggest that the way to do these infrastructure programs is to increase the price to the consumer for water is absolutely shirking the responsibility government has to this whole country. That seems to be this government's tack all the time: Let us look to someone else to solve the unemployment problem. Let us look to someone else to solve the environment problem. Let us look to someone else to solve the infrastructure problem.

We have a unique opportunity here. It needs to be pursued. Even the American infrastructure is in a state of absolute disrepair and the new president-elect recognizes that they have to invest in the infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure will produce jobs.

For those who say it is easy to stand up here and talk about spending because the deficit will be increased, in study after study, the OECD study, the FCM study, economists have all indicated that for every dollar put into infrastructure not only will it cause employment, but it will also have a ripple effect. In fact the impact on the deficit, if any, will be negligible.

If governments at all levels decide to put up money the private sector will also put up money. So you are going to leverage private sector investment in the program and hence do even more.

I want to reiterate that the government has a responsibility and the responsibility is to put our people back to work. There is no reason for people in the construction industry and other people who have skills to be sitting at

home collecting unemployment and for those who have exhausted their unemployment benefits to now be receiving social assistance when in fact these programs are ready to be implemented tomorrow. FCM says there are municipalities prepared to start building those bridges, to start building those sewers, to start building those water plants, to start building those water lines tomorrow. That is how quickly it can happen.

It is not something we have to study over and over again. People are getting absolutely fed up with inaction. We need to put people back to work. This is a unique opportunity and a unique program which will bring us all together, municipalities, provincial governments, the federal government, the private sector, labour, all working together to solve an infrastructure problem in this country, an environmental problem in this country, and a jobs problem in this country.

This is a unique opportunity and if this government had the guts and the vision to want to solve our problems in terms of joblessness and was serious about solving our problems with respect to the environment, this opportunity would not be missed.

Again I call on this government finally to show the people of Canada that it is prepared to move in a very positive way with the economy by bringing forward this program which I think has the approval and the consensus of most members of this House, the municipalities, the provinces, labour, and the private sector.

There is no reason to study it further. We can do it in a fiscally responsible way and get on with building and rebuilding this country from the infrastructure up and investing in people. That is what we have to do.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is an important time, as other members have commented on, to talk about this particular motion before us today.

I want to congratulate the member of our caucus from Regina—Lumsden who has been pursuing this question of municipal infrastructure, planning and development for some time now. He is to be congratulated for having the foresight to have this motion brought before Parliament. It might be a bit of lucky timing on his part for this motion to be the first item of business to be dealt with by this House upon our return.

It is important because there is a clear sense in the minds of Canadians right now that this government is adrift, that its conservative trickle-down policies, which were followed and were rejected by the American people in the last presidential election, pursued by the Conservative government are not working and it is clearly time for a change to seek new choices and to go in a new direction.

It is also very clear that this week, starting today, Canadians are expecting this House, and in particular the Prime Minister and the government, to say to Canadians exactly what it is that it is going to do to address the needs of the economy. The message that has been repeated perhaps *ad nauseam* following the referendum on October 26 is that now the referendum is out of the way at least for a short time that this government will turn its attention to the needs of the economy.

That has left a clear anticipation by Canadians that this week, perhaps starting today, we will hear from the government an economic outline of the plan that it is going to present to this House and to Canadians so that we can turn the economy around and get us out of the ditch the government has driven us into.

This motion gives the government an opportunity to do just that. It is a motion that calls on the House to join with provincial, municipal and regional governments to develop an infrastructure program that can help rebuild Canada.

One does not have to go very far to find out just how important it is to help rebuild our infrastructure. Just go to the front door of this building and see all of the work being done on the infrastructure for the House of Commons. The bus driver today said that they are digging up the water lines and the sewer lines. Yes, we probably need a big sewer line coming out of this place. If they can work on the infrastructure on Parliament Hill, certainly they can work on the infrastructure across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

What does infrastructure mean? Well it is clear to all of us who drive, who fly, who take our passenger rail service everywhere, that if we continue to ignore the work that must be done, the investment in our infra-

structure, we will then pay the price in ever greater amounts in the future.

To date this government has rejected out of hand any of those proposals though as of late we have heard hints from the Minister of Finance that he may consider an infrastructure program to try to kick-start the economy. I say one of the best infrastructure programs would be to scrap the GST. That would kick-start the economy.

What we need this government to do is to pay attention to those very details, the nitty-gritty parts of people's everyday lives. When they leave their houses in the morning, when they drive or take the bus to work, they know that their car or that bus is not going to be rattled to pieces because of holes in the pavement, that the bridges they drive across in this country are safe.

One of the best ways to address this infrastructure problem—and it is one that I have been working on myself in my riding and it is an issue that I share with my colleagues from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba—is the whole matter of highway upgrading and the question of the Yellowhead highway. Most people in western Canada are familiar with that particular highway, the northern Trans-Canada, as it is known to us in western Canada.

• (1130)

Sometimes it is just not fair. I wrote to the Minister of Transport recently. He wrote back telling me what this government is doing to help with highway construction in Atlantic Canada. I have nothing against the need to improve the roads in Atlantic Canada. This government is spending about $1.1 billion to help some of the provincial governments in Atlantic Canada rebuild some of the roads. Of course, there is much more work that needs to be done, but what about the Yellowhead highway?

Let us take a look at that. We used to have a program. The government says it cannot do this, that it has never done it before. Well in fact it was done before. We had a joint federal-provincial program called the Yellowhead Highway Improvement Program. It was a program between the federal and provincial governments in B.C. of $36 million and expired at the end of March 1990.

The new government, the Harcourt government in British Columbia and the transport minister there, Mr. Charbonneau, the member from Kamloops, fully support renewing that infrastructure program, the Yellowhead Highway Improvement Program. We have yet to get a signal or a message from this government that it will in fact endorse that program.

As the previous speaker mentioned, this is not something we have to study. We do not have to wait six months for a report to come in to tell us what we have to do. Those reports have been done. They are right and ready. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if we called the village clerks in my riding and said that there was an infrastructure program ready to go and could they consider some projects that we could do, they would have those projects ready. They would be on the fax machine within minutes. We can do it.

The investment put into that will return to the public treasury in two ways. It is an investment we will eventually have to make in any event. If we do it now, it will save money. It will be cheaper to do now than to wait for years when it will cost considerably more. As well, estimates range. It has been said by some for example that for every $100 million we might invest in infrastructure the return to the public treasury in terms of taxation, money that we do not have to spend on UI and welfare that there is actually a net gain to the public treasury. That has been shown in a number of reports.

Unless it is keeping this as a big secret to be announced in a couple of weeks or so before an election campaign, why this government cannot seem to see that, is beyond me. I think most Canadians cannot understand this government's inaction on this issue as well.

In the short time I have left I appeal to this government to support this motion. I appeal to the Prime Minister to tell us today what this government is going to do when it comes to some economic direction. I ask for a little fairness. I ask that this government take a look at the kind of programs that can help communities, like the Yellowhead highway program that I am encouraging this government to sign because it is that kind of day-to-day bread and butter help that this government can provide to put Canadians to work. The government has a choice and that choice is for this infrastructure program. I encourage the government to support it.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I really wish it were that easy.

I am going to refer to my notes because I have a number of points I want to make, particularly with regard to the question of rail grade separations and its logical extension to rail safety.

As of January 1989 with the proclamation of the Railway Safety Act, the railways of this country have had their primary responsibility for safe rail practices clearly established and brought up to date. The federal Department of Transport monitors railway operations and it is empowered to take action to correct any threat to safety of the public or railway personnel.

Our two major railways, CN and CP Rail, had the best and the third-best safety records respectively, of all major North American railway companies in 1990.

However, this does not mean to say that there will be any reduction in the monitoring of their operations. The department has every intention of completely fulfilling its obligation to ensure that safe procedures are followed.

Despite the commendable goal put forth by the hon. member opposite, I feel that we can make the taxpayers' money go a lot further with a well thought out and balanced program of grade crossing improvements and public education than we can by assigning huge amounts of money to a comparatively few grade separation projects.

The reality is that Transport Canada's grade crossing improvement program provides an immediate safety dividend at a relatively low cost at many locations across Canada. For example, it takes approximately $80,000 to install an automated light and bell warning system at a level crossing. Installation costs for flashing lights, gates and bells are about $150,000. The total cost to eliminate grade crossings by contrast is positively immense.

To use an illustration, CN Rail's 534 kilometre, high density main line between Montreal and Toronto has 135 grade crossings with active warning systems as well as a large number of crossings with passive systems including public, private or farm grade crossings. The total cost of building grade separations on this line alone at an average cost of $8 million each would be in the order of $1 billion. This figure does not include pedestrian crossings.

There are more than 24,000 public grade crossings in Canada, 8,000 of which are equipped with automatic protection devices such as flashing light signals, bells or gates. The balance is protected by standard cross-buck grade crossing warning signals. In addition, there are some 33,000 private or farm crossings which are for the most part unprotected.

Prevention of accidents at grade crossings requires action by motorists, railways, road authorities and the federal government. Therefore, an example of where responsibilities must be accepted is the establishment and maintenance of clear sight lines to enable drivers to see approaching trains. Although this measure is cost effective, it is sometimes difficult to get the responsible party to carry out line-of-sight clearance. While the railway responds relatively quickly to orders to clear brush along the rights of way, municipalities may resist a similar request to clear railway lines in their jurisdiction.

Under the Railway Safety Act, the Minister of Transport has extensive powers to improve grade crossing safety to help prevent accidents and to initiate remedial measures after an accident. Railway safety inspectors also have considerable discretionary powers to act in the interests of safety. It has used these powers to impose speed restrictions on both the railway and the road authority where it feels it is necessary to limit risk.

It has also required road and/or railway traffic to stop before proceeding through a crossing and, where a severe threat to safety exists, it has actually closed crossings. An exceedingly important component for safety at railway crossings rests with education.

Transport Canada contributes $150,000 a year to the Railway Association of Canada's Operation Lifesaver, a public education program that promotes safety at railway crossings. A recent survey done for Transport Canada has shown that the public is generally unaware of the inherent dangers at railway crossings. Much of Operation Lifesaver's public education campaign, therefore, will be directed at the areas targeted by the survey in coming years.

Transport Canada does not just talk about safety, it spends a fair amount of money. There is an $8.5 million program in place to improve grade crossing warning systems. The department pays up to 80 per cent of the total cost of railway crossing improvements and the

balance is provided by the railways, municipalities or provinces.

These improvements include the installation of automatic warning devices such as flashing lights and bells, the interconnection of devices to highway traffic signals, lighting, improvements to the road approaches, to track layout, clearing of line-of-sight and construction of a road or rail detour. There have to be choices made every year as to which projects proceed and which must wait.

The criteria used to assess these projects try to address this frankly tough process as fairly as possible. They consider the rail and road traffic densities and speed, school, public bus and truck traffic, dangerous commodities carried by road and rail, the angle and the view of the crossing. Tragically, they also have to consider the accident history as well as the number of train tracks and the type of train operation and all of the physical road factors such as lanes and grades.

• (1140)

Despite what might be implied by the motion before us, it is not as if there is not concrete action every year to improve crossing safety. The money spent annually through the Railway Crossing Improvement Program, namely $8.5 million, would pay for only two modest grade separations each year. Contrast that, if you will, with the more than 100 at-grade crossings that are actually improved each year with these resources.

The existing programs have contributed significantly to increased levels of safety at our railway crossings. During the last 10 years crossing accidents have been reduced significantly. In 1990 there were 386 railway crossing accidents. While one would want that figure to be even lower, it is down sharply from the 826 accidents which occurred in 1980.

Transport Canada's grade crossing improvement fund certainly appears to be the most effective means available to us at the moment to improve railway safety. Safety has been improved at thousands of crossings through this program. Funds are allocated on a priority basis to try as much as humanly possible to see that railway crossings are as safe as we can make them.

The sentiments expressed by my hon. friend opposite are laudable, but grade separation projects must be looked at in the context of delivering the best and safest possible service to the widest population. For no other reason, I cannot support my hon. friend's motion as presented.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might put a question to the hon. member and ask if she realizes that the grade crossing fund has been cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. According to the rules, it is not possible to raise a question on this matter.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I am rather concerned. I understand the government House leader has been on television this morning saying that spending for infrastructure will do no good whatsoever. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are certainly several studies to show, in the United States context anyway, that spending in the public sector increases enormously the benefits to the private sector. If you think about it, it is rather obvious.

Whether it is railroads, bridges, highways, sewage treatment plants, hydroelectric generating capabilities, or whatever carried on through the public domain, it is rather obvious that if those things were not in place certainly the private sector would suffer enormously.

Imagine if the trucking industry was not able to transport the goods which it carries so well on our road system and had to transport over roads which were still gravel, for example. Saskatchewan is actually a pretty good example. Under the Conservative government in Saskatchewan, the roads deteriorated to an enormous extent. I can certainly understand why the municipalities and the trucking industry are saying that there has to be an improvement to the highways.

The point is that regardless of what segment of our society you look at, the private sector benefits enormously from the public expenditures in the whole realm of the infrastructure, whether it be municipal or on a national basis, or whether you are talking about sewer and water. This means that industries taking water from our rivers and streams for use in their plants may have to go to enormous lengths to treat the water so that it is pure enough for their use. This extra expenditure is certainly something which they have to take into account when they balance the bottom line. It is rather obvious that there is a benefit to the general public as well. When water is taken from the inlets to our public water

systems, the cleaner it is, the less expenditure we have to put forth as taxpayers in order to make it drinkable.

The Canadian Federation of Municipalities has done a tremendous amount of work on this. It should be commended for its efforts to raise the consciousness of the nation and hopefully draw the attention of the provincial and federal governments to the enormity of the problem facing the country. What we could term the situation we find ourselves in is a need for home improvement. It is rather obvious: If we never make any improvements to our homes, there comes a point where they deteriorate beyond a point where they are even habitable.

I would suggest that in the context of Canada being our home and the need for improvements, we have in many instances digressed, regressed and fallen to a point where some of our home is almost uninhabitable. That certainly would apply in so far as our rivers and streams are concerned. The South Saskatchewan River flows through the city of Saskatoon. There certainly is a tremendous amount of pollution getting into that river before it ever gets to the city.

I would like to add that in spite of the fact that the city of Saskatoon does have treatment plants for its sewage, there is certainly room for further treatment of that sewage before it goes back into the river for those who will be using it down stream from us. There is just no way that it is not obvious that if such action were to be taken that all citizens along our rivers and streams would certainly benefit from that expenditure.

The House is now back. We have been through a referendum where Canadians told us that the problem we are facing in this country for the most part is not some kind of a resolution to the esoteric way in which we view ourselves as a nation, but rather it is the nuts and bolts problem which we face and of course that is the economy. I do not think there is a member in this House who did not experience during the referendum the plea from the constituents to get on with what is really ailing this country and this economy and to do something about it.

It is just inconceivable how the government could say that there is no benefit from these kinds of expenditures. If we spend our resources on something which actually goes to create and put a better foundation under the wealth of this nation, like an assessment of a city or a town, the more houses and things you have that are taxable within the jurisdiction, the broader the tax base is.

• (1150)

I assume the government is really saying that it is far better for the nation to spend money on paying off the interest on the debt, which seems to be rather unproductive, than it is to build roads and bridges which are productive and add enormously to the wealth of the nation.

I cannot for the life of me understand how it can possibly conceive that expending tremendous amounts of money on paying interest on the debt is adding to the wealth of the nation. It seems to me to be the opposite case. Most likely what is happening is that it is adding to the wealth of individuals in other nations because very few people to whom we pay that interest are in this country, and even those who are here are certainly doing the best they can to avoid contributing to the wealth of the nation.

The Canadian Federation of Municipalities is saying that we need access to clean water, as I have already alluded to, for a number of reasons, certainly not the least of which is the health of our citizens. That includes to no small degree the absolute necessity of water and sewage treatment plants on many Indian reserves which have been shown to be so lacking in those amenities, things we take for granted. As well, I have already alluded to the fact that they are saying we need better sewage treatment systems.

I cannot help but make a plea for the government to get away from the idea that it seems to be better to pay interest on money borrowed than it is to spend money on the infrastructure of this nation, which will put people to work. The money which is expended will go into the hands of people. In turn it will be spent in local communities and, to no small extent, will come back to the government in the form of taxation rather than out of the federal Treasury in the form of interest paid to banks and lending institutions that certainly will not return any. History shows that they have not returned any.

I congratulate the member from Regina who brought forward this wonderful motion.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I could not start without commenting on the remarks of the previous speaker. I hope his remarks were in humour when he urged the government not to pay interest on the national debt, not to pay interest on the money it borrows. I am sure those of us who invest in our country and buy Canada Savings Bonds would be somewhat discouraged if the NDP came into office and we found that it was not going to pay interest on Canada Savings Bonds as the member has just suggested.

Do not pay interest on the national debt, do not pay your bills; I guess that is NDP policy. We know from the last session of Parliament that the NDP's policy for the debt is simply to print more money. This is what its financial critic said in the last session: "Just print more money", as if it would not cost the taxpayer any money.

The NDP policy of not paying interest on the debt is somewhat amusing to those of us who buy Canada Savings Bonds or have pension plans, whether it be the teachers' pension plan, the nurses' pension plan or even the old railway workers' pension plan, those of us who buy government bonds or government monetary issues expecting to receive a return on that investment to reinvest in pension plans. The NDP now says we should not pay interest on the money the government borrows.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Richardson: That is exactly what the member said, that we should not pay interest on the money borrowed, that we should spend it on something else.

An hon. member: Just write it off.

Mr. Richardson: "Just write it off; do not pay interest" is what the NDP says. The member said 10 times in his speech: "Do not pay interest". It is unbelievable but true. We will look at the "blues".

Mr. Benjamin: Who said that? Where and when?

Mr. Richardson: Old fog-horn is bellowing down there, but the fact is the NDP member said seven or eight times during his remarks that we should not pay interest on the national debt.

Getting back to the subject at hand, I would agree that building up the national infrastructure is a laudable goal and one we can all support. My objective today is to convince members of the House that the motion of the hon. member, the proposal he has made, is not a practical way or even a proper way of tackling this most important subject.

Let us look at the list of items that he proposes for our attention. He proposes improvements to the sewer and water treatment systems, road and bridge repair, and construction of grade separations at level railway crossings. I realize this is just a representative list but, even given that, the first thing that strikes me about it is that one of the items is clearly outside federal jurisdiction, a second is under active development, and a third, grade separations at railway level crossings, is already covered in a federal program.

Let me say I am not opposed to federal aid to other levels of government. I am as aware as the next person that all governments today are cash strapped. I am certainly not opposed to the use of scarce federal resources to achieve national goals that would otherwise be beyond the means of the responsible jurisdiction.

However, given that our means are limited, it surely is our duty as federal members to ensure that any such expenditure meets some recognized national goal. Otherwise we are just wasting valuable taxpayers' money.

Let us take a closer look at two of the hon. member's items. Sewer and water infrastructure is entirely a local matter. It is the most distant from federal jurisdiction of the items on the hon. member's list. Our first problem is deciding whether it is a matter for the federal government at all.

I do not for a moment deny that sewers and water treatment facilities are important, nor do I deny that they represent significant cost items for many Canadian municipalities. My objections are strictly practical. In today's tight economic climate the federal government must target its assistance to areas where it can make a difference nationally, and the federal government is committed to doing just that.

The hon. member proposes to build grade separations in place of level rail crossings. To put it in a nutshell grade separations are very expensive. They cost in the range of $3 million to $10 million each.

There is another kind of crossing, namely a protected level crossing with automated gates or lights, bells, or both. These projects cost in the range of $80,000 to

$150,000. Quite clearly money will stretch further for protected level crossings than for grade separations. This is not to say that grade separations are not worth it, but rather we have a responsibility to bring the best safety systems available to the greatest number of crossings.

Finally there is the hon. member's suggestion for a federal contribution to repairs to the nation's roads and bridges. As a matter of fact on this issue we are not entirely in disagreement. Indeed I am also of the opinion that highway upgrading and reconstruction is one area where the federal government could perhaps invest some money, but I am equally certain that if we are going to invest our resources at all it should be toward a national highway system.

I want to stress the importance of lasting economic value as a criterion for federal funding of infrastructure projects. Highways are an example of an area where carefully considered strategic application of federal money will pay lasting dividends for the country as a whole.

What are some of those dividends? How do better roads help the economy? There are gains in fuel efficiency, highway safety and travel times. Most important there would be greater efficiency in our distribution system in our domestic market. As is well known, highway policy is an area where federal government has been working in collaboration with the provinces toward a national policy.

As the House will recall, earlier this year first ministers directed their ministers of transport to consult with their ministers of finance and explore ways of proceeding with this work, remaining consistent with fiscal restraints. Considerable progress has been made in the discussions between transport ministers and finance ministers across the country with a notion of looking at a national infrastructure system, improvement of highways and reconstruction in Canada today.

To conclude, I support deliberate, carefully thought out, long-term national policies on specific infrastructure issues like highways.

• (1200)

Unfortunately this is not what the hon. member is asking us to support today and therefore I am unable to support the hon. member's resolution as it has been presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of presidence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION (FISCAL MEASURES) ACT, 1992

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John McDermid (for the Minister of Finance): moved that Bill C–76, an act to amend certain statutes to implement certain fiscal provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 25, 1992, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Riis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was looking forward this morning to see what the first order of business would be and I wonder if I could briefly raise two points.

One relates to the important economic statement that the Prime Minister or Minister of Finance will be making forthwith. I wonder if I could ask my friend who is with us in the House at the moment, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, if he could indicate as specifically as possible when that statement may be made and whether it would be made in Parliament.

Second, we are getting a lot of calls this morning in the lobbies and in our offices, I am told, from people who are anxious to get copies of the NAFTA, either on floppy disk or hard copy. Since I understand we are now likely to begin holding hearings this week on NAFTA, it is not unreasonable that people would want to get a copy of it before they appear at the hearings.

I wonder if my hon. friend could assist or, if he does not know the answer in terms of where the material is available immediately, perhaps later in the day we could have someone report back so the people of Canada would know where to get copies of the NAFTA.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether it is Thursday or Question Period.

I will strive to be obliging to my hon. friend because I know he has emerged from several weeks, if not months, in lotus-land and is having reality immersion.

The reality is that there will indeed be a statement on economic matters and it will be soon. My hon. friend can count on that sort of exchange taking place in the House of Commons. In addition, I do not know the specific answer to his NAFTA question but I will endeavour to get it for him.

Mr. Riis: I simply want to acknowledge the fact that perhaps my point of order was slightly out of order at this point. But I thought, since it was the first time we had a chance to rise in the House of Commons, that it would be a reasonable point to put to my hon. friend. As he has indicated, he will get back later in the day with information as to where the floppy disk or the hard copy is available.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome all members back to the House of Commons. I know they all worked extremely hard on the constitutional matter. We now have that behind us. The people of Canada have spoken; we have listened and we are getting on with the business of Canada.

Mr. Milliken: Let's get on with an election. They want to throw you out.

Mr. McDermid: There are the Liberals calling for an election. That is all they talk about. The last thing the people I talk to want is an election. They want us to get on with the business of Parliament, and that is what we are doing.

I am pleased today to lead off second reading debate on Bill C-76 which implements certain provisions from the 1992 budget. The Minister of Finance, in the lead up to the budget of 1992, held consultations across Canada with people from all walks of life; labour, special interest groups such as the handicapped, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, many of the trade associations, the financial institutions and so on. I participated with the Minister of Finance. These were tremendous consultation programs.

At the consultations where we had these groups together, a consensus was formed from these consultations. The concerns were responded to by the Minister of Finance in his budget of 1992.

Canadians told the minister that the government should take action to help get the recovery back on track and to help Canadian firms and workers become more competitive. They also told him they were concerned about the tax burden, about government spending and about the deficit.

The budget contained measures to boost the competitiveness of Canadian firms and workers. We announced tax support for the manufacturing and processing sector worth almost $2.3 billion over five years. The capital cost allowance rate was increased for manufacturing and processing machinery from 25 to 30 per cent.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands laughs at that. He thinks it is funny. I suggest that he talk to the manufacturers in Kingston to see if they appreciate this. It is exactly what they asked for in the pre-budget consultation. He sits there and makes fun of it. I cannot believe it.

This will help make Canada's manufacturing and processing sector, which directly accounts for about one-fifth of Canada's economy and jobs, more competitive. He does not understand that. Liberals do not understand competitiveness.

We also indicated that we are prepared to reduce the withholding tax on direct dividends paid to non-residents. This step, combined with the drop in the manufacturing and processing tax rate, will end the competitive disadvantage we face in attracting and keeping business in Canada.

The budget also announced further actions to reduce government expenditures in order to reduce federal taxes. We believe that cutting spending to cut taxes is economically productive. It reflects our confidence in the judgment of individual Canadians about how best to put their money to work in building a stronger, more competitive economy. Moreover, cutting spending will reinforce the government's deficit reduction effort, while at the same time allowing us to direct scarce resources to important national priorities.

The budget also provides tax relief through a number of measures to help Canadian families, students and students with disabilities.

In summary, the budget was fiscally prudent, socially responsive and economically sound. It reflects a realistic, balanced approach that will help pave the way for a return to sustained economic growth.

Bill C–76 will implement four measures contained in the budget. In order to help the government promote economic recovery, strengthen Canada's international competitiveness and further control its expenditures, the Small Businesses Loans Act, the Canada Student Loans Act, the Lobbyists Registration Act and the Salaries Act are all being amended.

First, I want to discuss the amendments to the Small Businesses Loans Act. Small businesses are a key to the healthy growth of Canada's economy. Reflecting their importance, our federal tax system offers significant support for small business. These recommendations came from the consultations with the small business sector leading up to the budget.

Small businesses enjoy a special reduced income tax rate of 12.8 per cent and that includes the 3 per cent surtax on the first $200,000 of business income. Canada's lifetime capital gains exemption provides an added incentive for individuals to invest in small business. Small businesses qualify for the most generous incentives for research and development in the G–7 countries, including a 35 per cent refundable federal tax credit instead of the general rate of 20 per cent. Over–all, Canada's federal tax system for small business is one of the most beneficial in the industrialized world. These measures provide Canadian small businesses with over $3 billion in support annually.

• (1210)

However, the government is aware that weathering the recession has drained the financial resources of many small businesses. As the economy moves into recovery, small businesses will need affordable financing to take advantage of the emerging opportunities for growth and help generate productive economic activity.

In order to provide greater assistance to small businesses and to help stimulate the process of recovery in the economy, the Minister of Finance announced two measures in the budget to help small businesses.

A small business financing program, effective budget day, will help small businesses in financial difficulty, including farmers, to obtain loans at lower interest rates. Tax preferred small business financing bonds may be issued up until the end of this year and may have a maturity of up to five years. Therefore it can provide assistance well beyond the current year.

A complementary measure is contained in Bill C–76. The ceiling for loans to individual small businesses under the Small Businesses Loans Act will be double from $100,000 to $200,000. This change is in response to the increased financing needs of small business.

The Small Businesses Loans Act, first passed in 1961 by another Conservative administration, assists the private sector to obtain loans to establish, expand or modernize small businesses. The most recent amendment to the loan limit in 1980 established the ceiling at $100,000. As we all know, there have been considerable changes since that time, both in the purchasing power of the dollar and in the financing needs of small businesses.

The over–all consumer price index has roughly doubled since 1980. Doubling the Small Businesses Loans Act ceiling to $200,000 responds again to representations from the small business community and recognizes changes which have occurred over the past decade.

The current legislation authorizing the small business loans program will expire on March 31, 1993. The government will be introducing new legislation to extend the program. As part of this legislation, consideration is being given to modifying other program terms and conditions to take account of the concerns and needs expressed by smaller firms and the banking community.

Let me move now to a second important component of Bill C–76, the amendments to the Canada Student Loans Act.

The Canada student loan program was introduced in 1964 and makes financial help available to needy students pursuing studies at the post–secondary level. The program helps eligible students to meet the many costs involved in gaining a higher education. This is vitally important if Canada is to maintain and enhance its competitive position in a global economy. It is increasing-

ly clear that an educated and skilled workforce is a prerequisite for improved productivity and prosperity in today's competitive world. I think we all agree with that.

To help support an educated and competitive workforce, the program's current structure must be modernized. Left unattended, it may very well cease to be an effective tool for access to post-secondary education. Accordingly, to preserve this important national program and to ease its administration, the Canada Student Loans Act will be amended.

The Secretary of State, who administers the program, is negotiating new arrangements for student loans with financial institutions. The aim of the negotiation is to reduce the growing cost of the program and to improve its efficiency by asking the lenders to share in the risks and the cost of defaults. Saving are expected to provide scope for the needed improvements to the program, including the elimination of the 3 per cent fee, which is an administrative fee, and an increase in the weekly loan ceilings.

These important measures will be implemented following successful completion of the negotiations and passage of any necessary amendments to the Canada Student Loans Act. In the meantime there are some measures that we can take now.

As currently structured, the federal government guarantees loans made to full-time students by lending institutions. The government pays the interest costs while the students are at school and for six months after graduation. After completing their studies, the students must enter into a consolidated repayment agreement with their lending institutions. If a student fails to enter into a repayment agreement or fails to maintain payments, the federal guarantee is honoured. In other words, the federal government pays off the loan and the borrower's debt becomes due to the taxpayers of Canada.

The estimated interest cost the federal government will pay under the program in 1991-92 is almost $190 million. Payments in 1991-92 to lenders for loans that have gone into default are estimated at $175 million. Collection costs will total over $24 million.

Moreover, total defaults outstanding as of March 31, 1992 were $980 million—almost a billion dollars—owed to the taxpayers of this country.

Over the five-year period from 1985-86 to 1990-91, total program expenditures increased at a rate of over 9 per cent a year. It is essential that action be taken to ensure the continued financial viability of the Canada Student Loans Program.

Bill C-76 proposes to eliminate the six-month interest free period currently granted to full-time students upon their graduation. The budget had proposed this for the 1992-93 loan year, but following consultations with the financial institutions, this measure will now be effective for the loan year beginning August 1, 1993. This will coincide with planned improvements to the program and will give financial institutions the time required to implement the necessary adjustments to their systems.

It is important to remember that students can continue to benefit from Canada student loans, interest free, for the entire time they are in school. They will also continue to have up to six months after leaving school to make repayment arrangements with their lenders. However, during this period, interest on their loans will accrue. Borrowers in repayment will continue to be eligible for up to 18 months of interest relief in the event that they are encountering financial hardship in repaying their loans.

Through Bill C-76, the government is also moving to ease the administration of the Canada Student Loans Program. In future the necessary forms used in the program will be determined by the Secretary of State rather than the Governor in Council, as is the present practice. Making the forms an administrative matter and not part of regulations will provide better scope for planning and implementing administrative changes and co-ordinating these changes with the lenders and the provinces.

Bill C-76 also proposes to update the alternative payment formula which is designed to compensate provinces choosing to establish their own student loan programs as an alternative to participating in the Canada Student Loans Program.

The changes in Bill C-76 will ensure that the alternative payments to provinces that might opt out of the program reflect more accurately spending in the province on outstanding Canada student loans. In addition, a

province will be required to give written notice 12 months before opting out of the program.

These proposed changes to the formula would have no impact on a province as long as it participates in the program. At the present time Quebec and the Northwest Territories do not participate in the program. They administer their own student aid programs and receive compensatory payments from Canada determined by a formula in the Canada Student Loans Act.

The federal government wants the Canada Student Loans Program to remain as widely available across the country as humanly possible. It is a national program and we want to keep it that way. The changes we are debating today will help to ensure that the program continues to provide assistance to needy students in participating provinces and territories, and to compensate jurisdictions offering their own alternative program.

• (1220)

Some hon. members may not be aware of just how much support the federal government does provide, either directly or indirectly, to post-secondary students. Support through the personal income tax system includes a tax credit in respect of tuition fees and a tax credit for each month of full-time study.

Also, if the post-secondary student does not have sufficient income to take advantage of the tuition and education credits his or her spouse, parent or grandparent may claim them up to a specified limit.

This measure recognizes that some students are in a non-tax paying position and are supported by the family. In addition, post-secondary students may earn tax free up to $500 of scholarship, bursary or fellowship income.

Let me point out that the Minister of Finance also announced in the budget an increase in tax assistance to post-secondary students. The dollar limit on which the education credit is calculated will be increased by one-third, from $60 to $80 per month of full-time study.

In addition, the limit on the total amount of tuition fee and education credits that may be claimed by another taxpayer will be increased from $600 to $680. These changes will benefit 600,000 post-secondary students claiming the education credit and 400,000 supporting taxpayers claiming the transfer.

The federal government also transfers funds each year to the provinces and territories under the Established Programs Financing arrangements. The EPF transfers provide almost $6 billion annually in cash and tax transfers in respect of post-secondary education. Education, as I indicated earlier, is a vital element in ensuring continued prosperity for Canadians.

Consistent with our policies of fiscal restraint and responsible management, the Minister of Finance indicated in the budget that the government would strengthen its cost recovery performance. To this end, Bill C-76 proposes to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act. It is our view that the lobbyists registration program should be operated on a cost recovery basis.

Specifically the government proposes to amend the fee-setting regulation to allow the Governor-in-Council to charge lobbyists a registration fee when registering under the act. The fee will be determined in consultation with the private sector.

Fees owing will also be made a debt to the Crown so that the Crown may sue in the civil courts to recover unpaid fees. To further encourage compliance, the current penalty avoidance incentives which exist to encourage compliance with the act will be extended to the registration fees.

Finally, Bill C-76 amends the Salaries Act. Last year the government froze ministerial, parliamentary and Public Service pay. We believe that in a period of national economic hardship, ministers of the Crown, including the Prime Minister, should further contribute to the restraint effort by cutting back their ministerial salaries. To meet this commitment, and to further assist the government to reduce its expenditures, the ministerial salaries of the Prime Minister and all ministers will be reduced by 5 per cent effective this past April 1.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the February budget was designed in response to what the government heard from Canadians in all parts of the country. The measures contained in this bill are an integral part of that response. They will help the government to live within the taxpayers' means and to create the conditions for recovery, strong growth and a more competitive economy.

With this in mind, I encourage my hon. colleagues to give speedy passage to this legislation.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to speak to Bill C–76 which is a budget implementation measure of the budget which was tabled last February.

Canadians all know that this government's fiscal measures are not working. There is a total lack of trust. We are into a major recession. We can even call it a depression. We are still implementing measures that were brought forward in the budget of February 1992. We know today that the finance minister is preparing to bring forward either an economic statement or a mini budget shortly. We also know that the Prime Minister has said that his government has made mistakes. We asked the government when it was going to bring forward some new measures that would do something for the Canadian economy. Yes, the government has made mistakes and we can all feel it. Just go out on the streets and everyone will tell you that there are no jobs. From small business to big business to students, every Canadian is worried as to where we are going next.

This government does not know where it wants to go and it does not know how to get there. I ask the government to please do whatever it can to start making some concrete investments in Canadians. That is what we need. Canadians need to be able to constructively contribute to this country. It is absolutely impossible to do this under what this government has done.

The government has tried to tell people that it was responsible when it has done nothing. It had a prosperity initiative that cost $24 million which told us things we already knew. The government has told us that it has done polling. It spends millions of dollars every week on polling. It should know by now that it is not the polling that is going to do things for Canadians. It is what it is going to do about the results that it is hearing. It is impossible for us to continue in the same light that we have been continuing for the last eight years.

When the Prime Minister was first elected and first became the Prime Minister he said: "Watch me. You will not recognize this country when I am through with it". Boy, was he right. The problem is that we do not want to see our country the way it is right now. We want some massive changes. We want some investment in people, not some niggardly cutbacks.

Bill C–76 purports to do many things. I listened to the ministers and I know they mean well, but they do not know what they are doing.

Let us talk about Canada student loans. Yes, it is important that students be able to get loans. It is essential because right now, most students were not able to get a summer job to help pay their way. Most of them are not able to get a large enough loan to keep on going. The problems that the students have right now are horrendous. However we go on preaching that we have to invest in our young people. Yes, we have to invest in our young people, but we have to help them along and we have to do more to help them.

When a student gets a Canada student loan it is not because he is rich or because he has the money. It is because he needs the help. There is no interest on the loan while he is a full–time student in school, but this government now says that as soon as he finishes his course there is no more interest–free period. From that day on the interest starts accumulating. That is fine if the student is able to get a job, but how many students have been able to get a job the day after they graduate? Very, very few. Those who do have part–time work which does not pay very much and have a great deal of difficulty of coping with what is happening to them.

This government in the last budget said: "Well, we have to do something about the defaults on Canada's student loans". That sounds like a good reason to collect from those who are not paying, especially from those who were able to get good jobs because of their education. They should pay for their loans. I agree with that. However, one of the things that has been happening is that we have been terrorizing young people who have not been able to get jobs.

I have been in my riding and I cannot begin to tell you the number of people who have come to see me, crying, because some collection agency has been terrorizing them in their homes. I had one woman come to my office a week ago. She is the mother of a 26–year old who is on welfare. The collection agency found out where she lived, telephoned her and verbally abused this lady, laughed at her and told her: "Get a mortgage on your

house. Pay off your son's loan". This is a 26-year old who is on welfare and who cannot get a job.

• (1230)

The mother does not own her own home. She came to me crying and asking: "Why are they doing this to me?" The collection agency said: "We can call you three times a day if we want to". When she came to see me I called the collection agency and asked: "Why are you terrorizing the mother of a 26-year old? She does not have any money. The son does not have any money. What are you doing? You have no right to terrorize the parent of a 26-year old".

First of all, I had a hard time getting the person at the collection agency to identify what company they were working for. They were demanding that the parents pay off the loan in full for the student. The parents did not have the money. The way these collection people treated me when I simply asked what company they worked for is unbelievable. Finally, after I spoke to them for a while, they agreed that they should not be terrorizing the parent of the 26-year old, that they should speak to him directly. However, what do you do when a young man is living on welfare? How can he make payments on a loan? I do not know. I know how little they get on welfare.

A young woman came to see me, again the same thing. She wanted to make payments but the collection agency was not giving her any option. They said: "You have to pay the balance in full". But when I called they said: "Well, no". These are just collection tactics.

Do we do the same thing with the Reichmann brothers when they default on a loan? Do we terrorize them? Are we telling them that their credit is finished?

On Friday another young man came to see me. He was very frightened. He said: "I do not have a job. I do not mind making payments but they do not want payments. They want the full amount. They told me that if I did not pay off the full amount, and I do not have the money to do that, they would garnishee my wages and I would never get another job because what employer would hire me if I owed this amount of money". I am shocked at the kind of treatment our young people are getting. This is disastrous. There is no need to go after the poorest of the poor that way. If they have jobs, by all means make sure they pay. However, if they do not have jobs, what can you do? How discouraging it must be for these young people.

A lot of the reasons they do not have jobs is because of this government's policies. It is frightening to think that this government has lost total control, absolute total control of the economy. It is absolutely shameful.

It talks about investing in our future and investing in our young people. It has cut back on transfer payments for education, therefore tuition fees are increasing. How do you expect the poorest of the poor to cope with increased tuition fees and GST on books? They have to pay it. They do not have any choice. How do you expect them to cope with these kinds of things?

This particular bill does not even tell us whether they will be able to apply for interest relief. In the past, if after the first six months after graduation they did not have a job, they could apply for interest relief. I would like to find out if they can continue to apply for interest relief. Already we have passed the 3 per cent surcharge. Do people out there realize that students have to pay the 3 per cent in cash before they actually get the loan? If you need a loan to go to school where are you going to get the 3 per cent to pay for it in advance? You will have to borrow somewhere else so that when you get your loan you can pay it back. What kind of nonsense is that?

We talk about tax relief. I am pleased that during the last budget the government did bring in some measures that would offer tax relief. That is great if you have parents who can afford to pay for you and they can get the tax relief. What about the thousands of young people who do not have parents that can afford to pay for them? What about them? What good is giving them tax relief if they do not have any income? Any kind of measure that saves you income tax money does not work if you do not pay income tax already.

Right now I am very worried about what this is going to do. I know it is a minor thing to say that we are going to start charging interest from the day they graduate. In the scheme of things the Conservatives can say: After all, the government has lent them the money. What can we tell those young people about a job?

If a person has a job and gets laid off under unemployment insurance he or she has been able to get training funds. Yes, that has been good. It means that not only is their tuition fee covered but also they get unemployment insurance while they are in training, although I am told that those funds have run out also.

In a sense these people have a greater advantage than other young people who have chosen to get their education before going out into the workforce. They have no retraining advantage. They do not even have any kind of a hope, most of them, of getting a job. I cannot tell the House the numbers of students that have been to my office with masters degrees, with economics degrees, with all kinds of education degrees that have been unable to find jobs.

It is a signal of a country in crisis when our young people have so little hope. Then we do something to change our policy. I know that this government is thinking about doing that, but it needs to do it today, not three weeks from now, not four weeks from now. The government needed to do it two years ago, but better late than never.

The first thing the government should do is admit that it has failed. It has already admitted that. It has failed. As soon as it realizes that, it should not wait two or three weeks. It should not wait one week. It should come out right away with some measure to invest in people.

I know that my Conservative friends across the way are going to say: "That is just the Liberals and their policy of spend, spend, spend". I tell them that investing in people is not a waste of money. A person who sits at home on welfare and is discouraged consumes as much money as the one who goes out and works at something and leaves something behind, be it in municipal infrastructure, sewer, water projects, whatever.

Would it not be better to have brought forward something in this budget concerning students to say that those students who have graduated, who have been unable to get jobs in order to start paying back their student loans, could do some community work and perhaps get credits against the interest or against their loans?

I believe that the president-elect of the United States has actually proposed something like this. Perhaps this government that has in the past always followed what the Americans do might consider this. Do members opposite not think it would be a good idea?

Think of a young person who is without work and living on welfare. How much better would such people feel about themselves if they were actually contributing something and at the same time keeping the collector on their student loans off their backs while they are waiting to find a job. Then they would be investing their time and would actually be doing something more constructive than sitting at home, living on welfare and worrying about where they are going to go next.

These are positive things that we can do for our students. They are very positive. We have to consider doing things for our students. We have to offer them the opportunity to gain some kind of experience, be it community work and perhaps some relief from their student loans or again just working physically at some infrastructure programs where there will actually be something left after they finish, such as a sewer built. All these things are going to have to be done. If they are not done this year they will have to be done next year.

• (1240)

It is important we consider the kinds of things that can be done and the way we direct our money. Perhaps we can redirect the money this government has been spending on polling. Every department does its own polling constantly. Can you imagine the millions of dollars that have gone into all of these polls? If the government redirected some of the advertising money or other misspent money, it would go a very long way toward creating the kinds of jobs that will leave something behind next year and the year after. I think it is very important.

We must remember there are very few dollars but we must use them in concrete ways that will help the people in the long term, not just in the short term. Doing nothing means the unemployed go from unemployment insurance to welfare. On welfare they get money, and it costs the government money, but there is nothing left. They can eat and sit at home, but imagine how much better it will be when they are able to go out and actually do something. They will feel much better and it will be

much better for the country. They get money to live at that point because they are paid for work they have done.

There are many things having to do with students that are shameful in a country that values education, that values the future as we are purported to do. The fact that so many of our people are unemployed is absolutely the most shameful thing that we face every day as parliamentarians. That is the first thing we should concentrate on, getting those young people to be productive members of our society. We should be giving them the best education possible, making it easier for them to go to school and get that education rather than making it harder. We should be making it better for them so they do not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

One of the most shameful things I have learned is that there are food banks at every major school in the country pretty well and there is a tremendous demand at the food banks at the universities. Does that not tell you that many of our students are the poorest of the poor? They have to have food banks because these young people do not know where they are going to get their next meal. Is that not shameful in a country that wants its young people to be the best educated? How can they learn if they have empty bellies? There are a few jobs but they are few and far between. We must do something far more productive and far more decisive than these kinds of measures. Obviously that is why the finance minister is planning to bring out an economic statement and a mini budget.

There are four major parts to this particular bill, and one of them is the increase in the small business development loan ceiling. There will be an amendment to the Small Businesses Loans Act which increases the individual loan amount from $100,000 to $200,000. That is a good measure.

However, many small businesses have asked that the ceiling be made higher because not all financial institutions will deal with an amount of $200,000. They would prefer to have more institutions involved, but obviously that is something we can ask the government to consider while we are studying this bill in committee. I do not know if it would be agreeable to this kind of an amendment. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and they have been extremely hard hit.

We talked about the students. We might as well talk about the small business people in the same way. They have borne the brunt of a lot of the costs of the GST. The smaller they are, the more difficult it has been for them to survive, to do the work associated with many of the changes that have come about due to this government's economic and fiscal policies. It is extremely important that we allow this kind of a ceiling because obviously if you are in big trouble the odds of getting a larger loan are not very good.

We also have to talk to bankers. The Federal Business Development Bank has perhaps to reconsider its mandate. It has now become just an ordinary bank. It will lend money the same way an ordinary bank will lend money. If the business is slightly risky it does not look at it.

Where does a small business person go when he or she is in financial trouble or when he or she needs some kind of bridge financing? It is not easy because these are tough times. People have not been making profits. They do not have a lot of collateral to offer for loans.

When there is no collateral more often than not banks will not look at you. They will not offer you a loan if you say you are going to work hard and make this happen. They are going to offer you a loan if you have something with which you can back up your loan, your personal home, or whatever investments you may have.

If you are in trouble as a small business person, you have already given your house and any other investments you might have had are long gone and your house is up as collateral. How do you increase the amounts you have?

It is especially important that this government come up with some policy to help small businesses in trouble, that the tightening up not occur. I know the banks are trying their best but as financial institutions they have to show a profit to their shareholders. It very important that some scheme be worked out between the government and the banking institutions in order to allow the kinds of loans, the kinds of incentives for small businesses because they are the ones that create the jobs. They are the only way at this point that we have of really pulling ourselves out of this recession.

If we encourage our small business sector then we will be better off. We know that. Hopefully the small business people in our country, in our cities and in our towns will continue to work on. They work extremely long hours. If you have ever been in any kind of a small business usually it is owner operated. In hard times the owner works longer and longer hours under more stressful conditions. He cannot afford to hire people. Often they suffer from burnout.

Would it not be so much better if the owners could afford to hire a few people to help them, if there were some way that they could feel secure enough in their business to hire these young people who are without work. Then we have a chance.

I am asking this government to make sure that these kinds of policies are put in place so that our small business sector can grow and create jobs the way they have done in the past and the way they must continue to help us.

One of the other parts of this bill is the amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act. The government is saying that if it wants anything having to do with these lobbyists, it is that the whole cost be recovered. At first glance that sounds like a very good idea. However, one of the things that worries me is whether this will deny access to those people who need to lobby the government but have no money.

Let us make sure that we do not cut out all of the poorer people from getting through to government. The rich people and the rich lobbyists can always find a way around it, but in these hard times we must always be very much in touch with the poorer people so that the policies that are brought forward by this government can be talked about by these lobbyists who represent groups that do not have the kinds of dollars that perhaps some of the other ones have. Under the terms of the Lobbyists Registration Act, passed by Parliament in 1988, the statute would have to be reviewed on the third anniversary of the enactment. The third anniversary of the enactment was September 30, and as the House was adjourned for the referendum campaign the government put off the resumption of Parliament and the requirement to strike a committee.

• (1250)

This committee, which should be struck now, would have one year to report back to the House to present its findings and any recommendations for amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act. This would be an opportunity to begin dealing constructively with the central issues in Canadian democracy: the relationship of the government to its people and how public policy is formed.

Will the mandate of this parliamentary committee be broadened to include the examination of how public policy advocacy is conducted generally in Canada including the use of advocacy advertising, coalition building, grassroots campaigns, public opinion polling, paid lobbyists, and the relative inequities between those few elements of society that can afford to hire highly skilled advocates and those many who cannot?

These are things that must be studied. We know that this piece of legislation will be passed, as this government does have a majority, but we ask that it consider these requests when it strikes the committee. It is extremely important for all Canadians.

The last one is an amendment to the Salaries Act which, effective April 1, 1992, cut the salaries of the Prime Minister, ministers and ministers of state by 5 per cent. That is good. Obviously when you freeze everybody else's salaries you must somehow lead the way and show that you are also prepared to tighten your belt. The only question is whether 5 per cent was enough. That can be debated. I was pleased to see the government do this.

On the other hand, we hear that the Prime Minister is thinking of reducing his cabinet. Let us remind all Canadians that since the Conservatives took office they have had the biggest cabinet ever. When the Liberals were in office the cabinet was not as large as it is now. Perhaps if back in 1984 the Conservatives had done a little bit more thinking rather than just talking they might have saved us millions of dollars by keeping it on the slimmer side, even slimmer than that of the Liberals. I have no objections to that.

That is a question that must be asked.

I know that this government is planning to bring forward some new initiatives. I look forward to hearing them because I, as well as most Canadians, do not believe that this government knows where it is going or

has any idea what to do. This government is in total disarray. Canadians no longer trust this government. For all Canadians the sooner it resigns the better.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): It is my pleasure today to speak on the matter of Bill C-76, the omnibus tax or budget bill that is before the House today.

This bill is one that tags a number of different loose ends. It introduces some things that are probably a step in the right direction, and some things that are perhaps questionable.

The bill itself is essentially divided into four parts. The first deals with the Canada Student Loans Act and makes some necessary changes and some changes that are perhaps questionable. The second deals with the Lobbyists Registration Act and is once again a dichotomy. Some parts are essential and some parts are perhaps questionable with respect to some of the fine tuning of the bill. The third part reduces salaries of ministers and the Prime Minister by 5 per cent. I will have some comment on that a little bit later. The fourth part increases the Small Businesses Loans Act limit from $100,000 to $200,000.

First, allow me to give an overview before I speak specifically about these parts of the bill. If we examined the budget overall—and I am not going to speak at great length about the budget because I have had my kick at the cat as many others in the House have had. However, since this is set up in the budget it is relevant to examine the direction that this government has taken over the last few years and where we are at the present time.

Part of the reason I am bringing this up is because I read a recent statement by the Prime Minister in which he spoke about the recession and the depth of the recession. He said, essentially, that he did not realize how deep the recession would go, that some of the economists of the finance department had not recognized the difficulties and that possibly he would have changed some of the government's direction.

Mr. McDermid: Nobody did.

Mr. Whittaker: It is interesting that the junior minister of finance says that nobody did. I would refer him specifically to the GST hearings of 1989-90 at which questions were constantly being asked of the witnesses and the economists—the economists of the Department of Finance—that were before the committee. The number one question was: "Is there a prediction that there will be a recession commencing?" Of course the answer was yes.

Next they were asked: "Will the GST if it is brought in when it is planned to be brought in lengthen and increase the depth of that depression?" The answer was yes. If the member looks through them he will find it in there.

Mr. McDermid: Nobody did.

Mr. Whittaker: I am telling the member to do his homework. I am telling him that it is there. I was on those committees. I heard it. I asked the questions and I got the responses.

Mr. McDermid: Who said that?

Mr. Whittaker: I want to tell the hon. member that if he does his research he will see that those predictions were made and that the Prime Minister should have been aware of them, as should the Minister of Finance, the junior minister of finance and their economists. It was predicted that this recession would be a deep recession and that their monetary policies would increase that problem. The minister closes his eyes to those facts. He does not want to hear that it was their monetary and fiscal policies that caused the problem. I want to remind them of that because they are going to hear from now until the election, and through the election, that the direction they have taken has been wrong. It has been pointed out to them time and time again.

I digress, but I felt that it was important to put it on record that this government has been misleading the people of Canada by telling them that, first of all, there was not a recession and then by saying that the recession was just a little bump and that its monetary and fiscal policies would solve the problems. They have not. I would suggest that they have caused the problems.

Now to examine the legislation before us. I would like to turn to the section dealing with Canada student loans and point out to the government that as a member of the public accounts committee I along with the members of that committee pointed out the difficulties with the collection of Canada student loans and the massive defaults on Canada student loans. There were problems in the collection and the government had to tighten that up.

What we have witnessed over the last little period of time is that in the over exuberance in the collection procedure the collectors who have been hired have hounded those in arrears. In many cases there is no apology for those people. They are clearly in the wrong. They owe the money and should have paid it.

What we are now finding is that some of the people that the collection agencies are going after and some of the people from whom the government has withheld income tax returns, GST credits, et cetera are now without work.

• (1300)

There are some who have become disabled. I recall one case in my riding in which the person had become disabled as a result of a motor vehicle accident since the time of borrowing the money and now it was collection time. Yes, there are provisions within the act and policies within the student loan department to make exceptions, exemptions and reasonable collection procedures.

Unfortunately when those people come into our offices they have already either lost the money or they are being hounded to death by a collection agency. That must stop.

The main thrust of this bill is a serious one that we must examine on behalf of students. It will require students to begin paying interest on loans from the time of graduation.

If you look at the other side, the government is saying: "We will increase the amount of money per week that you can get". However over the course of the time it is saying: "We are going to give you more money over the period that you need it. The interest rates may be increased because of the new administrative problems for which we will be paying and ultimately for which you will be paying but you will now have to pay interest from the time you graduate as opposed to six months later".

The accumulated principal and interest now owing increases. The student comes out of university owing $5,000, $10,000 or $20,000 under the Canada Student Loans Act as well as the other loans that the student has had to get in order to get the education, and he or she has no guarantee of a job.

At the time that I finished high school I was able to go directly from high school into a job and then later go back to university. I was able to pay my own way through but that is not the case with many people. There are no jobs out there.

The jobs that were available in industry have collapsed. They are simply not there. They are not available any more. Therefore, it is very unfair to these students at this stage to say, particularly in these hard economic times: "You are going to have to pay interest for that period of time".

It is one thing to try to get the deficit and the debt under control, but it is another to put the onus, not just for paying off the debt but for paying off their own personal debts, onto the next generation coming up. It is shirking our responsibilities as members of Parliament and of our present generation to hoist that onto the younger generation. It will make it that much more difficult for them to become viable within the business community as they get out of universities and colleges. I have some problem with that.

I would like to turn to the Small Businesses Loans Act. While it appears to be laudable to increase from $100,000 to $200,000 the amount of money available to be loaned we must examine the many other things within that with regard to where we are going with small business.

We all know that small business, and we have said it before, is the backbone of Canadian employment and that 85 per cent of the increased employment throughout the last 10 years has been created by the small business community. We also know that the majority of profits from small businesses are put back into the Canadian economy, but on the other hand it seems that we do not make it that easy for the small business community.

If we examine the bankruptcy results for the last couple of years we see enormous increases in small business bankruptcies. There was an increase in bankruptcies just last month from September to October of something like 35 per cent compared to the same period last year.

We also have to examine what these small business people face when they are starting up, the capitalization, the money that they need in order to get going. They go to the banks. First I would suggest that the banks do not often look at the Small Businesses Loans Act in deciding whether or not they should finance.

Often we talk to small business people from within the communities about what funds are available. If you ask them if they have ever looked at the Small Businesses Loans Act they say they have been in to see the bankers and their bankers have never told them about that particular act. I think that this is reflected in some of the loans under the Small Businesses Loans Act. If we look at the period from 1985 through to 1991, we see a decrease under the Small Businesses Loans Act of 69 per cent in loans, from 34,741 small businesses using that act in 1985 down to 10,640. I think that is a reflection of the difficulty of what the small business community calls triple dipping and the fact that the bankers are not telling the small business community that the Small Businesses Loans Act is available to them.

The triple dipping I referred to is the wish of the banks to ensure their loans are looked after. They are guaranteed under the Small Businesses Loans Act. They are then given business collateral as well as personal collateral so that there is essentially triple collateral available to the banks. On collections, they often do not bother to pay attention as to whether they get the best value for their money when they are collecting on defaulted loans.

Also, if we look at the amount of money lent under the Small Businesses Loans Act for that same period of time, there is a decrease of 59 per cent of loans, from $1 billion approximately in 1985 down to $413,000 in 1991, a substantial drop. While the increased limit seems to be a good idea, I suggest that there is not much use to it if in fact the banks are not making the small businesses aware that this is available.

I should say at this point that I was pleased to see considered one of the suggestions that I have made to this House and a number of other members have made over the last two or three years, that of a one-stop shop. I understand that the government, under the Minister of State for Small Businesses and others, has set up a pilot project in Edmonton where there will be under one roof a one-stop shop for the small business community. I am hoping that that pilot project will work out well within Edmonton and will be able to be expanded throughout Canada to ensure that the small business community can go to one stop under one roof and find out from that area all of what is available from the federal government and perhaps also the provincial governments. I think that would be of great help to the small business community.

I think it is also interesting to note that as we look at money that is provided or loan guarantees provided by the federal government through the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Federal Business Development Bank, we see the loans getting larger and larger. If we speak to the banking community they tell us that there is as much paperwork to make a $20,000 loan as there is to make a $2 million or $10 million loan and they would much rather make the larger loans. I think that is the way the situation has gone in the banking community. There is a tendency to flow toward larger loans to larger corporations as opposed to assisting smaller businesses with smaller loans, the small capital loans.

I do not think that moving the floor up from $100,000 to $200,000 is going to help those smaller businesses. While I support the floor for those who need that increase, and I think that increase is needed, I suggest that we have got to do other things to make sure that the small business community is in fact getting the money it needs.

• (1310)

It is interesting to note also that there is a report card done on banking by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business each year. It is also interesting to note that the five major chartered banks are the bottom of the satisfaction scale. There has been some shifting over the years. I will say that the Bank of Montreal has made an effort. It appears to increase the availability of loans to small businesses. That is reflected in this report card, where they have come from the bottom last year up to somewhere in the middle, approximately a 56 per cent satisfaction rate. It is interesting to note that caisses populaires and credit unions have the top ranking as far as satisfaction percentage with the small business community goes in this report card. It goes out to other institutions, down to trust companies, national banks and other chartered banks. Then you get into the big five. I think that is a tell-tale figure and a tell-tale report card in looking at the availability of funding through our chartered banks and through our banking community.

We as parliamentarians have to look at where we are going and what we have done in the past in ensuring that our small business community is in fact a viable community and that we make things somewhat easier on them in order to secure their loans while still protecting the profits, which can be somewhat less, of the lending institutions.

I would like to move on briefly to touch on the amendments to the lobby area and just flag one problem that I foresee in this. It is a good idea to ensure that the user pays to some extent in this particular case, but there are two parts of the lobbyist registrations. There are tier one lobbyists who lobby on behalf of several different firms or organizations and tier two lobbyists who are employees of a firm or organization and lobby exclusively for their employer.

I would suggest that while there is now a cost of some $500,000 for the registration per year of lobbyists, and there should be some way of getting that back from the larger firms, there is a potential problem here for those groups which lobby on behalf of women, minorities, native people, the disabled, the homeless, the poor. Many of these groups would fall under tier one. Many of these groups may perhaps be hard pressed to pay some of the lobbyist fees that may be required. It is not set out in this bill exactly what those lobbyist fees will be and how extensive, but I would suggest that in order to get back what it costs for the registration that they may have to be fairly substantial. I flag that as a potential problem in this particular area.

The final part of this bill of course is that of reducing the salaries of ministers and the Prime Minister by 5 per cent. While I do not think that anybody can criticize the government for cutting back and recognizing that, we should also recognize that these cutbacks mean approximately $100,000 in the over-all picture, if added up. I think that each minister gave up a matter of something like $2,400 and the Prime Minister slightly over $3,000. All this added together is $100,000. This is not a lot when we consider a budget of over $160 billion in expenditures, but I think this was a correct idea to show that there are problems out there and to lead the way. Capping the salaries of the members with a 0 per cent increase last year and taking a cut in the cabinet and prime ministerial salaries of 5 per cent shows that things are tight and things are tough and that our cabinet is willing to make that step. However, it is in fact tokenism and I think the government has to look deeper into some of the areas that it wants to go into.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the remarks that the member from the New Democratic Party made in regard to the Small Businesses Loans Act.

I would corroborate the member's remarks in the sense that small businesses are the engine of growth and new job opportunity and the fact that most banking institutions in this country are not promoting and not working with small and medium sized businesses in providing this service of the $200,000 Government of Canada loan insurance. For many months now I have been asking the minister to try to promote this, and even to buy a bit of advertising space in some newspapers. This is a useful tax expenditure when promoting a service to the 1,700,000 small businesses and when most of the banking institutions are not aware of it.

I have just been handed the minister's press release wherein the banks are being urged to be more progressive in their attitude toward small business. I salute the minister for that.

If we could get something going in this House this week with that sector of the economy with the point person for the government then we can get some confidence going. We are not going to get a lot of confidence as we look to Royal Trust and the bigger guys. If we could somehow figure out a strategy this week where we could pump up the morale, pump up the entrepreneurial spirit with small and medium sized operators, I think Canadians would feel that maybe we are finally doing something constructive in this place.

I would like to ask the member a question related to student loans. I too have had the experience of young people who are being harassed by credit agencies coming to my office. Some of these stories are very harsh and very hard to believe. I think the government is making a mistake in the way it is handling the student loan situation. We know there is a major problem in terms of job opportunities for people coming out of university today. Maybe we should apply the same principles to student loans that we are applying to some of the restructuring going on with some of the loans to major corporations and the development industry.

Would the member give me his comments on using the same formula for students that we use for major corporations?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member has hit on something that we often overlook, that the larger the loan the more willing the financial institutions are to work around and make exceptions and exemptions for them.

The investment we have in our young people through the student loans program is an investment in the future of Canada. By restructuring those loans to make it easier for those students to pay off their loans and get back in as an active member, and generating some funds and employment for Canada, we will be better off.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I want to make just a couple of comments on the problems with post-secondary education created by the federal government. It has been acknowledged by the Canadian Federation of Students and others that there were a couple of positive proposals put forward. One was to increase the weekly rate and the other was to remove the 3 per cent tax. Then it reneged on it, as it has done with virtually everything else.

The cumulative negative effect on students will be that in addition to now being charged the 3 per cent tax, they will be charged additional interest payments. The second thing is they have changed the mission statement. The program used to be aimed at access to education. Now it is some mealy-mouthed statement about a need for a productive work force. There needs to be fair and decent access to the education system.

An hon. member: Accessibility.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Accessibility is the comment and the need. What we do not need is discrimination with regard to accessibility. The Conservative government is turning access to universities and post-secondary education into an élitist opportunity for people who live in urban areas and a profound discrimination against the rural areas. Affordability diminishes while tuition costs are going up like a rocket.

• (1320)

The federal government has made major unilateral cuts to provincial partnership funding. The room and board and transportation loans are harder to get. Economic recession is in full tilt and yet the federal government makes it harder and harder for students to afford post-secondary education.

Defaults, in an economic recession, are a fact of life. That is why the guarantees are there. The primary principle of Canada student loans, which has been strangled by this federal government, is to provide Canadian young people—Canadians in general—accessibility to post-secondary education. This has been a complete miserable failure.

I wonder if the hon. member would agree with that.

Mr. Whittaker: I think my friend makes some excellent points and I cannot argue with the points he made. I will throw it over to the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism. I know that he has made an important announcement. I would have liked him perhaps to go further in his announcement when he stated that the economic recovery will also hinge on the banks committing additional dollars for new small business loans and generally being more receptive to the clear requirements of small and medium sized firms.

I would also have liked to have seen his negotiations try to ensure that there is no double and triple-dipping as far as collateral means go. I think he is well aware of the difficulties involved in that.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, for just over 30 years the Small Businesses Loans Act or the SBLA has played a key role in the development of the small business community in Canada. One of the four items in this piece of legislation is the raising of the ceiling for the Small Businesses Loans Act to $200,000.

That is the part of this act I would like to make my references to today, although I would be glad to answer questions on other matters as well.

[*Translation*]

It is a fact that outside financing is essential for small businesses when initial financial resources, provided by a family member or a friend, are exhausted. These precious funds lent by relatives, the foundation of many small businesses, are usually soon spent especially when a business is expanding. That is when the SBLA program has proved to be useful and indeed very successful.

[*English*]

Obtaining financing for small business is always a challenging task. I have expressed my concerns in the House this past year about the limit to credit that has been perceived for small business in this country.

This morning I met again with the Canadian Bankers' Association to press the point home to them about how important it is in this period when interest rates are low to do everything we can to extend credit to small businesses, and to as many of them as possible.

This particular piece of legislation helps us do that because it is a government guarantee bill that helps small businesses obtain much needed capital. The SBLA program makes debt financing more readily available for the purposes of establishment, expansion, modernization, or improvement.

In practical terms this program provides loans for the acquisition of fixed assets such as land or buildings, machinery and equipment, leasehold improvements, and even some computer software.

Thirty years ago at the inception of this program which was put into place by the previous Conservative government under John Diefenbaker, the maximum loan size was set at $25,000, a large amount at that time.

While this amount was appropriate at the time inflation over the years eroded the dollar's purchasing power and so amendments to the act raised the loan ceiling to its present maximum of $100,000.

Now, as part of the government's continuing commitment to the small business sector, the Minister of Finance, through Bill C-76, is recommending to this House that the SBLA be amended to further increase the loan ceiling to $200,000.

This is an important change and one that has been requested by the small business community and by financial institutions.

As a result of Bill C-76 financial institutions will have the flexibility they need to meet the credit requirements of the small business sector in general and in particular growth companies, that segment of the small business community that presents the most challenge to financiers.

The present ceiling contained in the act, which is $100,000, is generally sufficient to respond to credit needs of new small businesses. With smaller operations, owner equity and family or friends investing in the business, start ups generally require loans in the $30,000 or $40,000 range. Indeed the average loan under the program is $38,000, with a significant number of them under $20,000.

Nonetheless, a significant number of start-up operations do require more capital and this bill will make it available to them. Even more important, the change we are proposing recognizes the risks inherent in expanding a business operation, risks well known to financial institutions which tend to reduce their willingness to lend. Purchasing technology, expanding plant operations or exploring export opportunities all cost money. This puts pressure on the balance sheet that the small, early stage business is not equipped to deal with.

Without an immediate growth in sales to offset the capital expenditure cash flow suffers and the growth phase can stall. Here is where this program steps in and helps meet that problem. With this program amended to guarantee loans up to $200,000 the short-term impact on the financial operations is reduced and the business can then concentrate on taking advantage of the expansion to service the additional debt. In this way the SBLA can act as a bridge between business phases ensuring a smooth growth period for small and medium-sized enterprises.

As is presently the case, the financial institutions will be required to impose a normal business regime with respect to the granting of credit under the program. This process, combined with a normal monitoring of the program by ISTC officials in Ottawa, will ensure there is no change to the normal government liabilities associated with the SBLA.

Members who have heard me speak on the issue of small business financing will have heard me focus not so much on debt, which the SBLA addresses itself to, but on equity as the key capital concern of small business. I have focused on the need for equity.

I would not want members to get the impression that by focusing today on this particular debt instrument I have changed my views. I have not. I continue to hold the view that access to equity is the most important issue for

small business. We are working on a number of fronts in that regard.

Notwithstanding this, the small business community requires access to loans. We are committed to meeting that requirement because we recognize the important role that small and medium sized enterprises play in the Canadian economy. It is important to note that the SBLA program is a program for small business, not big business and not medium business but small business.

Only companies with revenues of $2 million or less are currently eligible to participate in the program. This means the assistance implicit in the program is being directed to the small end of the business spectrum in terms of size, but I might add that it is the big end of the spectrum in terms of contribution to Canada's economic well-being and growth.

In fact, I think most Canadians know that 81 per cent of all the new jobs in the last 10 years in the Canadian economy were created not by big business but by small businesses, those with less than 100 employees.

As members are also no doubt aware, small business is a major engine of growth in this country. For example, almost 99 per cent of the approximately 900,000 incorporated businesses are small—they have fewer than 100 employees—and 36 per cent of total business employment is represented by the small business community. Since 1984 small business has created, as I already said, over 81 per cent of net new jobs.

Small businesses also play a significant role in the creation and use of innovation, which is so vital in the increasingly competitive world in which we live. For example, more than one-half of the Canadian companies carrying out research and development have fewer than 50 employees. These facts and figures state simply and powerfully the key role that Canada's entrepreneurs play, in many cases with the help of the SBLA.

• (1330)

When I ran for public office the first time in 1981 I was concerned about the increased dependence of Canadians on big government, big institutions, big business, as shown in the seventies. I saw other countries with a tremendous amount of entrepreneurial dynamism. I was worried that Canada did not have that.

Since the early eighties this country has become much more entrepreneurial, and the SBLA program has played an important part in helping to make that happen. Since its inception some $7.6 billion in more than 280,000 loans have been disbursed under the program. In recent years almost 40 per cent of all loans have been to start ups, with 60 per cent to clients that were less than three years old. This program helps companies get going, especially in the early stages.

It also means jobs, and this is very instructive. Based on figures reported by the borrowers, in the range of 24,000 jobs were created by the program's clients last year alone. With the net cost of the program for that year of just $27 million this amounts to an average cost per job of just over a thousand dollars—a very cost effective performance.

This is why members of the House of Commons from all parties are fans of the SBLA and why they support it. There were some very constructive comments made by the Liberal member and the NDP member on this particular part of the bill with regard to the Small Businesses Loans Act.

In a nutshell the program provides banks and many other smaller financial institutions such as *caisses populaires*, with an 85 per cent guarantee against loan losses for eligible loans. That is how it works. Private sector lenders are the sole delivery agents. There are no government bureaucrats delivering them. People just go to their financial institutions and apply there. We set the rules and the lenders make credit decisions within those rules. We do not have an array of officials administering the program. Only 22 government employees do all the work.

The loan guarantee enables lenders to make loans to businesses which they would not otherwise undertake without the guarantee, for example viable companies with a limited track record or with inadequate or inappropriate collateral. In particular risky types of businesses or perhaps those outside the major metropolitan areas are generally clients of the program.

This bill will allow us the opportunity to further improve what is already a successful and necessary program for Canada's small business sector. The change we are proposing is supported by the small business

community and its representatives, as well as by the lending community. It is an important tool in the government's over-all effort to create an economic environment conducive to small business growth, which includes low and simplified taxes, price stability, low inflation and low interest rates. This bill can be made more dynamic in the months and years ahead.

While my friends opposite may not agree with everything I have said I do believe that they agree that everything possible must be done to help our small business sector lead the recovery. Bill C-76 will help them do that. I urge all party support quickly for this very important bill.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the minister. I know that he has avoided the particular subject of ministers' salaries which I believe is dealt with in this bill. He mentioned the Salaries Act which pertained to his and his colleagues' salaries. I know they are being reduced and I sympathize with the minister because frankly I do not feel that the minister is over paid. For the moment we will let that pass.

Would he not agree that the government could have saved a lot more money than the rather modest decrease in ministers' salaries proposed in this bill if it had chopped the size of the cabinet from the overweening, over sized, and grossly inefficient group of 39 cabinet ministers that we have in office now? It is the largest cabinet in history, and Canadians have been saddled with it and have been paying for it through the nose since 1984.

Would it not have been better, in his view, if the Prime Minister had reduced the cabinet by cutting out the dead wood and reducing it to a smaller number with a little less dead wood?

An hon. member: There would be nothing left.

Mr. Milliken: My friend is unduly harsh. He said there would be nothing left. That is unfair. There are a few members of the cabinet who are not dead wood.

Mr. Riis: Name them.

Mr. Milliken: The member for Kamloops wants me to name them, but I would not want to embarrass the others. It is better and safer, as he knows, to refer to a lot of dead wood and let the public and the press decide who they think is dead wood.

Would the hon. minister enlighten us on whether he thinks we could have saved a lot more money by chopping the cabinet instead of proposing this modest reduction in ministers' salaries? Would it not have been better for the Canadian public if we had done that?

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear from my hon. friend on this subject. I am astonished to hear that he is against the cutting of ministerial pay.

Mr. Milliken: I did not say that.

Mr. Hockin: He expressed that he did not think this was a particularly good reform. He was very complimentary but he said that we did not save very much money with it. However it is important symbolically. When we are asking Canadians to tighten their belts, it is important that ministers do so as well.

His next question about the size of cabinet was a more interesting one. Let me say that I think he is taking the position of Preston Manning who said last week that all ministers of state represent nothing but narrow specialized interests and all must go.

I do not believe that small business is a narrow specialized interest. I do not believe that small business which creates over 80 per cent of all the new jobs in Canada is a narrow specialized interest. I do not agree with Preston Manning.

Small business is the engine that will take us out of the restraints of the present economy. Small business needs support, and that is what this bill is for.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I want to add that indeed small business is driving the recovery. We should do everything we can to support that sector.

I listened to the hon. minister's speech carefully. The other day a group of students from Cariboo College approached me regarding the six-month grace period that is now being removed. Needless to say it is a real struggle for students coming out of colleges, universities and so on. Their ability to repay their loans is being further challenged by the economic downturn.

The question put to me was the following one: Why would the government be making life more difficult for students entering the work force at this critical point when it has agreed to spend over $4 billion on attack helicopters? A lot of these students did not see this as necessarily a priority. Important, yes, but is it more of a

priority than providing assistance and encouragement to our young people entering the job market?

I wonder if I could put a question on their behalf to the hon. minister to help explain to them why $4 billion—actually it is more than that—on attack helicopters is a greater priority than helping young students after they graduate in those critical few years as they try to get back on their feet.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his question. The changes that are being made here to the Canada Student Loans Act are precisely to help the student by removing the administration fee while they are in university, while they are in college. That is when they need the help.

We have removed the 3 per cent fee in an attempt to capture them at student age so that they would not be burdened with the fee when attending an institution. The philosophy of the bill is to make sure that students are not burdened with that 3 per cent fee while they are in college.

I know the hon. member agrees with that change. We have done this in order to underline the importance of young people in our economy and the importance of education.

As for attack helicopters, I think the hon. member believes in search and rescue. He believes in policing our fishery zones to make sure that foreign fleets are not catching fish there, to make sure that international agreements with respect to fish are complied with, and to look after that now that over eight countries have nuclear submarines.

The hon. member is an intelligent member of Parliament. We have these frigates but they cannot do anything without helicopters. He knows that. If we do not have helicopters we might as well not build the frigates. Once we have these helicopters we will have the greatest range of any country in terms of policing the seas. We will have the safest vehicles to make sure that search and rescue can happen properly.

All of this builds a greater country. It builds jobs and helps the young people to whom he refers.

• (1340)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the minister's media release of either today or yesterday, wherein he urged the banks to loosen their purse strings toward small business.

My concern is that this may be put to the Canadian Bankers' Association but I am not convinced financial institutions will follow through. As the minister knows, a lot of the branch offices of these financial institutions are working on memos from head office. Right now credit for small business has been very tough. This media release is a total about-face in terms of the direction the minister is giving to the banks. They have not been supplying credit generously to small business and he is giving them an instrument to make it a lot easier.

What type of accountability will the minister put in place to make sure that what is in this press release actually happens?

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, that is a very responsible question. I met this morning with the Canadian Bankers' Association to put in place the mechanism to which the member refers.

It is fine to have a Small Businesses Loans Act. Hopefully we will pass this bill and will have a higher ceiling in place. After that we will want the banks to pick it up and use it by giving people loans.

They confirmed to me this morning that they are to do a major advertising campaign on this issue. They are also to get head office to instruct the account managers in every branch to take it seriously. They have also told me today—and the member can discuss it with them directly if he wants—that they are to have a major advertising campaign to try to heighten the awareness of small business in all major chartered banks.

They also told me that there has not been much take-up of these possibilities by the credit unions, the trust companies and the insurance companies. They can use them too and I would like to see it happen.

Every few months I meet with the banks and tell them to report to me on the performance of small business financing. This morning they told me there has been an increase in the past quarter of loans to small business. Frankly I am not too impressed with the amounts, but at least it is up 2 per cent in one bank, 4 per cent in another and 9 per cent in another. There has been a slight improvement in credit availability in the last quarter. The FBDB, the bank for which I am responsible to

Parliament, has increased its loans 13 per cent in the last year.

I am starting to see a sign of improved credit availability. It is still not good enough, and I agree with the hon. member we should monitor it closely.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I found it a bit intriguing to listen to the minister for small businesses and to notice that while he was talking about matters within his portfolio he had to read fairly slavishly the speech in front of him in both languages. However, when it came time to quote Preston Manning he had it down by heart, word for word.

I thought that was fairly instructive. Members over there are experts at quoting Preston Manning. If only they were as adept, as skilled and as familiar with the concerns including some of the graphic quotes about this government from ordinary Canadians, we would be a lot better off.

The following appeared in *The Ottawa Citizen* a couple of days ago:

> The Prime Minister has admitted that he failed to realize the scope of the recession and he may have mistimed some important economic initiatives.

That is like my standing here and saying that Christmas this year is coming on December 25. If he failed to realize that, he must be about the only Canadian, let alone the only leader out there. If he only now realizes that he mistimed some of his initiatives, again he must be the only one out there.

Who knows? Maybe there are a few more things he did not know until now that he is prepared to own up to. Does he not know yet, for example, that because of the kind of legislation we have before us today we are losing some of our best minds in the area of research and development to other countries?

I heard an agonizing story this morning. I had in my office a lady professor from the Ontario Institute for Studies and Education. I asked her for examples and she gave me two specific examples, both of eminent researchers from a couple of universities in Montreal who have gone in one case to Harvard and in another case to UCLA in California. In the first case the person has a research budget four times what he could have at a Canadian university. This relates directly to the way the government has treated research and development.

Is the Prime Minister now prepared to do a *mea culpa* on this one too? Is he now prepared to say: "I did not know that my policies were causing such havoc in the university community?" Does he want to do a *mea culpa* now by saying: "I did not realize that I was keeping so many students out of university because since 1984 I have not adjusted the floor amount that a person can access under Canada Student Loans?"

That is a fact. In eight years this government, despite increasing costs, inflation and so on, has not adjusted the amount that students can apply for. Even when they qualify for a student loan, they do not have enough in their hands to get through university.

Does he want to do a *mea culpa* on that one and say: "I did not know about the recession; I did not know I was driving all the best minds out of the country; and I did not know I was standing in the way of thousands of would-be university students getting into university?"

On other matters, does he now know what his policy has done in terms of foreign overfishing on the south coast of Newfoundland and the fish plants that have closed? Does he now know about the thousands and tens of thousands of people who are put out of work? Does he want to do a *mea culpa* on that one right now?

Does he want to admit and apologize for the devastation, the unfairness of the fisheries programs being implemented by his minister of fisheries as they relate to people on the south coast and the southwest coast of Newfoundland? Does he want to admit and apologize for the blatant unfairness as it relates to the people of Ramea who handled northern cod before the minister knew what a northern cod or a southern cod looked like?

Those people are being hung out to dry. Does the Prime Minister want to do a *mea culpa* on that particular issue while he is in a fessing up mood?

Deathbed repentances, whether to do with recession, the depths of it, the devastation caused by his policy on foreigners fishing off the Grand Banks, Canada Student Loans or the brain drain from Canada to other countries, particularly the United States, ought to be seen for what they are.

Someone has said that nothing concentrates a man's thinking as much as the certain knowledge that he is to be hanged in the morning. Maybe the Prime Minister has had more than one touch of reality. Maybe he is beginning, a couple of weeks after the event, to absorb what the public said to him on October 26. I say to him

that what the public said to the Prime Minister on referendum day had very little to do with the Constitution.

None is so blind as he who will not see. If the Prime Minister does not see clearly or graphically and does not hear what the message was—

• (1350)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think it may be useful to remind the hon. member that the debate is on Bill C–76, an act to amend certain statutes to implement certain fiscal provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 25, 1992.

Mr. Simmons: I wondered what we were debating here.

I realize full well, but I ask this House, before it rushes to a judgment on this one, to keep in mind very clearly who are making the commitments here. All the talk from the Minister of Small Businesses and Tourism about how there will be a new millennium beginning tomorrow morning and that things will be all different if we up it from $100,000 to $200,000. We have no difficulty with that particular detail, none whatsoever. But this is the crowd that told us before how they were going to double research and development and how we ought to believe them on their measures with respect to the recession.

Admittedly I was taking a little licence to make an important point that if we are going to judge this piece of legislation we ought to keep in mind who leads the gang that brings this legislation before us. It is the same gang that has botched every measure they have tried with respect to getting us out of this recession. It is the same gang that has made life miserable for university students. It is the same gang that is driving some of our best minds out of this country. They want to be here doing research we can benefit from but instead, they are being driven across the border by the policies and negativeness of this particular government. Mr. Speaker, if you find that not to be relevant I will get even more relevant.

Let us look at the question of post–secondary education addressed in the bill. One will realize that the government wants to eliminate the six–month interest–free period for student loans for example. It wants to put a 3 per cent administrative fee on student loans. In short, the government wants to make it even more costly and difficult for people to go to university. Who wants to do that? The same crowd that since 1986 has introduced a number of measures that together represent a cut in federal support of $1.6 billion in the last six years. All together it was a cut of $4.9 million in revenues flowing to the provinces for post–secondary education and health care.

Let us look at those Canada student loans for a moment. I heard in the last little while a couple of absolutely mind–boggling examples. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that not only is the government going to remove the six–month interest holiday, not only does it want to put on a 3 per cent administration fee, but it has also set loose some of the most unprincipled collection agencies. I say to my friend from St. John's East, that we missed him yesterday at the forum in Gander. They were asking about him.

Mr. Reid: I was at Bonavista last time.

Mr. Simmons: I hope my colleague was in Bonavista. It is his riding the member will realize, not mine. I was charitable. We missed the member yesterday.

I wanted to say to him that the crowd he supports over there have unleashed some of the most unprincipled collection agencies on little old ladies. I will give him a specific example that has come to my attention in the last hour or so. Does he realize there is a fellow who has a student loan of $3,000 or $4,000 and has been out of university for two or three years? The loan is due, no question about that. He is 26 years of age. The loan is in his name and in the last few days a collection agency at the behest of the government the hon. member supports was not calling that 26–year old man but the mother of that 26–year old man. The mother is of very limited means.

An hon. member: Bravo.

Mr. Simmons: There is a stranger in the House.

An hon. member: *Parce que je parle français?*

Mr. Simmons: In any language, there is a stranger in the House.

The collection agent made a suggestion to this mother who, by the way, has no responsibility for the loan. She signed no piece of paper. She happens to be the biological mother of this individual but he is a person quite well of age. One of the suggestions the collection agent made to this mother was: "Sell your house if you have to", when she asked where she would get the

money. Except he did not realize she did not have a house to sell.

I see by the nods of my compassionate friends on the other side they see nothing wrong with that particular example. The less compassionate of my compassionate friends on the other side see nothing wrong with that particular tactic.

Let me be even more specific so as not to indict the innocent. I think that was the point my friend from St. John's East was making and I absolutely agree with him. I was referring particularly to the compassionate soul from Abitibi. I got from his signals, his always very communicative body language, that he saw nothing wrong with a collection agent, on behalf of the federal government, going out and harassing little old ladies for repayment of student loans that their adult offspring happen to owe the government. Well, I say to him that I do have a lot of difficulty with that particular example.

There was another case where the government found somebody after 20 years. It found him through his social insurance number. When he called to find out why he did not receive his $5,000 GST refund he was informed it had been applied to his $6,000 loan which he did not realize he owed. His parents had passed on seven or eight years before and this was the first he had heard of it. Not only did the government collect the $5,000 that way, in the meantime he got a call from a collection agency and when the language was printable these people said some pretty nasty things to him.

Stop the pretence about what this government is doing for students and people who want to improve their education. I hear all the quotes from our Prime Minister about our brightest and best but he does not put his money where his mouth is. The regime he leads is socking it to students. This legislation is a good example of that with the 3 per cent administration fee which should not be there and which we oppose and the taking away of the six-month holiday on interest on loans that have been acquired by those students. This does not give those people a fair break.

I have talked in the last few minutes about what is happening in terms of collections. If those people owe these amounts, let us use legitimate means to collect them. I say that having collection agents calling and threatening people and the mothers of those people is not a legitimate, fair way a government should be going about its business. I appeal to the minister responsible to call off the hounds now that he has been made aware of those instances by what I have said in the last few minutes. Call off those unprincipled collection agents and allow those students whose only sin was to go out and get some money to get an education a fair opportunity to repay. Let us stop treating them like a bunch of criminals and sending those unprincipled people after them.

I see that my time is up for now.

Mr. Speaker: 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

[*Translation*]

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to congratulate the Church of England for allowing women to become priests after an historic vote by the synod. In so doing the Anglican Church has consecrated the equality of men and women.

I hope that other religions especially the Catholic Church of which I am a member will follow this example because only then will the gap between men and women and its attendant inequities diminish.

* * *

[*English*]

THE LATE DR. PETER

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, early yesterday morning Dr. Peter died of AIDS at the age of 35. Dr. Peter was known to hundreds of thousands of Canadians, particularly those of us in British Columbia, as a courageous and eloquent spokesperson for people living with AIDS.

Through his weekly CBC television programs and specials he put a human face on AIDS and exemplified the remarkable caring, compassion and true family values of the gay community in fighting this epidemic.

For many viewers Dr. Peter was the only person they knew who lived with AIDS. His work, even as he lost his vision and his mobility, did much to dispel the stereotypes and misunderstandings both about AIDS and about gay men.

I last saw Dr. Peter at the annual walk for AIDS in Vancouver a few weeks ago when he spoke out, urging the government to extend and increase federal funding for AIDS which runs out on March 31 of next year.

The finest tribute all of us could make to the memory of this truly outstanding Canadian would be to act on this plea now.

* * *

STEVE MACLEAN

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Canadians it is indeed my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Steve Maclean for becoming Nepean's first astronaut in space.

It would be impossible to fathom the magnitude of Steve's excitement spending nine days in orbit as a member of a crack flight team. It is not so difficult, however, to imagine how fulfilling it is to realize a childhood dream and even easier for all of us to feel proud of his accomplishment.

Steve quickly emerged as a star on board the space shuttle *Columbia* testing materials designed by his father, Paul, reviving a failing experiment from Queen's University, and demonstrating his gymnastic ability with a few flips and rolls.

Steve's work on the Canex-2 project is not only contributing to the success of Canada's robotic arm but also enhancing a Canadian reputation for ingenuity and efficiency in the field of aerospace.

Just as the Space Vision System gives eyes to the Canadarm, Steve has shown all Canadians that with devotion, vision and plenty of hard work we too can endeavour to reach for the stars.

[*Translation*]

CONTAMINATED BLOOD

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for some time people in Abitibi and across Canada have been following the news about possible cases of contaminated blood in this country.

According to an estimate by the Canadian Hemophilia Society, about 1,000 patients contracted the AIDS virus from blood or blood products imported from the United States. Tragically many of the victims could have been spared this fate if governments and the Red Cross had been more vigilant and more effective.

On November 6, 1992 I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare to order a public inquiry in order to find out how such a tragedy could have occurred and how it could be prevented in the future.

* * *

[*English*]

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, in recent months a new inducement to violence has entered our community. Serial killer cards glamourizing individuals who have wounded, raped and killed many people are being imported into Canada.

I have been approached by many of my constituents who are rightfully horrified, disgusted and appalled that these materials are being allowed into Canada.

They spread a dangerous message, particularly to our young people, that murder, torture, masochism, sadism and sexual assault are somehow glamorous or acceptable.

Canada cannot hope to progress in its fight against violence, particularly against women and children, if such materials are readily available to our children.

I ask the government to act immediately to stop the import of serial killer cards into Canada.

THE LATE COLONEL FRED TILSTON

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, during our recess Colonel Fred Tilston, one of Canada's greatest war heroes, died.

People who never met Fred Tilston knew he had done something exceptional. The letters VC following his name needed no explanation. He was one of the bravest of the brave. He held the Victoria Cross.

Colonel Tilston won his VC in the Hochwald Forest of Germany in 1945, leading an attack on enemy positions. He was wounded three times while repeatedly running through heavy fire for fresh supplies. Canada now has only two living Victoria Cross winners: Cec Merritt and Ernest "Smokey" Smith.

The Canadian Armed Forces are still composed of men and women from the same mould as these, yet we no longer recognize the Victoria Cross in our honours and awards system.

Canada must retain the right to honour others who in the future may exhibit great courage. The finest tribute we could make to Fred Tilston would be to restore the Victoria Cross to its rightful place as Canada's premier decoration for valour.

* * *

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to continue its patient handling of debt arrears with the Russian Federation. The worst case scenario would be for Canada to pull the plug on the $1.5 billion line of credit. The Russian shortage of hard currency does not preclude its desire to receive Canadian exports and ultimately to pay for them.

The $20 million payment made last week on Canadian grain shows good faith on the part of the Russians, even though they remain well in arrears on the payment schedule.

I urge the government to be clear about the status of the loan guarantees for the sake of Canadian workers. Thousands of Canadian jobs hang in the balance on whether or not these commitments are fulfilled.

Commodities such as grain and other agricultural products are a required staple, and steel tubular products will allow the development of the oil and gas fields so necessary for a vital economy.

I believe our support of the federation will not only behove Canadian exporters but also demonstrate our support for economic and political reform in the Russian Federation.

A meeting last week with Russian Ambassador Belonogov confirmed to me that continued dialogue and patience are necessary on our part.

* * *

CLASS OF 72

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, October 30 marked the 20th anniversary of the election of the Class of 72. On October 30, 1972, 59 Conservatives, 23 Liberals, 11 New Democrats and 3 members of the Social Credit Party were elected to the House of Commons for the first time. Of those members, only 11 Conservative members and 2 Liberal members remain in the House today with unbroken electoral records.

In the Conservative caucus there is the right hon. Joe Clark, the hon. Harvie Andre, the hon. Perrin Beatty, the hon. Paul Dick, the hon. Jake Epp, the hon. Otto Jelinek, the hon. Frank Oberle, Bill Kempling, Gus Mitges, myself and, by no means the least, yourself, Mr. Speaker.

In the Liberal caucus there is the hon. Bill Rompkey and the hon. Jean-Robert Gauthier.

Given the fact that the political life expectancy of an individual in public life these days is quite short, those who count themselves among the Class of 72 are to be commended for their tenacity in bucking the electoral trends over the past 20 years.

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[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada should proceed bilaterally with the Government of New Brunswick to enshrine the principles of Bill 88 in the Constitution.

The Government of Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada, the New Democratic Party of Canada, the first ministers of the 10 Canadian provinces and the leaders of the Northwest Territories and Yukon, aboriginal people, the Government of New Brunswick, the Conservative Party of New Brunswick, the New Democratic Party of New Brunswick and the majority of the citizens of my province agree with guaranteeing the equality of my province's two official language communities.

Will the Government of Canada in co-operation with the Government of New Brunswick confirm today that it will enshrine Bill 88, the best Christmas present we could give the Acadians of New Brunswick since 1755?

* * *

[*English*]

VIOLENCE

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, five research centres on family violence and violence against women were announced on November 12 and November 13 by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and several of my colleagues, along with the president of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

This innovative network of centres, funded equally by Health and Welfare Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, will see the creation of new partnerships among front-line workers, community groups and researchers.

The successful centres chosen by an arm's length committee will be based at the University of New Brunswick, the University of Western Ontario, the University of British Columbia, the University of Manitoba and l'Université de Montréal in conjunction with Laval University in Quebec City.

• (1410)

The practical research into the grass-root causes of family violence and violence against women will help all Canadians find the solution to these pervasive and troubling problems in our society.

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, each day the economic forecasts of this government are proven wrong. Each day the pace of plant closures quickens, the line of unemployed grows and the despair of ordinary Canadians deepens.

Yet, in the face of a fierce recession, government policies are driven by accountants intent on spending cuts and by politicians relying on the marketplace and the goodwill of corporations. This government forgets that unemployment statistics are about human beings increasingly left out in the cold.

Nowhere is the crisis more desperate than with Canada's youth. For young people who look forward to a productive life, the unemployment line is their prospect; the vicious circle of no experience blocking experience, their reality; welfare, their alternative.

Young people must be offered hope, a fair shot at a decent job. Urgent priority must be given to job creation, to improved education and apprenticeship, to substantial job opportunities for youth.

While 1.5 million Canadians are waiting, we simply do not have one person to waste.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, the airline industry world-wide is facing difficult times. This is also true in Canada.

The employees of Canadian Airlines International have committed between 5 per cent to 9 per cent of their salaries for the next three years in an effort to save their jobs and their company in a competitive industry.

This innovative commitment is remarkable. I encourage cabinet to back the employees of Canadian Airlines International with loan guarantees. Canada needs a competitive airline industry.

I also encourage both Air Canada and Canadian Airlines International to get on with business, build those international partnerships, and continue to serve the travelling Canadian public as well as we know they can.

DEREGULATION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Tory Minister of Transport in Manitoba declared that deregulation had made a mess of Canada's airline industry. After years of supporting deregulation he finally made the connection. Not that this new-found awareness stopped one of his colleagues from announcing deregulation in the phone industry on the same day. We would not want to make too many connections in one day.

The most important connection Canadians need to make when it comes to deregulation is the historical connection between deregulation and the Liberal Party of Canada.

Deregulation started under the Liberals, under the then Minister of Transport, now the member for Winnipeg South Centre. Indeed I refer Canadians to *Hansard* for April 6, 1984 where they can find an argument between the then Minister of Transport and the current Minister of Finance about who got on whose deregulation band wagon first, both claiming the honour of being the champion of deregulation.

Before the transport committee on April 10, 1984, the member for Winnipeg South Centre defended himself by saying that he had 400 letters calling for U.S. style deregulation. I bet he had as many calling on him not to deregulate, but he chose deregulation and now we have the chaos and the airline bankruptcies that he said would never happen.

Like free trade, privatization and a host of other destructive policies, deregulation can be traced to a time when the corporate agenda was being implemented by the Liberals. The only escape from that agenda is through the NDP.

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Elk Island as in many other parts of our country, Canadians have expressed concern about criminal activity by young people. The constituents are angry and frustrated that the Young Offenders Act is not working.

S.O. 31

Constituents in my riding want Parliament to toughen up the Young Offenders Act and more preferably replace it with a law that makes young criminals accountable for their actions.

Robert Romanchuk, an insurance man in Bruderheim writes:

> The Young Offenders Act is a joke. In one case a young offender stole a vehicle and scratched in the hood: Young Offenders Act, ha, ha.

Rick and Laura Rumohr of Fort Saskatchewan write:

> We live in fear and this is wrong. People who commit crimes must be punished and there must be stricter penalties.

Doug and Marie Bodeux of Beaumont suggest work camps. James Brandick of Sherwood wants the names of young offenders made public. Many people suggest that parents should be made accountable for the crimes of their children.

Let us work together to strengthen or replace the Young Offenders Act. Let us all work together for safer communities and a better Canada.

* * *

CORNWALL, ONTARIO

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, on November 6 the Courtaulds fibres plant in Cornwall announced that it will be closing at the end of this month. The closure will eliminate 360 jobs.

Since June 1989, 20 manufacturing plants have ceased operation in Cornwall. Over 2,500 jobs have been lost and the city's unemployment rate is over 20 per cent. More than half of the eligible UI recipients in Cornwall have exhausted their benefits. The city ranks third in Ontario in terms of percentage of population on general welfare. Thirty-seven per cent of the population, 17,638 men, women and children rely on social assistance.

For two years I have called upon the government to bring forward an economic development program for eastern Ontario. Yet, while the recession continues to take its toll and unemployment climbs, the government has done nothing to stimulate the local economy.

The time has come for this government to act and assist the people of Cornwall and eastern Ontario by immediately implementing an economic development program.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister.

This House adjourned almost five months ago. During the time we were not here all members of Parliament went to their ridings. I visited probably 150 different ridings, and I have never seen the situation so bad in the country. I met with fishermen, farmers, blue collar workers and office workers who are completely desperate, small business people who are 45 to 55 years of age who have lost their businesses, not finding jobs and completely desperate because they see their daughters and sons coming out with higher education who have no hope of finding a job either.

I would like to know from the Prime Minister when this government will take the situation seriously, bring down a budget and tell Canadians that they can have hope in Canada because it is absolutely desperate out there today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, obviously all of us are preoccupied by the economic situation, both here and elsewhere, because as a trading nation our prosperity depends a great deal on economic strength with our trading partners and that has not been the case for some extended period of time. I share some of the concerns mentioned by my hon. friend.

Some of the encouraging points to register for all of us are that both the OECD and the IMF have recently indicated that Canada will have the strongest rate of economic growth in 1993.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Canadians.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says Canadians. With inflation at 1.3 per cent, this is now the lowest in the industrialized world and that is a very important contributor for economic growth. Real GDP grew at an annual rate of 1.1 per cent in the first quarter and .7 per cent in the second quarter. Employment rose by 64,000 in the last six months. I think that there are beginning to be some important and promising signs of economic renewal.

Where I have to disagree with my hon. friend is where he said that he had never seen the situation so bad in the country. He was a minister in the government in 1981 when interest rates were 22.75, inflation was 12.9 and unemployment was 11.7. That was the worst economic record in the history of Canada.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): It is unbelievable that the Prime Minister sees no problems.

There are 1.6 million Canadians who want some action from this government. He tells us today that we are doing well. We were the first to go into a recession and we will be the last to get out of the recession. He gave us some good news. The Minister of Finance was completely wrong in his analysis of the future economy of Canada. All his predictions have been wrong.

When will we have a budget so that Canadians can have hope again and have the real facts, not dreaming in Technicolor like the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that the Prime Minister said that he sees no problems. Quite the contrary.

• (1420)

I just said moments ago that indeed there are troubling signs that we are all working to correct. There are also encouraging signs that my hon. friend will want to factor very much into his statements.

For example, trade with the United States is increasing. Our productivity gains are substantial, up to 3.5 per cent. Productivity gains are the only way that we can establish real and new genuine wealth. Our unit costs are down, making Canada more competitive. We are having greater access to international trading markets.

These are encouraging signs. They are not a panacea, but they are encouraging signs. We are following an economic program which the IMF and the OECD indicate will structurally reform Canada's economy to make it more competitive, thereby creating more jobs. That is the program we are pursuing, and we would be

happy to hear from my hon. friend if he has any specific ideas that we can entertain without—

Mr. Speaker: We are going to have to move on.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have an idea. Call an election and we will fix it.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister rises in the House and refuses to propose any solutions. He has no solutions to offer at all.

Today there are 1.6 million unemployed in Canada, each costing this government $14,000. We made some suggestions to the government in January, but the government refused to act on them.

Today there are rumours the government may embark on a joint program with the municipalities and the provincial governments. Why did the government not act in January, as we suggested? If it had, we would not have 1.6 million unemployed in Canada, each costing the Canadian Treasury $14,000. We are in this mess because the government does not know what to do and refuses to do anything at all.

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. Leader of the Opposition should recognize is that there are 12,240,000 Canadians who are working.

In 1984 there was something like 11 million Canadians working. Yes, indeed unemployment levels are too high, but yes, indeed we have had five consecutive quarters of growth. They are not robust, but they are certainly consistent with the growth in the global economy.

For those who suggest that we do not live in a globally interdependent economy, you better look again. The Canadian economy is weak in many respects because the global economy is weak. Notwithstanding that, we are making progress. We have made progress on inflation, we are making progress on unemployment, we are making progress on retail sales and our exports are achieving an all-time record.

Therefore, there is a turnaround. It is slow but sure. However we are making progress.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the words of the Minister of Finance will be cold comfort to the 1.5 million Canadians who are out of work and to their families who he claims do not even exist.

Some hon. members: Shame.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

In his recent press interview he in effect admitted that he had made mistakes in his government's economic policies and their timing. For the millions of Canadians damaged by these policies, those who are hit by the trade deal, hit by the GST, hit by higher taxes, hit by loss of jobs, this admission of guilt even as part of a plea for mercy simply is not good enough.

I ask the Prime Minister: Why will he not also move away from these policies he now admits are mistakes and bring in a new economic plan, a new budget, today to create more jobs and real growth right now? If not, what is the point of that admission of guilt?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I know it will probably offend a Liberal for a politician to admit that he is not always right, but from time to time that is the reality in Canada.

What I acknowledged readily in an interview with the Canadian Press was that I, along with all other leaders of the industrialized world, including all of the leading economists whose work we had the opportunity to examine, had not anticipated with as much accuracy as we would have liked the duration of the economic recession and/or economic downturn, depending on the country. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. No one, not even my hon. friend who offered to resign in 1980 if interest rates went up and they went up 17 points or thereabouts—

An hon. member: And he is still there.

Mr. Mulroney: He hung right in there for the government pension. It never crossed his mind to resign.

An hon. member: That's principle.

Mr. Mulroney: I would point out to the member a statement by the Leader of the Official Opposition who in 1978 when he was finance minister said—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: They do not want to hear it, Mr. Speaker, and I can understand that.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians and their families who are out of work would like this government to realize that it is in 1992 not 1978.

My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. This House has barely sat for the past five months even though the economy continues in crisis. When this House last sat briefly I asked the Minister of Finance why, when it came to the economy and the Constitution, his government could not both walk and chew gum at the same time.

We are now back, the House is in session and listening to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, it is clear that when it comes to walking and chewing gum at the same time with regard to the economy, this government cannot even do those things separately.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Why else are we here now if not to deal with this crisis in the economy? The Liberals are ready to deal with these problems, but they involve measures that only a government can take.

I ask the Prime Minister: Why does he not answer the Leader of the Opposition's question and say when he is going to bring in a new budget to deal with jobs and the economy? What is he stalling for?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not stalling. I certainly take very seriously any reference to unemployment which in Canada is too high and has been too high now for some 10 or 12 years. I think my hon. friend would agree with that, even though we managed to get it down to 7.3 per cent in 1988–89.

My hon. friend objected to a comment that the Leader of the Opposition made in 1978 when he was Minister of Finance. I mentioned it simply because I think it is relevant. The Leader of the Opposition said then: "I don't believe I can be a Santa Claus. I am not a maker of illusions. There is not some magic solution to get rid of unemployment". The Leader of the Opposition was accurate. There is no magic solution to get rid of unemployment. If you get the fundamentals right you have a much better chance of doing that and this is exactly what we are in the process of doing.

My hon. friend concludes his remarks by asking about walking and chewing gum. I urge him: Herb, just take them one at a time and you will learn.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this country is seeing one of the greatest job crises that we have seen in the history of Canada. In the first nine months of this year, 750,000 Canadians went from unemployment insurance to welfare, joining almost three million Canadians who are on either unemployment or welfare.

I want to say to the Prime Minister that the responses from his government seem to be like retired generals fighting the last war: more of the same, stay the course.

Clearly the economic policies of this government have failed and the victims of these failed economic policies continue to grow and suffer every day. What new policies will the Prime Minister bring in now to turn the economy around and get Canadians back working?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's concern. We recognize that there are some serious difficulties and there are people who are hurting out there. However, I ask her to consider the fact that employment has risen in five of the last six months. Employment is up by 64,000 in the last six months. Full-time employment increased by 83,000 in the months of September and October.

• (1430)

The unemployment rate has come down from 11.6 to 11.3 per cent, so unemployment is going down, not going up.

We have other positive indicators. Housing starts have had a second consecutive quarter increase. Housing resales are up by 38 per cent. Retail trade has had a third consecutive monthly increase. Motor vehicle sales are up by 4.5 per cent. Export trade—

An hon. member: Go for a walk in the real world.

Mr. Mazankowski: The member's party continues to denigrate the free trade agreement with the United States. Trade with the United States has increased by 16 per cent since the free trade agreement was signed. Merchandise export trade has increased by 9.5 per cent in the first six months of this year. That is where the jobs are created. That is from where the long-term prosperity

will emerge and that is the policy course that we are going to continue to follow.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

The Minister of Finance fails to recognize the pain in this country, the loss of hope by young people who have an unemployment rate of almost 20 per cent. The government owes it to the Canadian people to say what it is prepared to do to turn around this situation rather than simply ignore the plight of so many Canadians.

[*Translation*]

For instance, one third of the people on unemployment live in Quebec, and 700,000 Quebecers are on welfare. All these people are the victims of Tory economic policies, victims of the failure of those policies. That is why I wish to direct the following question to the Prime Minister. Does he agree with his Minister of Finance when he says that the government has no reason to change its economic policies?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance just stressed a number of important positive elements in the development of Canada's economy. He admitted that unemployment was a major problem. All members of all political parties deplore, and rightly so, the employment rate in this country which is very high, too high, although this is a situation that has endured since the early eighties. However, I think the Leader of the New Democratic Party should be encouraged by the opinions expressed by the IMF and the OECD, two major international agencies which think that the changes introduced by the Canadian government are likely to promote productivity and improve our competitive position, thus creating a substantial number of jobs in this country.

This will not happen overnight, but I think we have every reason to be confident about the future, considering the policies that were and will be announced by the Minister of Finance.

[*English*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

This party is not asking the government to produce miracles. We are just asking it to produce some ideas and to put forward a plan to address the severe job shortages in the country.

We promised Canadians that we would come back to Parliament and it would not be business as usual. We would all turn our attention to the economy. What we have heard from the government today is that it is going to do more of the same. If that is turning its attention to the economy, please do not.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this specifically. We will put aside the rhetoric and get down to the bottom line. The government has an opportunity to save tens of thousands of jobs in the airline industry but it must act within the next few days. Does the government have a plan? Is it going to act and what exactly is it prepared to do?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, of course the members of this government, and all members on the opposition side, are concerned with the potential loss of 16,000 jobs at Canadian Airlines.

Over the past couple of days we have had extensive and very productive meetings with the three groups that are involved, namely the Council of Employees, PWA and AMR, to determine how we can arrive at a plan that would ensure the survival of Canadian Airlines without hurting the whole Canadian airline industry.

In other words we need to find a solution that would be profitable to all the people of Canada and at the same time ensuring that we have a profitable and safe airline industry in Canada.

We were extremely impressed by the commitment of all employees. All unionized employees have come together, accepted some wage concessions and have also agreed to invest their own money in their employer. This is a demonstration of their dedication. We are meeting with them to try to arrive at a viable solution.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that this minister was not so impressed months ago because for months this grossly negligent Minister of Transport has stood idly by and ignored all the warning signs.

Canada's airline industry is now on the verge of collapse and he is finally quoted as saying the clock is ticking on the survival of Canadian Airlines.

Will the minister inform the House now, today, that his government is prepared to join the other partners he so eloquently spoke of in preparing and providing the necessary loan guarantees to Canadian Airlines so that we will not see thousands, and tens of thousands possibly, of people going on to the unemployment rolls in this country.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member for the opposition could explain how far his party is prepared to go with investing taxpayers' money in a plan without making sure about guarantees that the interests of Canadian taxpayers will be protected.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is much more than that. The minister is still on autopilot on this entire issue. He has refused to act on the federal aid package. He has refused to end the destructive competition that is tearing two airlines apart. He has refused to deal with the restructuring of the airline industry in this country.

What then is the minister prepared to do?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have indicated that we are prepared to work with all the players now that all employees have indicated their intention to help their employer survive.

I put the question again to the hon. member: To what extent, to what amount, is his party prepared to commit the taxpayers' money without any guarantee that this will assure the survival of that carrier in the airline industry?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, even the friends of the government are bailing out over this problem because the government does not have a plan. We realize there has to be major reorganizing and restructuring in order to make the airline industry viable, protect the jobs, and to ensure that the Canadian based reservation system is intact.

We want to ask the minister, not what other people are doing, but what is the government going to put forward as a plan for the reorganizing, restructuring, and saving of this vital industry for Canada?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have said all along that we are prepared to ensure there is a viable Canadian airline industry and that we have competition in this country. It is through these measures that we will ensure the survival of the carrier.

I put my question again to that party: To what extent, to what amount, are they prepared to put the money of the Canadian taxpayer at risk without guarantees on the future survival of that particular airline and the whole Canadian airline industry?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the hon. minister is very anxious to ask questions. He will have the opportunity of being on this side of the House soon enough but for now, unfortunately, he has to govern.

In this proposal for the airlines one of the casualties is the Canadian based reservation system that is the underpinning for the entire tourist industry of Canada. We want to know what guarantee will the government provide that in any restructuring, the Gemini system which underlines and underpins the entire reservation computer technology system in this country will be preserved and maintained.

• (1440)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is precisely why I have been asking the question. Either the hon. member and his party are suggesting there is government intervention in the judicial system concerning the Gemini question or they are saying we should invest some money, no matter what amount it is, in order to save the airline on a band-aid basis without guarantees for the taxpayers of Canada. We are trying to find a viable, fiscally responsible answer to this question.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, this morning in Montreal the Minister of Transport told the Air Transport Association of Canada: "The marketplace is not a polite place". He went on to say

that competition is not enough by itself and regulatory bodies may need to protect the marketplace.

Is the minister and this government now prepared to admit that on the transport side the economic policies of this government have failed miserably and that the only long-term solution to the crisis in the airline industry is strong government intervention, including financial assistance? Or, is this government still prepared to leave those 36,000 employees and their families hanging out to dry in this impolite, yet vicious marketplace?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I dare say that if the hon. member only learned this morning that the marketplace is not a polite place he should have been alive for a longer period. Everybody knows that the marketplace is a very tough place where everybody is trying to outdo the other.

We have indicated that we are working with the employees because of their very enlightened dedication and preparedness to invest their own money. We are working with all the players to arrive at a viable solution that will be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Canada and will make sure that it is in the best over-all interest of the nation.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Minister of Transport that it was his government that turned the airline industry over to that marketplace and set it up for the crisis it is in today.

It is not a question of whether or not the government will have to provide some financial assistance. It is a question of how and when. The government has a choice. It can say yes to the requests that are being made by Canadian and perhaps those that will follow by Air Canada or it can put up with the cost to unemployment insurance which will reach approximately $150 million. The choice is the government's.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the fact that we held these very constructive and effective meetings over the weekend with the three interveners is a clear indication that we are interested in looking at what the possibilities are for a viable solution that will be fiscally responsible and also in the interests of the nation.

There are different obstacles in the present proposal. We have discussed them with all concerned and it is only when we have eliminated these very serious problems that we will be in a position to evaluate the risks to the Canadian taxpayers and also whether we can ensure the viability of the industry on a long-term basis. We are not looking for a band-aid that will cost taxpayers money and not be a viable solution.

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TRADE

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, President-elect Clinton has stated that he will not seek ratification of the North American free trade agreement until environmental and labour standards are improved.

Is this now also the position of the Canadian government or is it standing by its initial assertion that the agreement is more than adequate as it currently stands?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think what President-elect Clinton has said is that he supports the NAFTA as an agreement. He is also looking for elements outside of the NAFTA to support some positions he is taking in support of the environment, labour, labour adjustment, health and safety standards, things that can be accomplished outside of the NAFTA.

I would expect that the process for legislation will continue. The legislation does not have to be completed until the implementation date of January 1, 1994. We will be proceeding with hearings in the committee tomorrow and the process will continue then. I would not expect that the Canadian legislation will be dealt with until the early part of next year.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Let me understand the government's position, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister recognize that President-elect Clinton has said that he will not proceed with ratification of the NAFTA until there are parallel agreements on labour standards and the environment? Is that the position also of the Canadian government, or does it intend now to proceed with ratification of the agreement whatever the position of the United States is?

Will the minister also recognize that the government has progressed through three different stages in this? It said that the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement was flawless. Then it said that the NAFTA negotiations gave the opportunity to improve the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Now it takes a third position, which is presumably that it will not proceed with ratification until such time as the U.S. demand for parallel agreements on labour standards and on the environment are met.

What is its position today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, our position is completely unchanged. We have a North American free trade agreement and we will seek ratification of that appropriately in the House of Commons just as soon as we possibly can. The minister has just indicated our time frames in regard to that.

President–elect Clinton indicated to me his very strong support of the free trade agreement that we concluded with the United States in 1988 and he confirmed to President Salinas his strong support of the North American free trade agreement as it exists.

He may indeed want to bring about some parallel agreements that do not impact on the principal one, but that has not been conveyed to us. Our information from President–elect Clinton and his officials is that he is very much a free trader along those lines and will be very supportive of initiatives such as the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States and the North American free trade agreement with Canada, the United States and Mexico. We are delighted to have that kind of leadership in the United States to pursue these common objectives.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

Let me say that given the Prime Minister's earlier statements in the House today about acknowledged economic mistakes of the past, we on this side of the House are, to say the least, surprised to hear the Prime Minister say that this government, in its final months in office will seek—and I think I am quoting the Prime Minister properly—ratification of the NAFTA at the earliest possible opportunity. The Prime Minister said this, notwithstanding the fact that a new U.S. president has said he wants to study this agreement closely, and the U.S. Congress, and that a new U.S. presidential administration has said it will seek agreements on environmental and labour standards.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, given his admission of economic mistakes of the past, will he now not do the prudent thing, will he set aside the ratification process in Canada until such time as we know what the final draft of the NAFTA will look like after consideration by a new U.S. administration and president and by Congress?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Given my hon. friend's reputation for accuracy in this House, I reluctantly point out that he has just inadvertently made a substantially inaccurate statement in regard to any acknowledgement that I made about economic mistakes. He should read the transcript that is there and I am sure he will want to correct what he has just said on the floor of the House of Commons.

I was interested in his second point where he was conveying to the House President–elect Clinton's point of view. This was interesting to hear, because in my conversations with President–elect Clinton he conveyed no such views to me.

• (1450)

An hon. member: Maybe you didn't ask the right questions.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has had most of his conversations with the current U.S. President who is about to become the ex–president. Indeed he will be able to join him fishing in Maine full time very soon.

I want to again put the question to the Prime Minister. The incoming U.S. administration has made clear that it will seek parallel agreements both with respect to environmental standards and labour standards. The current U.S. Congress has made clear it will closely examine NAFTA and may propose amendments to it.

Given that the government's projections on employment were wrong, on GST were wrong, on free trade were wrong, on deficit were wrong, would it not be prudent to wait until the new U.S. administration has examined it and proposed changes and until Congress has examined it before we blindly proceed in this country once again?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would do well to allow the critic for international trade to ask questions on international trade. Our friend is really out of touch both with reality and with all of the facts in contrast to the official critic, the hon. member from Toronto, who on matters of international trade is always well informed. His questions are direct.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the right hon. Prime Minister would like to move to the answer to the question.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the member for Etobicoke—North for any damage I have done to his career. It was indeed inadvertent and I withdraw those comments. I should say in fairness that he is as inaccurate and ineffective—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps we should move on. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to interrupt a lover's quarrel when they both support NAFTA and the free trade agreement.

I would like to ask this very simple question. Over the past two years, I have asked the minister to provide to this Chamber and the Canadian public detailed information about the negotiations of the North American free trade agreement. Specifically, I asked for the sector-by-sector studies that should be made and, I assume, were made by this government going into the negotiations. I was told that they would not be made available because it would expose our negotiating hand.

The deal is now initialled. Will the minister now table in this House the sector-by-sector studies that surely must have been done before this trade deal was initialled by this government?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I know it is very hard for the hon. member to talk accurately about the NAFTA because he has never come to briefings that have been offered to him on half a dozen occasions. We quite understand the difficulty he has in understanding the issue.

My hon. friend I am sure is well aware there are NAFTA hearings starting tomorrow. I will be very happy to respond to any specific questions he has on elements of the agreement.

He is also aware that the Department of Finance released a document last week which sets out in very clear terms drawing on work done within the department as well as on work done by respected organizations outside of the government which support the government's position that the NAFTA is a very positive policy initiative supportive of the economy of Canada. I expect that the hon. member will read that agreement and come to the same conclusion.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, it is true that I did not go to the secret briefings because as a member of Parliament I would never sign the Official Secrets Act to find out information that should be made public to every Canadian.

My question is very clear and very precise. If there are any studies at all sector by sector, will the government release them? Not tomorrow, not next week, but will the minister admit in this House now that no sector-by-sector studies were ever done at all by this government? That is why they are not being released.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has just inadvertently left a very misleading statement on the record which I want to correct for him now.

He referred to all of the meetings being secret when he knows full well that there was a request for the first meeting for such an undertaking on behalf of members who participated. After that there were no requests. That was made known to the hon. member many times, yet he continues to leave this misleading statement on the—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINING

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is the Government of Canada prepared to sign a mineral development agreement with the Govern-

ment of Quebec? If so, will it be signed before December 25, 1992?

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question.

My colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and his counterparts in the province of Quebec worked very hard on this agreement. I am pleased that the agreement is at the point where I believe final plans can be made for its ratification and for its announcement.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Since the recession began Canadian manufacturing has lost three times as many jobs proportionately as American manufacturing. My question is: Why this crushing gap between us and the United States?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, let me just point out to my hon. friend that in the first eight months of this year Canadian exports to the United States, which were about 55 per cent manufactured exports, were up 9.8 per cent. That was 9.8 per cent in a period when the U.S. economy was not in a very robust position, but 9.8 per cent because of the advantages that my hon. friend well knows are there from the free trade agreement. That is one of the things that has helped the performance of the manufacturing sector in Canada.

My hon. friend would do well if he looked at other reasons the manufacturing sector is in some difficulty today. It is partly because of the fact that we are going through a period of enormous change which my friend, the Minister of Finance, has been talking about.

The hon. member talks about adjustment. If he would compare adjustment in the United States with adjustment in Canada, he will see that the adjustment programs in Canada for both individuals and industry, including the manufacturing sector are many, many times greater than those in the United States on a per capita basis.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about job loss. The fact is the United States is going through adjustment as are we yet we have lost three times as many manufacturing jobs as it has.

The reason is very clear. Despite the two years of tremendous human suffering, this government has pursued a course of action which has done nothing to relieve the pain Canadians feel, nothing to prepare the country for what lies ahead. While we on this side called for economic stimulus, they on that side countered with uncompetitive interest rates. While we called for increased training, increased research and development, they said wait for the prosperity agenda. The prosperity agenda is in. What is the government's excuse for doing nothing? When is the government going to give us a budget? Does it really think that the financial deficit can be solved if the human deficit is ignored?

• (1500)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, let me be quite clear that the human element of this has not been ignored. It has not been ignored at all because the amount of training that has been brought in by this government to address the problems of the people who have lost their jobs because of the difficulties in the manufacturing sector has increased substantially. It numbers now some $3.5 billion which I believe is greater than the total amount that the United States has for the whole of an economy that is 10 times greater than the Canadian economy.

The simple facts are that the reasons for the difficulties in the manufacturing sector go directly to the fact that manufacturing, unit labour costs, increased something like 50 per cent in comparison to the United States. It is for that reason and not reasons caused by—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

THE LATE RIGHT HON. PAUL MARTIN

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, this is the first sitting of this House since all here paid tribute to my father. I would like to express my gratitude.

[*Translation*]

My father loved this House so much. He had so much respect for all those who serve and served in this great institution. On behalf of my mother and our family, I want to thank each and every one of you in this big parliamentary family for the moving message of sympathy you extended to us in this trying period.

[*English*]

There is a small room off the kitchen in my parents' house with a TV set that is permanently frozen on the House of Commons channel. It was there over the last five years that my father used to sit and pass judgment on the debates in this House.

On September 14 my dad was not in that room, but my mother was. On her behalf, indeed on behalf of our whole family, I would like to thank all of the members of this House for their words, for their understanding, and for their compassion.

I said my father was not in that room, but that does not mean he did not hear what was said. I am sure he did. I am also sure that looking down from his new vantage point that had you asked him, Mr. Speaker, he would have given you his full consent to extending the debate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, the right hon. Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs had the occasion on behalf of the government and members of Parliament to extend our deepest sympathies to the Martin family on the occasion of the loss of one of Canada's most distinguished sons.

Paul Martin was indeed a great Liberal. He was a great member of Parliament, an outstanding minister of the Crown, and a most impressive representative of Canada abroad. I came to know him through his son—something the son may or may not acknowledge today—years ago and found in the Martin family one of Canada's finest in every way.

I had the privilege as Prime Minister of Canada to recommend to the Governor General and Her Majesty the Queen the elevation of Paul Martin to the position and to the title of Right Honourable on July 1 past. I had many conversations with Paul Martin Sr. in advance of this important event. I can just say, on behalf of all parliamentarians that no one, certainly in recent Canadian history, deserves this honour more. No one loved this House more and no one contributed more to Canada and her unity than the Right Hon. Paul Martin from, as he would say, Windsor, Ontario.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank the member for his remarks. I have a special memory of Mr. Martin Sr. When I was 15 years old, Mr. Martin was the member of Parliament for the area where I lived and I came to the House of Commons for the first time at that time. I came to the House of Commons for only the second time when I was elected as a member of Parliament. I have many warm memories of his warmth, of his friendship and of his interest in young people.

I want to say that all of the greetings from this party to the Right Hon. Paul Martin were indeed sincerely felt. He was a great man and a great Canadian.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

GWICH'IN COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

The appropriate legislation to enforce this agreement will be introduced in the very near future.

Routine Proceedings

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Edwards (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 88 petitions.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BILL C-86

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-86, an act to amend the Immigration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, with amendments.

[*English*]

Might I just say that members will know that this is an important bill. The committee received 186 letters and 116 briefs. We listened to 110 witnesses, 48 groups, 35 officials from the department, the RCMP, CSIS, the Department of Justice.

The committee adopted 102 amendments. I say that this reflects the very best of Parliament where all three parties worked hard all summer and that this in fact is good public law.

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

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CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-365, an act to amend the Canadian Criminal Code.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to prohibit crossbows as we know them. It does not take away from archery or the other types of crossbows which are used for sporting.

• (1510)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Harb moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-366, an act to amend the Criminal Code (replica firearms).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, this again has to do with an amendment to the Criminal Code, replica firearms. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the sales of replicas of guns that might reasonably be mistaken for real guns in the commission of a crime.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Harb moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-367, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (donors to food banks).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to amend the Income Tax Act immediately after section 259. The purpose of it is to permit donations of food to a food bank to be treated as a charitable gift, notwithstanding that the value of the food has already been deducted as a business expense of the donor. The objective of it is to encourage people to give more to food banks.

Just for the record I want to thank Mr. Norm Rebin who helped in the evolution of this proposal as well as our legal staff.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Mr. Harb moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

Pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), the motion is deemed adopted.

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

REGISTRATION OF LOBBYISTS

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ACT

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent for the following motion:

> That pursuant to section 14 of an act respecting the registration of lobbyists, chapter 44, 4th supplement, Revised Statutes of Canada 1985, the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations be the committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration and operation of this act and submit a report to the House no later than one year after the review is undertaken.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent for the House to consider the hon. member's motion?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is no unanimous consent.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

BILL C-330

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty to present to the House petitions certified correct by the clerk of petitions that contain the signatures of yet another 10,000 Canadians who support Bill C-330.

The petitioners want Canadians to have a greater say in the disposition of offenders in the judicial process and call upon Parliament to support victims' rights and the protection of the public from violent offenders.

There will be tens of thousands of signatures to present to this House before Bill C-330 is presented this Thursday.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting before this House petitions that were circulated as a result of the death of young Rosalynn Dupuis in the Regional Municipality of Sudbury. A young offender has been charged with her death.

The people who have signed these petitions—there are many indeed—ask that the government bring forth changes to the Young Offenders Act in order that those who commit violent crimes be sentenced in a way that would represent the severity of their crimes. The petitioners ask that violent young offenders be psychologically assessed and that psychiatric treatment of these young offenders who have committed murder be mandatory and immediate upon sentencing.

[*Translation*]

REQUEST FOR ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE IN OUR SOCIETY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition from Charles-René-Lalande School in Rivière-Héva, Abitibi. The petitioners say that violent movies on television are dangerous and therefore unacceptable because they incite more violence and that all toys that incite violent games are unacceptable and should not be made.

Information on violent acts that is repeated too often on all television stations and on radio can lead to other acts of violence.

Therefore the petitioners humbly ask Parliament to legislate on the above-mentioned points to eliminate violence in our society and thus better protect our children and give all our fellow citizens a better quality of life.

[*English*]

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of a number of constituents

from Chase, British Columbia, Kamloops, British Columbia and from a number of other western Canadian cities.

Their concern is having read the NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, it would appear that fresh water was not made an exemption to the deal. They are asking the government to explicitly say that fresh water is exempt from NAFTA because they are concerned that this government is agreeing to sell water in terms of inter-basin transfers to the United States and Mexico.

As a comfort they are asking the government, for goodness sake, to exempt fresh water from this particular trade deal.

BILL C-91

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from hundreds of Canadians across the country who ask this government to end Bill C-91 which seeks to licence further no name generic drugs in Canada and will allow brand name drug companies to market their drugs without competition from generics for periods up to 20 years.

They say that the price of new and existing drugs already increased substantially to individuals, to provincial and private drug plans since 1987 when the Liberals brought in Bill C-22 which allowed up to a 10-year period of no generic competition.

Therefore, these petitioners call on Parliament not to proceed with Bill C-91 and to also repeal Bill C-22 so that Canadians will have the full benefit from lower priced generic drugs and so that provincial and private drug plans can serve Canadians without being forced to charge higher fees or provide less coverage.

POVERTY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased on behalf of a number of Canadians from Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, the rest of Atlantic Canada and Quebec to draw the attention of the House to the fact that hundreds of thousands of Canadian senior citizens live below the poverty line and that over 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to ensure that Canadian old age security pensions are sufficient to meet the basic needs of Canadian senior citizens.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and duty to rise in accordance with Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by 66 of my constituents in the Salmon Cove area, Perry's Cove, Adams Cove, Broad Cove or what is called the north shore of my riding in the Carbonear area.

They have asked that consideration be given to those who are employed outside the fisheries seeking employment. They are bringing to the House notice of the tough economic times in their area and the difficulty they have in finding employment.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to provide them with guidance and in particular with assistance in finding employment.

• (1520)

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that has been signed by a number of Canadians. I think the message is very clear.

They call upon Parliament to reject legislation implementing the North American free trade agreement, NAFTA.

I believe that is a very simple message and I hope all parliamentarians will listen to it.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I too have a significant number of signatures on a petition from my constituents endorsing precisely the same message that my colleague has presented to the House.

That is a very straightforward message which says to this Parliament that it urges us very strongly to reject legislation implementing the North American free trade agreement. The strong view of my constituents is that this agreement will make a bad situation worse. It will hurt jobs in this country. For that reason we are asked to reject any such legislation.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present another petition signed by

numerous residents of Ottawa who object to the high gas prices in this area as opposed to the prices in other parts of Ontario, particularly the southern region.

I may say that these citizens are very long suffering because I have been filing petitions like this with the House for months. The same problem with respect to gasoline prices pertains to my own constituency of Kingston and the Islands. Some of my own constituents have been moved to sign similar petitions that I have presented in the past and all we get from the government in response to these petitions are pie in the sky answers that the government does not control prices and it does not intend to do anything to alleviate the suffering of Canadians who are being unfairly treated in the gasoline pricing.

I note the petitioners claim that this kind of pricing is unfair and they call upon Parliament to urge the government to correct this injustice to Ottawa area motorists. I agree with their petition and suggest to the government that it do something instead of filing these pie in the sky announcements in response.

BILL C-86

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty under Standing Order 36 to present a petition from residents of Toronto who petition the House of Commons that, whereas we are concerned with recent amendments to the Immigration Act and Bill C-86, particularly we strongly oppose the restriction and delay that parents will face when seeking to join their sons and daughters in Canada, therefore, the undersigned your petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to withdraw these amendments.

I have a second petition also from a number of residents of Toronto concerned with the same bill but with different aspects of it.

They point out that the American government allows inland processing of families of convention refugees and that the current policy of the minister of immigration in Canada in refusing minister's permits to the families of accepted refugee claimants can deprive these immigrants of security of person, physical and mental health because their families are separated for years at a time.

Therefore, the undersigned petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the minister of immigration to issue minister's permits for spouses and dependant children of refugee claimants who have been permitted to apply for landing from within Canada, including persons in the backlog and persons accepted under the new legislation, and allow them to be reunited in Canada for inland processing.

LOW-LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, finally, I have a petition from a number of residents of metro Toronto who are concerned with the continuing policy of Canada in using the land of the Innu people in Labrador and eastern Quebec for NATO low-level flight training.

They ask that Parliament join with the Assembly of First Nations, the Innu of Labrador and other aboriginal peoples of northern Canada in opposing use of their land for NATO and NORAD attack training and that the Canadian government end all NATO and NORAD low-level flight training in Canada and redirect Canada's NATO and NORAD funding toward enabling Canada's aboriginal peoples to regain control of their lands and their livelihood and promoting sustainable development for all Canadians.

BILL C-91

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a duly certified petition on behalf of my constituents in Saskatoon—Dundurn. They ask the government through Parliament not to proceed with the passage of Bill C-91 and to repeal Bill C-22. They would like that to occur so that Canadians will have the full benefit of lower priced generic drugs.

An hon. member: Who passed Bill C-22?

Mr. Fisher: The Conservatives did. Then the provincial and private drug plans would not be unduly hit with the higher prices of drugs.

In asking for this they point out that Bill C-22 raised the period of protection from seven years to ten years. While the government promised that the prices would not increase, that was not the case. Experience has shown that the cost of drugs has escalated tremendously to the great detriment of all concerned.

Going from 10 to 20 years is not going to do the Canadian economy, and certainly not the people of this country, any good whatsoever.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a large number of people from Surrey which points out that family class and assisted relatives have always been an historically important part of immigration into Canada because they have relatives that can assist them with employment, housing and learning Canadian language and customs.

The petitioners point out that the present proposals of this government would severely restrict family class and assisted relatives from obtaining immigration visas. They ask the government to change their priorities so that family class and assisted relatives are assured first priority in immigration into Canada.

BILL C-91

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to bring before this House a petition signed by a number of Canadian citizens who are extremely angry that Bill C-22 should have been introduced in the first place. This bill erodes the Canadian institution of compulsory licensing which provided inexpensive drugs. We are now confronted with Bill C-91.

In short, the petitioners ask that Bill C-91 be withdrawn and Bill C-22 be revoked.

It is a pleasure to submit this petition because my party and I support that view.

CANADA POST

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my riding at Raymore which points out that post offices are the backbone of many rural communities.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to support Canada's rural way of life by supporting the maintenance of rural post offices and postal services and to reject the Conservative agenda of cutbacks and closures of those services.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of petitions here, one which is from many people in my riding of Simcoe Centre. These petitioners request that Parliament revise the laws of Canada to replace the Young Offenders Act with an updated juvenile delinquents act with a lowered maximum age of 13 years.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition indicates that it is appropriate to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada. Canadians are normally a reserved people, often concealing their patriotic feelings. Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada have created an opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the Proud to be Canadian project during the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Confederation in 1992.

Therefore the undersigned hereby support the Proud to be Canadian project as an opportunity to nurture a positive life-long relationship with our heritage and our flag, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles, and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): According to the rule, the time provided for presenting petitions has now expired.

* * *

• (1530)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 348, 363, 370, 392, 394, 397 and 399.

[*Text*]

Question No. 348—**Mr. Young (Acadie—Bathurst):**

Since 1985 to the present, with respect to the Department of Supply and Services (*a*) how many contracts through the department in excess of $100,000 have been awarded as sole source (*b*) how many contracts in total were awarded from the department and what was the total dollar value per year?

Hon. Paul Wyatt Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): (*a*) With respect to contracts in excess of $100,000 which have been sole sourced, 18,238 contracts were awarded through Supply and Services Canada (SSC) since 1985.

The award of a contract on a sole source basis is permitted only where the following conditions are met: (1) in the absence of bids in response to a competitive bid sollicitation; (2)* when, for works of art or for reasons connected with protection of exclusive rights, such as patents or copyrights; (3) insofar as is strictly necessary when, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by unforeseeable events; (4)* for additional deliveries by the original supplier; and (5) the procurement of prototypes or a first product which are developed in the course of, and for, a particular contract for research, experiment, study or original development.

* For each GATT and free trade procurement meeting single tendering conditions (2) or (4), an advance contract award notice (ACAN) must be prepared by the appropriate directorate.

Any determination that these conditions have been met must be fully substantiated at the procurement planning stage. The substantiation is required for contract approval purposes and must be explained in or attached to the approval document.

(b) The following lists the total number and dollar value of contracts awarded:

Fiscal Year	Number of Contracts	Dollar Value ($M)
1985/86	311,847	6,706
1986/87	294,669	8,751
1987/88	287,647	10,351
1988/89	283,754	7,429
1989/90	287,099	8,495
1990/91	243,261	8,699
1991/92	188,136	9,787
1992/93 (in progress)	27,569	1,296

The SSC statistical data base is designed only to reflect levels of contracting activity, the signing and recording of contract documents. Extreme caution should be used in attempting to ascribe precision or authority to this data for any other purpose.

Question No. 363—**Mr. Pickard:**

With respect to the undertaking of certain functions by Canada Post Corporation from Revenue Canada Customs on July 1, 1992 in relation to postal imports (*a*) what is the amount of compensation to be received by Canada Post (*b*) how much revenue does Canada Post estimate to generate on an annual basis?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): (*a*) The government has asked Canada Post Corporation to take over some of the data entry, material handling and revenue collection functions associated with the clearance and collection of duties and taxes on postal imports. Canada Post Corporation's agreement with Revenue Canada Customs and Excise for the provision of these services is similar to agreements that Canada Post Corporation has with other customers. A handling fee of $5 for each parcel subject to duty or taxes or both was introduced on the importer to cover some of the costs incurred by Canada Post in providing these services. This cost recovery fee is similar to that charged by other countries.

(*b*) Revenue projections are commercially sensitive information and cannot be disclosed.

Question No. 370—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

What are the amounts received through procurement contracts by the Department of Supply and Services (*a*) for the fiscal years 1984–85 to 1988–89 for each of the following ridings: Lanark—Carleton, Nepean, Ottawa West, Ottawa Centre, Ottawa South, Carleton—Gloucester, Ottawa—Vanier (*b*) for the fiscal years 1989–90 to 1991–92 for the riding of Lanark—Carleton?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): The statistics in this report do not cover all goods and services purchased by the Government of Canada. Supply and Services Canada (SSC) procures only 55 per cent of the total goods and services bought by the federal government.

SSC neither awards contracts nor maintains contracting statistics on the basis of electoral or other boundaries. To produce the following listing by constituency SSC sorted its procurement data base by postal code.

The statistics do not necessarily reflect the origin of the goods and services purchased. More often, a contract is listed in the area where the contractor is located and does not reflect any subcontract work or other services carried out elsewhere. For example, fuel purchases from Esso are part of a total of $249,678,000 in government purchase from Esso Petroleum Canada through its office in Nepean, Ontario, but the fuel is not refined in Nepean and the oil does not come from Ontario. Nepean is a point of billing only.

Finally, many contracts are multi-year in nature and are accounted for only in the year of award (i.e. major crown projects such as large shipbuilding contracts).

SUPPLY AND SERVICES CANADA

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE RIDINGS OF:

FISCAL YEAR	LANARK CARLETON *	NEPEAN *	OTTAWA WEST	OTTAWA CENTRE	OTTAWA SOUTH *	CARLETON GLOUCESTER *	OTTAWA VANIER
1984-1985	—	—	226,219	479,696	—	—	111,752
1985-1986	—	—	237,576	423,071	—	—	98,510
1986-1987	—	—	225,893	486,794	—	—	134,993
1987-1988	—	—	282,444	729,670	—	—	123,248
1988-1989	84,148	346,996	240,578	771,737	297,085	83,639	105,264
1989-1990	103,679	430,522	274,168	731,299	300,337	83,888	108,513
1990-1991	100,197	550,131	260,290	1,025,121	437,141	75,715	169,896
1991-1992	163,906	443,904	236,546	694,067	1,530,237	63,313	117,055

* Contract statistics for the above-noted ridings are not available prior to 1988 because of the redistribution of electoral boundaries.

The Supply and Services Canada statistical data base is designed only to reflect levels of contracting activity, the signing and recording of contract documents. Extreme caution should be used in attempting to ascribe precision or authority to this data for any other purpose.

Question No. 392—**Mr. Bosley:**

What was the cost of the CBC-NFB production "The Valour and the Horror"?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): "The Valour and the Horror" is an independent production produced by Galafilm Inc. in co-production with CBC English Television and the National Film Board of Canada through the Co-Production Program, in association with la Société Radio-Canada and with the participation of Telefilm Canada.

The National Film Board provided $200,000 directly to Galafilm Inc., spent $55,000 on editing and provided post-production and other services in the amount of $474,641.

With regard to the CBC's portion of the cost of the three-part series, it has not been customary to require the CBC to provide such details of its internal management and administration. The background to this custom is explained in detail in the reply to question No. 2530 asked by Mr. Cossitt May 22, 1975 and printed on November 6, 1975:

Question No. 2530—**Mr. Cossitt:**

With reference to the answer to Question No. 2,295 which stated in part: "it has not been customary to require the CBC to supply such details of its internal management and administration" (*a*) on what date and by whom was such a policy arrived at (*b*) what are all the reasons justifying such a decision (*c*) will the government agree to a change in this policy by making available to Parliament answers to all requests for legitimate information concerning CBC and its operations and (i) if so, on what date (ii) if not, for what reason?

Hon. J. Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State of Canada): In reply to parts (*a*) and (*b*) I am informed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as follows: (*a*) and (*b*) Parliament has not as a matter of custom since the corporation's creation in 1936 required CBC to supply in answering Parliamentary questions certain details of its internal management and administration. Parliament has had two reasons for following this custom: first, the independence of the CBC as a Crown corporation established for the purpose of producing and broadcasting independently of political or commercial interference programs for a national program service; and, second, the competitive nature of many of CBC's activities. The appropriateness of the CBC providing certain categories of information has been considered on many occasions by various parliamentary committees and when the CBC has suggested that such information should not be made a matter of public record its views have been accepted by them. Names of staff members and their functions in relation to specific programs and the costs related to such assignments as requested in Question No. 2295 are examples of details which it has not been customary to require the CBC to supply. It is open to Parliament to discuss the policies it and the CBC have followed in this regard and it would be appropriate to review them when the CBC's estimates are before the House of Commons Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts.

(*c*) No. The government makes available all information requested by members except where publication would be inconsistent with the mandate given to the corporation by Parliament. This principle is well established and accepted with respect to information about government agencies and Crown corporations which are in competition with the private sector.

Question No. 394—**Mr. Angus:**

Did the Government of Canada institute restrictions on the hours of work of interprovincial truck operators and, if so, for each of the five years prior their implementation and for each year since their implementation (*a*) how many truck accidents occurred (*b*) how many trucks, for how many hours, operated with a crew of one driver (*c*) how many trucks, for how many hours, operated with a crew of two drivers (*d*) what is the accident ratio for single driver operated trucks versus trucks operated by a double crew (*e*) what is the average annual income of truck drivers?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Transport Canada instituted new federal hours of service regulations effective July 1, 1989. Enforcement of these regulations which is the responsibility of each province commenced with the implementation of complementary provincial hours of service regulations governing intra-provincial carriers. The majority of provinces commenced enforcement in 1990.

(*a*) The number of trucks involved in fatality producing, injury producing or property damage only collisions is as follows: 1986—26,645; 1987—27,130; 1988—30,225; 1989—33,064; 1990—31,364. This data excludes figures for Quebec and Alberta which are incomplete at the moment. The 1991 statistics have not yet been compiled.

(*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) There is no data available on these issues.

(*e*) From Statistics Canada publication on the for hire trucking survey, the following is the reported national average annual income for drivers including supervisors and helpers: 1986—$28,390; 1987 -$28,348; 1988—$30,489; 1989—$32,099. Data has not been published for 1990.

Question No. 397—**Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing):**

Did any member of the Canadian Armed Forces participate in the raid on Dieppe on August 19, 1942 and, if so, what are the names, ranks and regiments of those who received the France-German Star for participating in the Raid on Dieppe and what reason was given for awarding them the medal?

Hon. Gerald Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Yes, however the France-German Star is granted for entry into operational service on land from June 6, 1944 in France, Belgium, Holland or Germany until May 8, 1945, the date of the end of active hostilities in Europe.

Also, airborne troops of the army who have taken part in airborne operations in a qualifying army area for land operations between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945 will qualify.

Question No. 399—**Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):**

With respect to the government, its bodies and agencies and the company First Satellite Communications (*a*) what is the total value of contracts since January 1, 1990 (*b*) what were the dates of these contracts (*c*) which departments or agencies were involved (*d*) what was the value of each (*e*) what was the subject matter of the contract?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): With respect to the government and the company First Satellite Communications (*a*) $20,181.75; (*b*) April 1, 1991; (*c*) Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; (*d*) $20,181.75; (*e*) communications support services.

[*Translation*]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52(1) from the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I wrote to you and asked that you accept the letter I gave you as notice of my intention to rise under the provisions of Standing Order 52 and seek the adjournment of the House to debate an urgent issue of national importance.

Very briefly, for some period Canada's airline industry has had serious financial problems. These problems have now reached critical proportions. In fairness, all airlines service communities from coast to coast to coast. It is a very important national situation. In fact, one of the carriers may be forced to apply for bankruptcy within days, so timing is extremely important.

The Government of Canada is currently examining options for assisting one of the carriers and must make its decision within hours, if not a day or so.

I conclude by saying Parliament has a responsibility and should have the opportunity to assist the government in its decision-making process by having a full and open debate on this issue before the decision is made.

While there will be supply days before our Christmas adjournment, it is extremely unlikely that one will be scheduled before the government responds. Nor will Question Period provide the House with sufficient opportunity to properly explore the options available to Canadians.

It is for this reason that I submit that a debate is urgently required.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member has raised a very important matter, but unfortunately in view of the conditions and constraints of Standing Order 52 I cannot entertain the request of the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan at this time.

* * *

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAYS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(8)(b) the total number of allotted days in the supply period ending December 10, 1992 will be reduced by three days. Consequently the total number of allotted days in the supply period, which was fixed at six on Wednesday, September 18, 1992 pursuant to Standing Order 81(8)(c), is now fixed at three.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PATENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, September 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. Blais that Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act, to amend another act in consequence thereof and to provide for related matters, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to participate in this debate on Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act.

Members of the House will recall that in January of this past year the government announced its decision to remove compulsory licensing of patented pharmaceuti-

cal products. Today, in continuing second reading of Bill C-91, we are carrying through on that announcement.

We are doing that for three fundamental reasons. First, the policy is good for Canada and for Canadians; second, it will end the uncertainty that has risen in the industry over the issue of compulsory licensing; and third, it will end the international isolation in which Canada has found itself on this issue and bring Canadian practice more in line with other industrialized countries.

Let me address each of these three motivating factors. First, there is no question that the changes embodied in Bill C-91 are good for Canada.

Above all else, improvements to patent protection will attract hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment to Canada.

Since January, when we first announced the government's intention to end compulsory licensing, pharmaceutical companies have announced that they will invest over $500 million over the next five years. These large scale new investments were motivated by the expectation of improved patent protection. However, they are conditional on this form of protection being provided. Without it Canada will not be able to compete in the pharmaceutical industry and these investments will move to other more inviting parts of the world.

This is no trivial matter. Over $500 million in new investments means quality jobs for Canadian researchers and medical personnel. We are talking about the full range of industrial activities: provision of plant and equipment, research and development carried out in-house as well as in hospitals, research institutes, universities and private sector laboratories. These investments include international R and D and manufacturing mandates.

These investments are not just in central Canada. In fact, $90 million of these investments that are being announced are for projects outside of central Canada.

[*Translation*]

This is just the kind of sector that Canada should invest in, a sector driven by innovation, a sector devoted to the creation of high value added products, a sector that supports high quality employment. Altogether, the pharmaceutical industry employs more than 22,000 people in brand name, generic drug and fine chemical companies. Bill C-91 will create an environment in which all sectors of the industry can grow.

[*English*]

All of this is good news for Canadian research and manufacturing. But there is also good news for Canadians in general.

Bill C-91 will position Canada to participate and become an important player in the search for new medicines and new cures.

At the same time, the bill embodies provisions that will keep drug prices reasonable. The Patented Medicines Prices Review Board is to be strengthened with new powers that will ensure that it is even more effective in the future than it has been in the past.

The board was created in 1987 as part of this government's commitment to keep drug costs reasonable. Since then, the board has acquitted itself admirably. From January 1987 to December 1991 the prices of existing patented drug products increased at an average rate of less than 3 per cent a year, 2.9 per cent. This was well below the rise in the Consumer Price Index.

[*Translation*]

A recent U.S. study found that medicines in Canada are much lower priced than in the U.S., 32 per cent lower in fact. This study has identified our Patented Medicine Prices Review Board as a key factor in achieving this.

[*English*]

I said at the outset that the policy means increased research and development and manufacturing, coupled with strict controls of price increases. This is good for Canada and good for Canadians. Let me turn to the second fundamental reason that we have initiated this bill.

It is time to end the uncertainty with Canada's patent protection for pharmaceutical products. The government announced its intention to end compulsory licensing in January 1992 in the expectation that the GATT process would be concluded shortly. Although I remain hopeful a deal will be reached in the very near future, negotiations have not yet been concluded.

Canada, however, cannot afford to wait any longer. Since the government announced its intention to end compulsory licensing a flood of new investment commitments have been announced. We have a responsibility to create the environment in which these investment commitments can be realized. With each passing day uncertainty in the sector grows and investment commitments may not materialize for Canadians.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Since the Dunkel text became public last year, the generic industry has flooded the system with over 250 new applications for compulsory licenses, compared to just 57 in all of last year.

All compulsory licences issued since December 20 when the Dunkel report was tabled have been accompanied by a written stipulation that the license may be revoked if the government went ahead with the change in policy. These licences will be declared null and void once this bill is through, but in the meantime all parts of the industry are waiting in an uncertain business climate.

[*English*]

It is our responsibility to ensure an orderly marketplace. We cannot maintain an environment of uncertainty that makes it impossible for companies to plan for the future. It is imperative for the sake of all parties that this issue be resolved immediately.

Finally let me speak on the third reason. Bill C–91 will end Canada's international isolation on this issue. Canada is the only industrialized member of the GATT that still maintains a system of compulsory licensing for pharmaceutical products.

During the negotiations leading up to the tabling of the Dunkel report on December 20, 1991 Canada was isolated among industrialized countries on this issue. Frankly Canada can no longer hope to attract international investment in the pharmaceutical industry while maintaining compulsory licensing.

The pharmaceutical industry is in the process of restructuring on a global scale. Patent protections for innovations is a critical factor in choosing a location for investments. If we are not competitive with our patent protection Canada will lose these new investments and manufacturing mandates to other countries.

Since the January announcement the innovative sector of the industry has announced new investments totalling over $500 million. Nordic Merrill Dow has pledged $40 million in new R and D over the next five years. Glaxo announced a new manufacturing facility worth $70 million and Ayerst pledged $60 million for a new plant in Brandon, Manitoba. These are just three examples, and there are many more.

These are the reasons the government is moving forward with this policy. It is good for Canada. We can no longer afford to be out of line with international development.

To better appreciate why we have come to these conclusions we must look back over the past few years. Bill C–91 is the completion of a process that this government initiated in 1987 when it moved from a period of no market exclusivity at all for pharmaceutical products to a guaranteed period of market exclusivity of 7 to 10 years.

This House will well remember that piece of legislation, Bill C–22, which reinstated patent protection for pharmaceuticals in 1987. That step represented a compromise that we believed would be enough to secure R and D investment and export mandates in Canada while protecting the public against abusive price increases. The government was subjected to a fire–storm of criticism about the effects of Bill C–22. Critics predicted doom on a number of fronts.

The critics were wrong, very wrong. I will take the House through three key predictions of doom from that time and show how Bill C–22 was sound legislation that was good for Canada.

In 1987 the innovative sector of the industry committed itself to doubling its spending on research and development as a percentage of sales from 5 per cent to 10 per cent by 1996. It has more than lived up to that promise. In fact, the innovative industry virtually achieved that target five years ahead of schedule by spending 9.6 per cent of sales on R and D in 1991. The innovative industry spent an estimated $1.1 billion from 1987 to 1991.

During this time annual spending on research and development rose from approximately $100 million in 1987 to $376 million in 1991.

Further, the innovative pharmaceutical industry has become the leading medical research and development funder in Canada. Since 1987, the industry has invested a total of $320 million in Canadian hospitals and universities for medical research and development.

The industry now ranks in the top five in total R and D spending in Canada. This certainly was not the case before Bill C–22. It was this government, through that bill in 1987, that created the environment that produced this tremendous activity in increased research and devel-

opment. Make no mistake about it, that was a critical factor in those decisions.

There are also many other positive aspects of the record of Bill C–22 in economic terms. The industry said in 1987 that it would create jobs if we passed Bill C–22, and it has done exactly that. Employment in the innovative industry has grown substantially to about 18,000 currently, an increase of roughly 2,400 new relatively high paying jobs.

We have proven the critics of 1987 wrong on the question of research and development, and we have proven them equally wrong on all other counts.

Critics predicted the total collapse of the generic pharmaceutical industry in 1987 if Bill C–22 was passed. We passed Bill C–22 and sales of the generic industry have not dropped. They have grown by roughly 190 per cent since 1987. In fact, sales of the generic industry have grown at more than twice the annual rate of growth of the over–all pharmaceutical industry since that time.

The point is that the generic industry did not disappear with Bill C–22. It has done very well and it will continue to do so under Bill C–91.

That brings me to the third major doomsday prediction of 1987 concerning Bill C–22, which shows just how far we have proven the critics wrong.

That concerns the prices of patented drugs. Critics predicted that Bill C–22 would cause dramatic increases in the prices of patented drugs. That did not happen. Price increases have been kept well below changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Over the past five years patented drug prices in Canada have risen by 2.9 per cent a year, less than the 4.4 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index.

The Patented Medicines Prices Review Board that we created with Bill C–22 has worked, and it will continue to work with the increased powers that this bill will give to that board.

The critics of 1986–87 were wrong. Bill C–22 was good for Canada and it is legislation of which we are proud.

The 1987 legislation, however, is no longer sufficient to cope with dramatic changes in this fast–paced industry. There is a new dynamic in pharmaceutical development that requires a new policy framework. Other countries have responded by strengthening their patent protection for medicines. If Canada is to remain competitive it must also provide a climate in which high quality and high paying jobs can be created.

The Liberals and the New Democrats say they want high quality and high paying jobs and more research and development, but they then oppose the key legislation that will help bring that about. They cannot have it both ways.

[*Translation*]

The policy of this government is to improve the climate for the intellectual achievements of those who have invested in the expensive and high risk research essential for innovation in the pharmaceutical sector. At the same time this governement is firmly committed to preventing any abuses in drug pricing. The enhanced powers of the Patented Medicines Prices Review Board will ensure that prices of both new and existing drugs are kept within reasonable limits.

• (1550)

[*English*]

By pursuing a policy based on balancing these two objectives the government will encourage investment, research and development, job creation, and the search for new cures while at the same time protecting consumers.

Bill C–91 is designed to achieve the best of both. That is why I think it is very important for industry in Canada to see this bill approved by this House.

As you are very well aware, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the release of the action plan of the prosperity initiative which calls for precisely what this bill is designed to do: the creation of more research and development, the creation of new investment, and the creation of foreign trade opportunities. By bringing these all together through an improvement in the protection for patent legislation it provides the environment whereby these companies are able to achieve the objectives that were set out in the action plan so that when we hear what people are looking for in the country today, an increase in research and development, in investment, and international trade opportunities, it is precisely this type of bill that will create the environment to achieve these objectives.

I call on all members of the House to support this bill in order to support the objectives that Canadians have set out for us through the prosperity initiative.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have three questions for the minister arising out of his speech. I am not surprised he defended this policy. I think it was he who announced it back in January.

My first question is: Why he would announce this policy during the course of the GATT negotiations? If Canada is the only major industrial partner in GATT that has not agreed to this policy, it might have been used as a bargaining chip to help bring those talks to a successful conclusion, a conclusion that might have been helpful for Canadians in other walks of life instead of throwing it away as the government did previously with Bill C-22 in the course of the free trade talks with the United States. When it might have been used as a bargaining chip it threw it away then and it is throwing it away a second time. I ask him as minister responsible for international trade to answer for that which is in my view a serious error, the throwing away of this bargaining chip earlier this year. I ask him to explain why that was done.

Second, why as a term or condition of this bill would he not require that drug companies reinvest part of their profits, a specified portion of their profits, in R and D in Canada? Why would he not require as a term of the legislation that that research and development be in the development of new drugs in Canada instead of spending the money on marketing?

Third, how can he say that prices have increased only by less than 3 per cent in accordance with the figures provided by this board that the government set up under Bill C-22 when the province of Ontario drug plan reports a 13.2 per cent increase in drug prices, when Green Shield health insurance company reports an 11.4 per cent increase in drug prices, and when the Manitoba health insurance plan reports a 12.3 per cent increase in drug prices, and when Health and Welfare Canada in its own report on health expenditures reports that "expenditures on drugs exhibited the highest level of growth among categories of health care expenditures increasing by 14.3 per cent from 1989 to 1990"? In the face of those figures, how can he put any trust whatever in the report of the drug prices review board?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has put three questions and I appreciate that he has done so because it gives me an opportunity to answer what clearly he is hearing from some of his colleagues in his own caucus.

Was this a reasonable bargaining chip? I think that is the basic question one has to ask rather than putting the question the way my hon. friend has done. The answer is that it was not going to be a reasonable bargaining chip since we were the odd man out. We were the only country that maintained this compulsory licensing regime.

If we had continued that we would have been the losers, not the other countries. We would have been the losers because we would not have had the new research and development mandates or the new investment and manufacturing mandates. And it is because we were in a period, and still are in a period of significant change in the global pharmaceutical industry that there is going to be rationalization which puts Canada in a position where we must compete for this investment. We could have said no, that we keep the compulsory licensing in place but we would have lost that new investment. We would have lost the $500 million of new investment that has already been announced, as well as new investment that is still to come once this legislation is passed.

That is the reason it could not be used as a bargaining chip, because we would have been the losers if people had called us and said that is not a realistic bargaining chip.

I can see my hon. friend does not understand some of the basic principles of investment and the global economy Canada is living in today. It is one of the tragedies of debate in this House that members opposite do not understand that things have changed in the 1990s; they have changed from the 1950s and 1960s and 1970s because of the nature of the economic interrelationships we have today. We are not an island unto ourselves. We have to compete and if we do not compete we are the losers, not the other countries.

My hon. friend asks why we should not require reinvestment of the moneys into research and development. We have seen over the past five years how the revenues generated have been reinvested by the increase from 5 per cent to close to 10 per cent of the sales in research and development. This is happening. It is the

normal response of a company if it is working in a competitive environment, a favourable environment for its investments in research and development, that it will continue to invest. But if, like the Liberal Party policies of the past, things are required which say that you must do this or you must do that, then the people who are investing the money will say that well, if we are going to be forced to do this this year, what are they going to force us to do next year and what are they going to force us to do the year after?

If we had taken that step we would have been sending out negative messages and we would not have generated the $500 million of investment opportunities. We would have not generated the high paying jobs and the good research and development in the companies as well as in the universities and the hospitals across Canada.

Finally, my hon. friend compares the 2.9 per cent with some of these other figures from the Ontario government's green plan and others. As my hon. colleague, who is very familiar with this business because of his professional background, says, these are apples and oranges. That is absolutely right. Because the 2.9 per cent measures the increase in the cost of the patented medicines that are brought on to the market. What these other measurements refer to are other things, including the amount of usage of drugs. The types of drugs that people are using today are different from what they were in 1987 or 1989. You cannot compare the 2.9 per cent with these other figures. That has been made abundantly clear by people who have reviewed both the conclusions.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): I must say that the minister talks about how marvellously the government understands the current economic situation in this world. That is why in eight years it has taken this country almost to the point of bankruptcy and the most difficult economic situation we have ever faced.

I want to ask the minister three basic questions. First, the government keeps denying that this is part of the free trade agreement, and yet when it passed Bill C-21, William Merkin, who was the deputy chief trade negotiator for the United States, made it very clear—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Time is running out and I ask the hon. member to ask one question, please.

Mr. Karpoff: I will ask him one question. I will get a chance to ask him many more. The government's own prices review board said that 40 per cent of all new drugs coming on the market were above its own guidelines. British Columbia made a study which showed in detail that existing drugs rose 6.4 per cent between 1988 and 1991, not the 3.2 per cent that he talks about, and that the average ingredient cost in pharmacare went up 133 per cent. The cost of actual dispensing went down 47 per cent. The actual moneys going to the pharmaceutical companies went up 133 per cent during that period of time.

• (1600)

How can the minister keep saying this when the government's own prices review board says it could not even control the costs of new drugs coming on and it has been documented that existing drugs went up much faster than he is claiming and that details show a 133 per cent increase?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will not rise to the bait in the preamble of my friend's question. We will have another opportunity to debate that.

Let me just respond specifically to the point he has made on initial pricing. Yes, my hon. friend is correct. The PMPRB did point out that the initial prices were initially offside. That was because when the initial price in Canada was compared with the international bench-marks we did not know what that international bench-mark was until some time past the establishment of the initial price. However, once the companies found out what that bench-mark was, they did reduce their prices to bring them into line with the existing international bench-mark that they had to meet.

What Bill C-91 does do in strengthening the role of the prices review board is it provides for a roll back to the initial date of the initial price or the introduction on the market so that there cannot be the windfall profits my hon. friend has referred to.

Rather than asking the question in a critical way, what he should be saying as I referred to in my speech is that this bill improves and strengthens the prices review board in a way that meets the concerns he has just expressed.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–91 is a very dangerous piece of legislation with respect to Canada's health care system.

The basic premise for the last 20 minutes or so from the minister of trade and industry and the former Minister of Finance was basically that this is a good policy for Canada: "Trust us, Canadians. This is good". This is the same minister who said that the FTA was good for Canada, that NAFTA was good for Canada, that the GST is good for Canada, that the 33 new taxes since 1984 are good for Canada and Canadians and that this eight–year record of this trickle–down economic theory which has placed literally millions of Canadians in the unemployment lines was also good.

Quite frankly Canadians did not believe him then and they will not believe him now that this piece of legislation by any stretch of the imagination is going to be good for Canadians or for Canada.

Let us put this bill into some historical context. Compulsory licensing was born in this country in the late sixties when the then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, introduced compulsory licensing for two reasons. The first was to diversify the industry, competition, something that I thought was part of the Conservative credo: diversification, competition in the marketplace. The second reason was to try to moderate and lower the price of prescription drugs, so it allowed the generic firms to replicate the brand name drugs in return for royalties paid to the brand name companies.

In 1987, along comes this government and through Bill C–22, and it basically eliminates the royalties and replaces them with seven–year effective protection for brand name companies. That means that the generics would not be able to duplicate those drugs until that seven–year period ended.

The government comes along in 1992 and through Bill C–91, rather than seven years, effectively adds another three years. When the process by which a company must obtain the permission of the government to introduce that drug in the marketplace is added there is a 20–year patent protection for brand name drugs.

That 20–year protection will kill the generic companies and it is also retroactive to last December. Can we imagine the gall of these government members opposite, not just having introduced and passed legislation but saying that it takes effect last December? This will kill that generic industry because after a 20–year monopoly the duplication of drugs will always be surpassed by new technologies and new drugs to administer to Canadians' needs.

That must be put into perspective. I am going to present four reasons why this bill must be stopped. The first one is that we cannot afford increased health care costs through increased prescription drug prices for Canadians in this day and age. Overwhelmingly, Canadians want accessible and affordable health care.

The elimination of compulsory drug licensing means increased prices for prescription drugs. They will be higher, and in fact they will be unchecked. As the hon. member from Kingston mentioned a few minutes ago, since Bill C–22 we have seen the increases in those costs. In my province of Ontario there has been a 13.2 per cent increase in the drug plan. In Manitoba the increase has been 12.2 per cent and for the Green Shield health insurance company the increase has been 11.4 per cent.

This is a recipe for increased prices. The Green Shield health insurance company, a large third party health insurer, had this to say in its report:

> The average cost of a prescription claim has risen at a rate in excess of 11 per cent compounded annually, for the period of 1987 through 1991—

It goes on to say that:

> —it will result in continued high levels of increases in drug costs, bearing in mind the high costs being experienced with new drugs as they are introduced to the marketplace.

Then there is the regulatory board that was set up after Bill C–22 to monitor and control the price of drugs. It has proved to be completely ineffective. In fact brand name companies are ignoring the guidelines of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. There is a 30 to 40 per cent non–compliance rate.

The chairman of that board, Dr. Eastman, said in his report:

> The high number of prices out of compliance suggests either that some patentees following a strategy of setting high introductory prices so as to benefit from a temporary gain or that they resist the board's guidelines, especially those limiting the prices of new drugs that bring moderate, little or no therapeutic improvements to the range of drug products already existing in Canada.

That is from the chair of that board that was established after Bill C–22.

It is no different in the United States. I was watching CNN the other day and there was a report on an organization called Families U.S.A., which had a press conference to outline, among other things, that the top 20 prescription brand name drugs in the United States have gone up in price over 70 per cent in the last six years. This government wishes essentially to emulate the same system that exists in the United States.

• (1610)

Even the government's own study provided to the consumer and corporate affairs minister recently said that longer patent periods:

> —will increase the length of time before generic competition can occur. Therefore consumers will have to pay more for drugs over time.

That was a study provided by the government's own department.

The evidence is clear. Vote for Bill C–91 and that is a recipe and a prognosis for higher prescription drug costs. Canadians do not want any part of that.

Second, the minister always says that we must provide Canadian entrepreneurs with a stimulus to develop and compete not only domestically but internationally. What does Bill C–91 do for the Canadian generic industry?

The generic industry is wholly Canadian owned and grown. Brand name manufacturers are largely offshore multinational corporations. The generic industry employs almost 3,000 Canadians across this country. It has been able, through the drug licensing system, to capture almost 10 per cent of the marketplace in Canada. It had sales last year of over $430 million. All those jobs, all those profits, all those taxes, and all the research and development that takes place in the generic industry happens in this country. Profits are not flowing south. There are no tax write–offs. There is not the stimulus to send jobs south. It all happens in Canada.

Therefore Bill C–91, which would kill that generic industry, would remove the window that this system has provided for Canadian companies like Apotex Incorporated in Toronto and Novopharm of Scarborough, two leading generic companies that are doing extremely well. We should be proud of the fact that they are doing well in this high–tech pharmaceutical industry because they are Canadian. They also moderate our drug pricing systems for Canadians.

Why not encourage, through this system, Canadian companies to take pride and stimulate additional companies like Novopharm and Apotex in the future. Through this legislation not only would we be killing an Apotex or a Novopharm but we would be ensuring that in the future no other such companies, Canadian companies with Canadian risks and Canadian creativity for Canadian jobs, will be given a chance to establish themselves.

The minister talks about the flood of investments that will flow from the multinational corporations. He was the same minister that talked about the flood of investments if we were to approve Bill C–22 some years ago.

The government promised that there would be some 5,000 new jobs created. It is not even one–third of the way, as we speak today, in delivering on that promise. Over half those jobs are in the marketing and sales components and divisions of those multinational corporations. They are not in the research and development area, as this government promised us.

Second, let us get behind our Canadian industry and Canadian companies in this pharmaceutical industry. The worry of the international community is that this system will be emulated in other parts of the world. In fact President–elect Bill Clinton made an issue in his campaign, a successful campaign which we all witnessed, the bringing to a stop of the spiralling costs to America of their prescription drugs as well as their health care system.

Third, does this government not have any pride left in any Canadian institutions?

Does it have to put its hands on every Canadian institution that has served this country well? Does it not realize that the generic compulsory drug licensing system is an institution made in Canada for Canadians and by Canadians and that it is working well? It is fair. The brand name companies are making their profits as they

should, and the generic industries are in there to moderate those prices and to give incentives to Canadian companies and jobs.

This is yet another institution touched by this government. This is the removing of yet another piece of fabric in that Canadian blanket that we have been proud of, which in the end serves to define who we are and who we are not. The government took all those individual strands: VIA, the airline industry, our infrastructure in transportation, Canada Post, doing away with FIRA in terms of protecting Canadian industry, not anti-foreign investment but standing up for number one, and the trucking industry.

The CBC is not able to promote Canadian unity. Can you imagine anything more insane for a Canadian broadcasting channel? Now the government touches the compulsory drug licensing system. I am not advocating, our critic who has spoken on this matter eloquently is not advocating and our party is not advocating, that we run the multinational companies out of town. Not at all.

We are suggesting that the compulsory drug licensing system allows both the brand names and the generic names to live and coexist, and allows each to do well. Does the House know who benefits in the current system, leaving the brand name and generic companies alone for a moment? Canadians do because Canadians get a health care system that is more affordable. Canadian companies do well. There are jobs and profits, and taxes are paid in this country.

Why fix something that is uniquely Canadian and that is not broken whatsoever?

Fourth—I do not like raising it but I will—is that in the debate on Bill C-22 elements on that side suggested: "If you are against Bill C-22 you are against Quebec". We hear those voices again now on Bill C-91. A lot of brand name multinational corporations are in Quebec, though not exclusively. In my own province of Ontario there are quite a number as well, but there is a large component of companies in Quebec.

Now voices opposite suggest: "Hold on, if you are against Bill C-91 you are against the province of Quebec and its interests". This is precisely the type of allegation that poisoned the referendum debate that all of us were engaged in. These are the voices that are the true enemies of Canada.

We know where we stand with the province of Quebec. We know what we did during the referendum when Canadians spoke, and whose voices must be respected. Bill C-91 is not a test of loyalty or patriotism to one province in our federation. Bill C-91 is an issue of health care. Bill C-91, whether there are brand name companies in Quebec or not, and there are, is of interest also to Quebecers, to Canadians in Quebec, because they too are concerned about how much they spend for their prescription drugs on which unfortunately they must rely.

Those are the four issues at stake. It is not: "Believe me, Canadians, this is a good policy for Canada". If that is good for Canada I would hate to see what the minister's definition of a bad policy is, and I think Canadians are wise to it.

I urge Canadians to rally to the defence of this compulsory drug licensing system which is a Canadian, home-grown, home-bred institution. This issue can be a sleeper. Do you remember when the party opposite tried to deindex senior citizens' pensions, thinking that the seniors were somehow not powerful and would not be able to mobilize public opinion? Do you remember when that beautiful, elderly lady called the Prime Minister a Charlie Brown? She captured the imagination not only of senior citizens but of young Canadians, nephews and nieces, and mobilized them until this government was forced to back down.

• (1620)

This issue is something like that debate, particularly when we talk about senior citizens. They are the ones who are most reliant on our health care system and the provincial drug plans that provide prescription drugs for them.

I urge senior citizens and not so senior Canadians to involve themselves in this debate. We certainly will stand our ground. This system has worked well. It has provided for moderate increases in prices, and it has allowed both the brand name and generic companies to co-exist, to continue.

Why must we let go without a fight an institution that has worked well for Canada and for Canadians? We must be concerned about the safety of our health care system. At the very time when provincial health care ministers are coming to Ottawa on a daily basis talking about the increased costs, this government is moving in the oppo-

site direction. The first piece of business, once we came back from the post-referendum episode, when we are supposed to be getting back to business and creating economic prosperity, is about the dismantling of a Canadian industry in Toronto, in Winnipeg and elsewhere.

If the government has learned anything from the referendum message, if it has listened to the deep disaffection that Canadians have, it will do the honourable thing in this legislation. It should not satisfy the needs of multinational corporations, those that the Prime Minister wishes to sing to. It should look after the needs of the people. From there, we will be able to build successfully. Start at home and let us do away with Bill C-91.

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 friend opposite had to say about this bill. I was a little surprised because it would seem to be in direct contradiction to what I heard during Question Period when there was a lot of rhetoric about jobs, jobs, jobs.

If we are looking at jobs for Canadians then we should look at the record and see what the innovative drug companies have done in creating jobs since 1987.

Right now the innovative industry, the industry that will be looking forward to investing more money in Canada, employs about 18,000 people in this country. Since 1987, with the advent of Bill C-22, they added about 2,400 new jobs. This is 2,400 new jobs just because of Bill C-22.

At that time I was not a member of the House, but I remember as a citizen being frightened because of the dire predictions of the opposition about what would happen if we passed Bill C-22. What happened is that we got 2,400 new jobs in Canada. We got a doubling of the R and D investment to the 10 per cent promised by 1996. It has already happened and it is not even the end of 1992.

Therefore, I have to ask the hon. member why he is making these comments against Bill C-91 and why he is trying to scare seniors by making all kinds of threats and predictions about rising costs. That worries me because there are a lot of seniors in my riding, as I am sure there are a lot of seniors in the hon. member's riding as well. It is highly unfair and highly inappropriate to make predictions about rising costs of prescription drugs that make seniors and others who have little ability to defend themselves to quake in their shoes in fear.

The hon. member can tell me if I am correct. I would like to get his opinion. The facts are that only 20 per cent of all of the drugs that are bought over the counter by people or through their doctor's prescriptions are patented. Those are the drugs we are talking about here. That is the portion of the bill that seniors and others would have to bear and only 20 per cent will be affected by this bill.

The hon. member has been saying that the prices review board was not effective.

An hon. member: Ask your question.

Mrs. Dobbie: This is a period for questions and comments. I can make my comment and then pose my question. He says that the prices review board has not been effective. The facts speak for themselves. The prices of these drugs under patent, not the patents that are being unfairly encroached upon because of special licensing created by the Liberals, have only increased by 2.9 per cent while the CPI has raised by 4.4 per cent.

I would like to hear the hon. member defend his dire predictions about price increases that frighten the elderly and people on fixed incomes. They are totally unfounded according to the facts and figures that I have.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I was not trying to scare seniors. I was trying to appeal to seniors to look into this issue. There is nothing more scary to seniors than this government. If the member wants facts and figures she should start with her home province.

She talks about the CPI rate. Since 1987 the health plan in her province of Manitoba has gone up, since Bill C-22 arrived, some 12.3 per cent.

Second, she talks about the need to create jobs and investment and how dare I criticize Bill C-91. In Bill C-22 her colleagues promised an avalanche of jobs in research from the brand name companies.

An hon. member: Overnight.

Mr. Marchi: Let us keep it in perspective. The brand name multinational corporations enjoy 90 per cent plus of the pharmaceutical market in this country. We are

talking about the generic companies trying to survive in that 10 per cent market share.

I ask the hon. member and the government she is part of if that is unfair. Are we saying that we have run the multinational corporations out of town when they enjoy 90 per cent of a billion dollar market rather than 10 per cent?

The research and development and the profits, the taxes and the stimulus from the brand name companies do not all stay in Canada. At least we can say in trying to have those two co-exist that with generic firms the direct employment, direct spin-offs, direct taxation, direct research and development all happen on Canadian soil and nowhere else. The hon. member forgets that. The hon. member forgets that Apotex Inc., the leading generic drug company in Canada has put on hold a multimillion dollar development in the city of Winnipeg because of the legislation we are debating today.

Is the member from Manitoba speaking up for Manitobans and the people of Winnipeg or is she paying lip service to the policies of her government which clearly have not passed the test? I advise the member to go back to her province, check her facts, check with the interests of Manitobans and then come back to this Chamber and talk intelligently.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for what I thought was a well turned intervention, not challenged seriously from the other side. I do not know where the other side gets its numbers but the actual facts show that only half as many jobs were created as they claim in their own statistics and other statistics were left out.

I was interested in something the hon. member had to say. The hon. member who speaks on behalf of the Official Opposition will know that just before it was defeated in the early eighties the Liberal government was planning changes to compulsory licensing of an undetermined sort. Nevertheless it was perfectly clear that compulsory licensing under the previous Liberal government was under threat.

• (1630)

It is also true that the former Prime Minister was a member of the board of directors of Sandoz. It is true that the present spokesperson on behalf of the multinational drug corporations is a former Liberal cabinet minister who is one of those interested in changing compulsory licensing. We know as well that one member has been communicating with other members of the Liberal caucus, along with others, opposing the Liberal position on Bill C-91.

I was very glad to hear the hon. member point out that the Liberal Party as usual is unified on this. I would be interested in knowing just what machinations went on to achieve such unity within an otherwise divided house.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I said that the party position was that advocated by our consumer and corporate affairs critic who spoke before this House recessed.

I do not think it would do much good for the hon. member to speak of divided houses because the rumblings coming from the NDP caucus and the challenges to his leader's ability to control the divisions within the constitutional issue indicate that the member is on very thin ice when he talks about divided houses. Obviously he should take a look at the sensitivities in his own party before he casts the first stone.

The fact of the matter is that it does not do anything for the national debate if I were to point out that the NDP Government of Ontario is cutting back on health care and that the NDP Government of British Columbia is prepared to take certain drugs off its list. However it does not do anything to further the debate.

The core of this debate is whether Canadians should have access to a system of prescription drugs that allows the pricing of those drugs to be controlled, that they remain affordable, and that they not escalate beyond the means of average Canadian families who must unfortunately rely on prescription drugs and medicines when a member of their family is ailing. That is the central premise of the issue.

The second one for me is allowing generic companies that only have 10 per cent of the market share to continue as Canadian corporate companies and citizens so that they can invest in this country and give rise to further jobs and stimulus.

If the NDP wishes to look at divided houses we would be happy to have an emergency debate and respond to every one of those challenges.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Atlantic Fishermen; the hon. member for Davenport—The Environment; the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast—The Economy; the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso—Westray Coal Mine; and the hon. member for Ottawa West—The Environment.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the consumer and corporate affairs committee and as a member representing a riding in which there is a university, the University of Alberta, I am pleased to add my comments to those of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who spoke in September and today of the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology on Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act.

The legislation before us today is designed to foster science and technology, build expertise in niche markets and to enable our research facilities to respond to global trends.

Bringing Canada's patent protection more in line with intellectual property laws in the rest of the world will help do all these things.

We have what it takes to become a world leader in pharmaceutical research. We have a well respected medical establishment, a health care system that is the envy of the world, an educated work force, and R and D tax credits that are among the most generous in the world.

However, we have been missing an essential ingredient: intellectual property protection in line with the standard practices of the rest of the industrialized world and patent laws that compare with those of the nations with which we compete for R and D investment.

Since 1984 the government has given high priority to the reform of Canada's intellectual property laws as a component for its agenda of economic renewal. It has recognized the need for patent laws that protect ideas and innovation and that attract investment.

But the government has had to fight every step of the way in its effort to modernize and streamline these laws. It comes as no surprise for me to hear the complaints of hon. members opposite. Over the years they have tried in vain to halt the government's progress.

I have heard some members across the floor complain that the government is moving too quickly with second reading of this bill. They seem to ignore the fact that some $500 million in new investment is at stake here, that innovative pharmaceutical companies stated their intentions to invest that amount once they heard last January that the government intended to strengthen patent protection for pharmaceuticals.

This is a substantial investment at a time when the world-wide industry is scrambling to restructure. Make no mistake about it: other countries around the world would love to get hold of that investment.

I often wonder about my colleagues opposite. They talk about the economy and they talk about how we need to do something. Here is $500 million waiting to be invested in Canada and yet they say we should not go ahead with it.

If Canada does not move quickly to take advantage of this offer, a window of opportunity will slam shut. I would remind those in the House that hon. members opposite and their colleagues in the other place have a track record of delaying patent legislation well beyond any reasonable time frame required to study the bill adequately.

In the last Parliament they used every obstruction tactic at their disposal in an effort to defeat or delay the first phase of patent reform. During the last Parliament Bill C-22, an act to amend the Patent Act, was given first reading on November 7, 1986. The Liberals and the NDP in this House obstructed the bill to such an extent that it was not forwarded to the other place until May 6, 1987.

I remind this House of the turbulent history as a warning that we cannot afford to see a similar delay in the passage of this bill. What I find disturbing is that many of the arguments I have heard today from the opposition benches echo the arguments made in the other place when it tried to thwart the government's legislation.

Back in 1987 the Liberals maintained that the amendments to the Patent Act would result in higher drug prices. They use the same line today. I would like to quote Senator Thériault who told that other place:

> By removing the competitive element provided by generic drugs in the industry, Bill C–22 will undoubtedly result in a huge price increase.

Senator Bonnell from Prince Edward Island, and a doctor himself, felt that we were encouraging research by multinational drug companies at the expense of disadvantaged Canadians who would have to pay higher drug prices. He said:

> For goodness sake, don't take off the backs of the sick, the hospitalized, the infirm, and the aged by increasing drug prices.

• (1640)

He said that on August 13, 1987.

In a similar manner Senator Buckwold raised the spectre of fear, inferring that the legislation would hurt the people of Canada because of higher drug costs. He said:

> In my opinion, if we pass this bill we will be doing a great disservice to the people of Canada. We will be adding to the problem of health costs. We will be denying drugs to people who otherwise would have bought them, and who desperately need them.

He raised the spectre of fear. Shameful. This is what the Liberals in the other place said about the legislation increasing drug prices. Today we know that their predictions were inaccurate and terribly unfounded. It was a shameful procedure.

In fact from January 1987 to December 1991 the prices of patented drug products increased at an average rate of only 2.9 per cent. This is well below the rise in the Consumer Price Index. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology spoke about that a bit earlier.

Bill C–91 gives the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board tough new powers. These powers will, first, allow the board to better influence introductory prices for new patented drugs. This was a concern of Bill C–22 and the government has met this concern.

Second, these powers will authorize the board to order price reductions or penalties which could compensate for past excessive prices and deter excessive pricing practices.

Third, they will provide for fines and imprisonments for failure to comply with the board's order.

Finally these powers will give the board's orders the same force and effect as an order of the Federal Court.

These are tremendous powers and the board will be very effective.

Again many Liberals both in this House and in the other place had dire predictions that drug manufacturers would not double the research and development as a portion of sales, as they had promised to do.

Senator Thériault said:

> As far as research and development are concerned, it is clear—that it is not Bill C–22 which will increase the level in Canada. We have nothing but promises and commitments from the pharmaceutical industry which has never proved quite reliable. There is nothing in Bill C–22 itself which would compel it to meet its commitments.

Senator Bonnell added:

> In the original bill, there is not five cents guaranteed to go into research. There is just a promise.

We now know that the effect of the changes to the Patent Act was indeed to open the gates to a flood of new investment by the pharmaceutical companies. The industry has lived up to its commitments.

In fact the fourth report of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board points out that the ratio of R and D to sales by the companies that filed patents with the board in 1991 now stands at 9.7 per cent, well on its way to the 10 per cent commitment it promised.

Total expenditures on R and D for these companies grew to $376.4 million last year, an increase of over 23 per cent from 1990.

This money is valuable money. It helps create high value added jobs, research and development jobs, the type of jobs we want to build a new economy, to provide for new growth in our economy. We need these jobs very badly as we face globalization and restructuring. Five hundred million dollars in new investment is at stake here and we must push forward with this patent legislation.

During the debates on the old bill, Bill C–22, Senator Buckwold expressed doubts about whether Canada had the capacity to play a major role in the international pharmaceutical industry. He had doubts about Canada's role to compete internationally, to compete in the world environment. I have confidence in Canadians. I have

confidence in Canadian researchers, in Canadian universities and in companies in Canada.

Senator Buckwold said:

> I do not know how the government can be so naive as to really believe that suddenly Canada will become a major player in the research world.

It was Senator Buckwold who was naive in this case. He lacked confidence in Canada. He lacked confidence in our researchers, in our universities and in others.

We on this side of the House have no doubt that Canada will become a major player in the research world. What we require, however, is public policy that enables the science and technology community to get on with the job, and that is what this legislation is all about.

In my riding of Edmonton—Strathcona, Glaxo announced on October 6 a $15 million investment to undertake basic research at the University of Alberta. This pledge is an addition to the quarter of a million dollars announced by Bristol-Meyers Squibb last July. I was a participant in that announcement. The Bristol-Meyers Squibb announcement of $250,000 will be spent over five years and it is renewable for another five years. That is half a million dollars and it will be matched by other sources. These investments will add to the university's high reputation for medical science.

We have a lot to be proud of in Alberta about the University of Alberta because it is a leader in many areas, in medical and pharmaceutical research, and it will lead again with the types of investments the Patent Act will bring.

At both those announcements the presidents of each of those companies lauded the government for Bill C-22. They indicated how much more money they had spent than they had committed to. They talked about the successes of their new drugs, how these new drugs would help Canadians and people in the world fight disease and improve their health.

That is what we want. We want high value added jobs through which we can export high value added products like pharmaceuticals.

Albertans recognize the importance of these kinds of investments and they are well aware of the connection between intellectual property protection and R and D.

Dr. Michael Lee of Edmonton has written to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to say:

> I believe that the brand name pharmaceutical industry has stepped into the forefront as one of the primary sources of funding for Canadian medical research.

Dr. Lee adds:

> It would seem logical that the maintenance of the patent protection will encourage continuation, and in fact, further investment by the pharmaceutical industry enhancing Canadian competitiveness in medical research.

Mr. Bachinsky of the University of Alberta, a former dean of pharmacy, has written to the minister and has said:

> You have my support in the forthcoming GATT negotiations to extend patent protection and to bring Canada into the post-industrial world.

I hope all members of this House will see the wisdom behind the words of these Albertans. We cannot afford to lose time, as we did in the last Parliament, by squabbling over this legislation in order to score political points.

We will fine tune Bill C-91 in committee. I am a member of that committee and I will be open to suggestions of opposition members and people who come forward to us. I am looking forward to a healthy, good process. Many members of the consumer and corporate affairs committee will be on that legislative committee.

We have worked well in the past. We have produced some good reports. We worked well on the bankruptcy legislation and on the consumer and corporate affairs study into credit cards. We will continue our work in a non-partisan sense on Bill C-91.

I will welcome constructive suggestions, but let us move quickly to the committee stage and avoid repeating the costly delays of the Patent Act amendments in the last Parliament.

• (1650)

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona, which is a very good seat, has left out a few things.

One of them is the fact that the industry tells me that they have 18,000 employees across Canada. I asked one of their spokesmen how many lived and worked in western Canada which has about 8 million people. The answer that I got was about 1,600 out of 18,000. Not a very nationalized industry in my view.

Maybe the member will have something to say about whether or not his friends in the industry are planning to increase employment. In my part of the country, the member knows that the chemistry department at the University of Alberta is one of the best known departments of the entire university. Why does it not hire people in Alberta and in other parts of western Canada or Atlantic Canada?

I hope he will also comment when he gets up on the fact that J. W. Gilman in a paper entitled "The Impact of Pharmaceutical Companies Sponsored Research and Basic Research of Canadian Universities" wrote in part: "Canadian medical schools have found that Bill C-22 has had a minimal impact on basic research and development in Canada".

The basic research is 26.5 per cent. Universities and hospitals research is about 23 per cent. I gather that this amounts to about $14 million yearly now going into basic research. I also have a figure that the member will want to clarify, employment in the industry. We were told by people like the Minister for International Trade that the brand name drug producers would create 3,000 jobs by 1996. My understanding is that there has only been about 1,300 jobs created since Bill C-22.

Will the member please respond to the specific questions with respect without giving us the bafflegab he was giving us until he sat down?

Mr. Thorkelson: Mr. Speaker, those are good questions and I appreciate the member's concern about R and D investment in western Canada. Like him, I would like to see more R and D investment in western Canada.

As I mentioned there were two announcements at the University of Alberta, one by Bristol-Myers Squibb for basic research. That was to fund a chair in the department of pharmacy to increase the amount of basic research done which was one of the points of the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast.

The $15 million by Glaxo is in co-operation with the University of Alberta hospitals and the medical school. The professor that is heading that up is from the medical school. It is also funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Medical Foundation. There are four or five partners bringing in people from the department of medicine, bringing in people from the department of pharmacy, from the hospitals and from the industries. That is indeed beneficial.

There was also an announcement of a firm spending I believe $30 million at UBC. Ayerst has announced it will spend $123 million which will produce 1,000 jobs in Manitoba. Yes, we could do more in Western Canada. We are building on our base there which is very important. As time goes on we hope to increase the research done in Western Canada.

I am not going to get into the game of pounding on one part of the country at the expense of another which is what the hon. Liberal member spoke of earlier. He was accusing some of trying to divide the country by saying that this was a bill for Quebec. It is not. It is a bill for all of Canada. It is a good bill. It is a bill that builds on our base. It is a bill that tries to provide high quality research jobs across the country. I am pleased that in Alberta my riding is a part of it and it is a part for all Albertans. I am pleased that there are investments at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg and at the University of British Columbia.

I would like to see greater investments in Atlantic Canada. I am hoping that the industry will take heed of the hon. member's remarks, my concerns and the concerns of the members on this side of the House and try to spread their investment more equally across the country.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he is aware that British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have all taken action to counteract high drug costs set in motion by the Conservative Patent Act amendments. They have deinsured drugs and, in one case, 350 drugs have been deinsured. The drug eligibility continues to be reduced in those provinces because of increasing costs for the reason of this legislation. Deductibles are being increased on pharmaceuticals for seniors and others. User fees are being added directly to the pharmaceuti-

cals. Clearly the cost of drugs is going up and is going to accelerate.

Would the member support a resolution where National Health and Welfare got involved with doctors to support an initiative to clearly and carefully prescribe drugs that were in the generic area or were alternatives to the brand names? Would he also support National Health and Welfare working with hospitals to reduce the number of approved drugs so long as they covered the needs in order to do an end-run around the pharmaceutical companies in Canada and support pharmacists in the same way?

I contend, as does almost every other Canadian in this country, that this project has more to do with putting money in the pockets of friends than with research in this country or jobs.

Mr. Thorkelson: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that several provinces have moved to control health care costs. I think the hon. member is trying to infer something when he says they are trying to control drug costs. Some of those deinsured drugs are drugs that are not affected at all but are already generics and so on.

This bill talks about new drugs and new investment, extending patent protection for those. The hon. member's question, with the greatest of respect, really is not relevant.

I have sympathy with what he is saying. Yes, health care costs are rising and yes, we must do something. Some of the provinces have moved in areas to control the health costs and it is up to them to decide how they want to control those health care costs. If some want to deinsure drugs or if some want to put user fees, that is up to them. I am not saying that I agree with that. I believe in universal health care and I believe that we have one of the finest health care systems in the world and we must maintain it at that. However, that question is not relevant to this bill because some of those drugs and some of those items that are deinsured are completely outside the scope of this bill which affects drugs that will be the subject of research and will come on the market. It does not affect drugs that are already on the market.

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING OF BILL C-91

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following:

> That since an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or (2) with respect to second reading of Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act, to amend another act in consequence thereof and to provide for other related matters, under the provision of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

Let us get on with the business of the country.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am shocked.

An hon. member: You should not be; they have used it about 50 times.

Mr. Boudria: Perhaps I should not be shocked, as my colleague has so eloquently just put it. This government has used closure on dozens and dozens of occasions. This is just terrible. This time we are talking about a major piece of legislation. Less than three hours of debate has gone on and this government wants to shut this place down. Parliament has been back since eleven o'clock this morning and this government has lasted until 4.55 p.m. without invoking closure.

• (1700)

An hon. member: They are tired. They are worn out.

Mr. Boudria: They just could not resist any longer. They lasted an unbelievable six hours without invoking closure.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Boudria: Shame on those Tories across the way. I was not going to engage in partisan debate today. I really was not. However I feel provoked by the actions of the government.

I have just spent a number of weeks in my constituency campaigning on the referendum. Before I get into all the details of this bill, I want to take this occasion to thank my constituents for their efforts in that regard, whether they agreed or disagreed with me. I want to take a moment and offer my respects to all who participated in

the process. People from all walks of life, people who were known Liberals, Tories, New Democrats all joined together in that effort.

The past president of the Conservative Association of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, a fine gentleman by the name of Mr. Bob Binmore, helped me a lot in the campaign. Symbolically, in order to show that there was no partisanship at the time, I attended every public meeting in the riding wearing his tie. We thought this was a symbolic thing. As a matter of fact, I am wearing it today. This is Bob Binmore's tie. I do not think this constitutes a display for the cameras and it does not offend the Standing Orders, although when some of my colleagues see how aggressive this tie is, they might want to comment on that. It is very aggressive. It makes a statement about our Canadian provinces and Canadian unity. This tie was given to Mr. Binmore by his daughters, Julie and Jennifer, and I made him a solemn promise to wear it in the House today, the first day back.

We all behaved in an unpartisan way and I am proud of that. However, we are only back a few hours today and the government goes at it, jack-boots and all. I thought the minister responsible for fisheries was a little less partisan than some of the others across the way because at one time he had the good sense to be a Liberal and that would make him immensely better than some of his colleagues. However, I see it did not make much difference.

I have before me a stack of little cards sent to me by constituents and people right across Canada who are just concerned about this Bill C-91. There must must be a pile four or five inches thick of these postcards sent to me. I am sure the member for Dartmouth received postcards from people paying the high price of prescription drugs who are concerned about the future of the pharmaceutical industry.

Here is what the postcards say. I will read a few sentences from one of them: "On June 23, 1992, the federal government introduced Bill C-91, legislation intended to extend retroactively to December 20, 1991, patent protection for brand name pharmaceuticals and eliminate Canada's system of compulsory licensing. This legislation will result in significantly higher drug prices in Canada and its retroactive provisions will cripple the Canadian owned generic pharmaceutical industry". This is not what I said. This is what hundreds and hundreds of Canadians have said.

An hon. member: And the government ignores them and wants to cut them off.

Mr. Boudria: However, no one across the way wants to listen to what all these Canadians have to say. They say there are going to be millions, possibly even billions, of dollars invested in Canada and thousands and thousands of jobs will be created with this new bill. There is a certain *deja vu* as we say in French, because in 1987 I heard the same refrain from the Conservatives opposite.

In 1987 they said that Bill C-22 was necessary and would create thousands and thousands of jobs. That is what the Conservatives opposite said. I have in front of me an article in *The Gazette of Montreal* last September which says there are few benefits from 1987 drug patent changes. This speaks of a study by the federal government, by Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I think that is the same guy who introduced this bill on June 23, the same Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the same department at least, that was telling us then that Bill C-22 would create all these new jobs. Now, years later, the minister wants to introduce another bill which is supposed to create all these new jobs. If he keeps repeating this over and over again I suppose some day, somewhere, some jobs might be created.

Here is what the study said. The government predicted first of all in 1987 that 3,000 jobs would be created by 1996. These are 3,000 jobs which might be called high-tech jobs, scientific jobs, stuff like that.

Lo and behold, according to the study by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, only 1,386 jobs had been created between 1987 and 1990, and half of them were in marketing and sales.

As my colleague from Dartmouth said a little while ago, a number of them were also in areas that were not related to marketing and sales. Some of them had to do with—shall we say, not all of course; I do not want to diminish this—being a janitor.

The government can talk until it is blue in the face, which of course is kind of natural for it, about jobs created in this industry, but so far it has not lived up to its promise, let alone those of someone else. In 1987 the government made a promise and it did not deliver. Today Conservatives stand in the House making another promise.

Should we be surprised that Canadians are a little sceptical. Would you not be, Mr. Speaker? I know you are a non-partisan person sitting in the House of Commons and you are able to look at this in a truly objective and completely detached fashion which I am sure you always do in your capacity as a Speaker.

But say, Mr. Speaker, that you were a Tory and that this was the situation. How could you possibly believe in that hypothetical situation what some of these ministers are saying. Obviously you would have great difficulty, as I do and as all my constituents do, in believing what those Conservatives say.

Mr. Speaker, if you think my colleagues and I are alone here in believing this, if you by any chance think that we might be slightly partisan in our approach here today, well far from it. I know that would be the last thing on your mind in any case.

Let me read what *The New York Times* of November 16 says in an article under the general heading "Business Day". This particular story is entitled "Canadians See Rise in Drug Costs". This article was written by Milt Freudenheim. I want to read a few little extracts from it which should make some of these Tories across the way cringe just a little bit.

> Canada's success at delivering drugs at costs lower than those in the United States is an important feature of its medical system, which has been a model for many health policy experts seeking to contain soaring costs in the United States. Medical costs are about 28 per cent lower per capita in Canada than in the United States, although spending on health care has been rising there, too.

• (1710)

We have lower health care costs in Canada on a per capita basis than they do in the United States, largely because of our prescription drug program, which this government wants to do away with. What are we to conclude from that, other than that the government wants to increase the cost of health care in Canada? It is going to do that, of course, at the expense of the taxpaying public, and at the expense of the provincial governments.

I want to read from a little further on in the same text. It mentions the burden of changing our patent legislation, and it says:

> Extending the patent life of drugs is likely to cost consumers immediately and also add to the burden on the government health plans which are already under economic pressure. Compared with hospital and doctors' bills, prescription drugs are a relatively small, though rapidly growing expense.

Even in the United States people are lauding Canada's generic drug system. However here in Canada the government wants to do away with it.

[*Translation*]

I do not say that there is no room for both industries in Canada, because there surely is. Besides, the conventional pharmaceutical industry has nearly 90 per cent of the Canadian market and certainly has its place. I am not one of those who want to make life harder for them than it is. I think that we must have an approach that is sensitive to the needs of Canadians who often use generic products which save them money.

As I just said, the United States or at least some American journalists praise our present system which the government opposite is ready to dismantle. About 15 or 20 minutes ago it introduced in this House a closure motion to cut short the debate which should take place.

If we review this whole issue, we see that compulsory licences are not new in Canada. They have been around since 1923 but perhaps they were not used so much then. In 1960 a royal commission of inquiry recommended that patents and compulsory licences be granted for pharmaceutical products.

In 1960 a Conservative government was in power. Three years later, the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission recommended abolishing pharmaceutical patents. After that, in 1969, we had amendments to the Patent Act authorizing compulsory licences in Canada. From then on we had the tools to give us pharmaceuticals at prices that if not reasonable were at least more reasonable than they might otherwise have been.

Just now a New Democratic member addressed the issue of what the government intended to do in 1983 when it mandated the commission to review the whole matter. I think it was time to review it in 1983. Then the Eastman commission reported to the government and recommended some changes that could benefit drug manufacturers in Canada.

The Conservative government opposite did not even listen to the Eastman commission. It gave away more.

Bill C–22 went much further than the Eastman report. Subsequently, as I said before, we had BillC–22 and the promises of the government opposite, promises which were never kept.

On June 23, 1992 the government once again was ready to give the pharmaceutical companies an advantage and put an end to the present system which allows the manufacture of generic pharmaceutical products. In any case the government's bill will certainly weaken the potential of the generic drugs industry and raise the prices of pharmaceutical products for the Canadian consumer.

Earlier I heard the hon. member for Winnipeg South say that we should not scare Canadians and tell them that the price of pharmaceutical products will increase. Mr. Speaker, as you know I am not afraid of telling Canadian consumers the truth. I am not afraid to tell them they are being had by the government opposite. I hope Canadians will keep sending the kind of cards I have here in my hand, signed by hundreds of people who are going to tell this story to all members in this House and to the Prime Minister. I hope they will call him up today or tomorrow and ask to speak to him personally and say: "We want to maintain an affordable drugs system, and we don't want Bill C–91". That is the position we and the Liberal Party have taken. I am not saying Bill C–22 should go on existing in its present form. Some day we will probably have to amend the bill but let us study it and determine what is best for consumers. Then and only then can we consider moving away from what we have now.

Meanwhile Bill C–91 goes much too far. In any case it goes further than what we as members of the Liberal Party are prepared to support. More important, I think it will make pharmaceutical products far too expensive for most Canadians.

Interestingly the government is about to make life easier for the big pharmaceutical companies at a time when the U.S. government, the new government that will be installed quite soon, is about to tighten the reins. What does this mean? We will probably see a Canadian government giving more latitude to the big pharmaceutical companies, while in the United States they will be concentrating on better protection for consumers. In that case the government would not only be going against the wishes of Canadians and members of the opposition but also against the wishes of those they claim are their friends, the government and authorities of United States of America.

I say to the Tory members opposite that they still have time to change their minds.

[*English*]

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said the government had promised back in 1987 when it passed Bill C–22 that we would have 3,000 new jobs by 1996. He pointed out that just a couple of years later we had about half that. It is only 1992. Since Bill C–22 was passed in 1987, 2,400 jobs have been created, well ahead of the predicted number of jobs that were supposed to be created when Bill C–22 was passed and in spite of the predictions of dire consequences that were made by the Liberal Party of the day.

• (1720)

We see from the lessons learned from Bill C–22 that Bill C–91 will indeed produce new jobs, new investments and new growth in our economy, which is what everybody wants. We all want jobs.

I have a question for the hon. member. I want to know if he believes in patent protection, if he believes that when people get a patent they should have that patent right protected. Is that not a valid and reasonable right? If he does believe in patent protection then I want to know how he can defend the Liberal government's invention of something called compulsory licensing, which was in fact a mechanism designed to break its own patent law. Either you believe in patent protection or you do not believe in patent protection. It seems to me that the Liberals were confused. I cannot think of anything else. If they believed in patent protection I do

not understand why they would have created something called compulsory licensing.

When I first came to this particular portfolio and was being briefed one of the things that the deputy minister talked to me about was compulsory licensing. I asked: "What is that?" She explained it to me and I still could not understand it. I could not understand how a government that says it gives so much time for protection under a patent would then also be saying that it would give other people special licences to infringe on that protection.

Perhaps the hon. member who may have been here, or at least may have some sense of the history of this compulsory licensing, would like to defend that particular practice and tell me if he thinks that it is correct or if he does not believe in patent protection. Perhaps he should clear that up for us.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that patent protection exists now. No right is absolute in any society.

I could engage in a long discourse with the member and explain to her, as she knows perfectly well, that the right of free speech, for instance, does not give anyone the right to scream fire in the middle of a crowded theatre. Similarly the right of patent protection is not eternal and is not all encompassing. Everything we do, every right we have and every privilege we have, is relative.

The point is that there are opposing views, there are opposing needs and conflicting needs in any society. What we do must be done in such a way as to ensure the best for society as a whole. Of course there must be patent protection. It exists now.

No right or privilege is absolute. The only question is how long it should be. Should it be absolute? Does it mean that the society that has contributed toward the whole process has no right of its own? Does it mean that the society that has trained all the people and that has paid for the education of all of them has no right of its own? Does it mean that nothing can be done in that regard?

It does not mean any such thing. That is why we have laws in this country that balance these things out.

In my opinion a system that permits the large drug manufacturers to have roughly 90 per cent of the business has not exactly driven those manufacturers into the ground. There must have been some justice in that.

If the member opposite thinks that is totally unjust then is she repudiating her own leader and her own colleagues who enacted Bill C–22 only five years ago. If Bill C–22 is so wrong, as she has just herself suggested, then how could she have possibly been a candidate for a party that lacks any kind of judgement, as she has just described?

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, this is one of those watershed bills that we get periodically in the House of Commons which fundamentally demonstrates the difference between the insane right wing agenda of the Conservative Party and the voice of reason of the Liberal Party.

Clearly the introduction of compulsory licensing in 1968 was done by the right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra who was a former Prime Minister and former leader of my party. From 1968 until today it has served us well.

The question that I want to ask my colleague is quite important. I do not understand why, with perhaps 3.5 million people either unemployed and on unemployment insurance or collecting social assistance and with over 1.5 million kids unemployed, this government on the first day back in this place does not come in to talk about a massive job creation project. It does not talk about trying to create jobs in this country for the poorest of the poor and it does not present economic policies or a budget so that the people out there who have lost hope because of this Tory agenda can have some light at the end of the tunnel.

It comes in with a piece of legislation this afternoon that has been debated for only three hours. It is a bill that is a billion dollar bonus bill for the big multinational drug companies. It is not going to do squat for Canadian consumers. It is going to take probably in excess of $1 billion from their pockets.

The question I have for my colleague concerns this. It is pretty interesting. I am reading from *The New York Times*, Monday, November 16:

> Gerald J. Mossinghoff, president of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association in Washington, said his members would like to eliminate Canada's government price controls.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he is comfortable as a member of this House knowing that we have a government opposite, with millions unemployed, that is not responding to the agenda of Canadians but is

responding to the agenda of Mr. Mossinghoff and the largest lobby group in the United States, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association in Washington.

It has done its job well. It has shut debate down for its American friends down south in Washington.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is quite right. I want to congratulate him for this interesting observation.

What he has indicated is quite correct. The agenda of the drug manufacturers is certainly quite well known. In fact this government is following in lock-step with what they are asking. What is strange now is that while this government is listening only to the drug manufacturers rather than everyone else who also has a word to say—I do not mean that the drug manufacturers do not have a word to say—it is going to find out in just a few weeks from now that the reaction from the government in the United States is going to be more toward the protection of consumers.

To pose another interesting proposition, why is it that the government instead of bringing forward measures today to bring people back to work is going with this right wing agenda? I do not know. It is hard for me to understand Tory behaviour at the best of times. Here is what the government's agenda is going to do.

The minister of health for the province of Ontario, Francis Lankin, said that this will create another $1 billion in health care costs in Ontario over 10 years.

The Saskatchewan health minister, Louise Simard, said:

> Bill C-91 is a severe blow to health care in Saskatchewan. It will cost our consumers and the health department a substantial amount of money.

The member from western Canada who has just posed that question must surely be familiar with those comments made by provincial cabinet ministers, particularly the one made by the minister from the neighbouring province to hers, Saskatchewan.

Those concerns have been aired right across the country by provincial governments and I am quite surprised that the Conservatives have not listened to them.

I want to pay special tribute to my colleague, the member for Dartmouth, who has listened to the concerns of the provincial health minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The time for questions and comments is now over.

• (1730)

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Winnipeg South): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important bill today. I support Bill C-91 because it is good for Canada and it is good for Canadians despite all the rhetoric on the other side. Innovation and competitiveness are very much on the minds of everybody these days, as is the protection of the consumer. I believe that Bill C-91 serves all of these interests.

If we want to continue to be an affluent country, a nation of opportunity, we have to rely on more than just the natural resources that are out there. We must be strong in knowledge based industries and advanced technologies and that includes technologies of modern healing of which pharmaceuticals play a part.

The government has been committed to that objective since its first mandate and that was the central purpose of Bill C-22, the historic amendment to the Patent Act that was passed by this House in 1987. The government was convinced then, as it is convinced today, that pharmaceutical R and D is a sector of critical importance. It is an area in which Canada must be strong.

We said in 1987 that weakness in this field was inconsistent with the profile of a modern industrialized society. We said that the key to a stronger Canadian pharmaceutical sector was better protection for the rights of innovators, protection comparable to that of our other trading partners. As earlier speakers have reminded us, members of the opposition party took a much more dismal view at that time.

They predicted then, as they have again today, that greater protection for innovators would devastate the generic industry. They said that prices would go through the roof. They did not see any connection between weak protection for patent rights and the lag in Canadian R and D in this particular sector.

It is five years later and it is instructive to examine just what has happened to the pharmaceutical industry in Canada. In 1987 the ratio of research and development to sales in the innovative drug industry was about 5 per cent. When we introduced Bill C-22 the brand name sector of that industry was committed to doubling that. It thought it could happen by 1996.

That 10 per cent ratio was reached last year. It doubled from what it was in 1987. There have been spin-off benefits as a result. Let me mention one that gives me particular pleasure.

In 1987 a young Canadian science graduate who wanted to make a career in the pharmaceuticals field would likely have had to look in the United States or in Europe for an opportunity. Now, in 1992 there are opportunities to have careers in that field, in Canada.

Since 1987 the industry has created 2,400 new jobs for Canadian scientists and researchers, and many of those have been in the west as we heard from my colleague a little bit earlier. This is the kind of result that makes us realize what a difference the environment of public policy and law can make. It is the kind of result that makes us glad to be legislators because this is what it is all about.

What about prices? Did they go through the roof as was predicted by my hon. friends across the way? Let us check the record. Since 1987 the price of existing patented drugs in Canada has risen by an average of 2.9 per cent. That increase was actually lower than the average rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index in that period which was about 4.4 per cent.

I will now discuss the two main features of the bill. First, it does away with patent encroachment and returns to the innovator the exclusive right to market his patented product from an average of 7 years to about 10 years. Let us look again at that change in both the domestic and global contexts.

Canada currently provides less effective patent protection for pharmaceutical products than do any of its major trading partners. Internationally the implications are significant. When a country gives less patent protection than its trading partners it sends a certain message. It says we do not put a high premium on innovation. That is the last kind of signal that a competitive country wants to send. What message have we been sending up to now? Our patent period lags behind that of the United States, behind all the European countries, behind Japan, and behind Mexico. It is half that of Italy.

By passing this bill Parliament sends a positive signal. It says that Canada respects the right of the innovator to full patent protection. It says that if you want to pioneer and invest and grow, come here and do it in Canada.

This legislation ends the practice known as compulsory licensing. There have always been two sectors to the pharmaceutical industry. The innovative sector does the research and development, exploration that develops new products, new cures, new technologies and new treatments. It is the sector which takes the economic risk in these development exercises. And there are the manufacturers of the so-called generic drugs. These are the people who copy the drugs that have been developed by the brand name sector which takes the risks.

Both sectors serve the public interest. The innovative industry advances the technology of healing. The generic industry gives us something just as important, and that is protection for the consumer, healthy competition once the patent period has expired.

The task of the legislator is to strike a healthy balance. Compulsory licensing is not compatible with that balance. Up to now in this country a generic company can, well before the patent period has expired, obtain a compulsory licence to manufacture the drug that the innovative drug company has developed at great cost and great blood, sweat and tears.

This can take place as soon as seven years after the patented drug comes on the market, an average of 17 years after the original patent—which would normally be 20 years—has been applied for. Henceforth generic companies must wait an average of three more years until the patent has expired.

Those who say that they are afraid the generic industry needs compulsory licensing to survive need only look at the experience in other countries where there is a strong generic industry without a system of compulsory licensing. That said, we realize that the removal of compulsory licensing changes the equation. This bill makes the necessary corrections to maintain the balance needed to protect the consumer.

Once again the instrument here is the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. Bill C–91 gives that board significant new powers to better deal with any kind of excessive pricing that might be contemplated. Both introductory and existing drug prices will come under its control. The board's guidelines have the same force and effect as a federal court. The board will have the power to order price restrictions or penalties. Failure to comply will subject offenders to stiff penalties including fines and even imprisonment.

We see by the record of the past five years what improved patent protection can do in this field. We have a pretty good idea of the benefits that an extension of this protection will create. Over half a billion dollars in new investment has been announced since January when the government announced that it would end compulsory licensing. Companies in this field have already announced that their Canadian operations will be the base for international product mandates. We expect to see the total research and development investment by the innovative industry reach $2 billion over the next five years.

Five years ago, with the passage of Bill C–22, we set out on a new course confident that it was the right one but content to be judged by the record. We see now that it was the right course. It is time to continue.

This bill is good for Canada. This bill is good for competition, good for the consumer, good for our economic well–being. I urge all honourable members to give this bill speedy passage.

I would like to also add that in the period since Bill C–22 was passed the total research and development expenditures by the innovative industry are estimated at $1.1 billion for the four years from 1987 to 1991. That is $1.1 billion in research and investment and jobs that we would not have had if Bill C–22 had not been passed. I also would like to note that the funding for basic research increased from $30.3 million to $94.2 billion between 1988 and 1991.

• (1740)

Those are just two of the statistics out of many I could give to show that this kind of opening up of competition to the innovative drug sector is very good for Canada. It is good for our science and technology sector. It is good for jobs. It is good for the economy. Ultimately, it will be good for consumers as more and more new drugs are brought on to the marketplace. Hopefully drugs that were developed and researched right here in Canada will be among the leaders in the field tomorrow.

Again I want to reiterate my urging of all hon. members to give this bill speedy passage so that all of the research and development dollars and other investments that are waiting to flow to this country can start flowing.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for my colleague who just delivered her thesis for why this bill should pass quickly. First I would like to voice my displeasure at the fact that the government has brought in another closure limiting debate on an issue that is important to all Canadians, Bill C–91.

My question is simply this: We have been accused in this House of complicating matters more so than they should be. I think that message came through loud and clear in the recent referendum vote in Canada.

Let us get back to the fundamentals that are being discussed in this House today which are, as I understand it, the purpose of the legislation. Really the purpose of the production of drugs and the research in drugs is that drugs are used to cure illness. Drugs are used to control disease and drugs are used to alleviate or lessen pain. Those are three functions of drugs.

Drugs are an intricate process in the health care of the people of our country. I think all sides of the House are dedicated to a comprehensive plan of medical care for all Canadians. We have to come down to the basic issues of the purpose of drugs and how they interact with the curing of illnesses of citizens through our comprehensive medical plan.

Then we have to ask ourselves three fundamental questions. One is whether Bill C–91 is going to increase the cost and availability of drugs through the provincial plans that already distribute drugs in this country. The empirical data is unquestionable that it will increase the cost of drugs through our health care system. Will Bill C–91 increase the cost to young families who are not covered under a comprehensive drug plan in this country? The empirical data indicates unquestionably that it will increase the cost of drugs to young families in this country. Will Bill C–91 contribute to the cost of drugs to senior citizens in this country? The empirical data we have available indicates that it will increase the cost of drugs to senior citizens in this country.

If you get an answer of yes to those three fundamental questions this is bad legislation at this particular time for Canada where we cannot afford to add one more cent to the cost of living of all Canadians. Why would this government propose this legislation at this time?

Mrs. Dobbie: Mr. Speaker, I can understand it if the hon. member has concerns about increased costs. We all do. This is a time in our lives when money is tight and we are all concerned about the future. The government is no less concerned about this.

One of the initiatives we have undertaken is to give new powers, broader powers, to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. Let me just give an outline of some of the things it will be able to do to ensure that prices are kept very reasonable according to all the criteria we can find to make sure that prices do not rise inordinately.

The legislation gives the board the power to better influence introductory prices when drugs are patented. It can authorize the board to order price reduction or penalties which could compensate for past excessive prices and deter excessive pricing increases. That means it can roll back the prices if necessary if it sees a particular innovator taking advantage of the new opportunities that will be out there because he has the full protection of his original patent. It can also provide for fines and imprisonment for failure to comply with the board's order and that is extraordinary. We do not just lightly set prices that are going to be against the regulations that are set down by the new board and under its new regulations because to do so could land you in prison.

These are all measures the government believes will help to keep prices down as much as possible. Of course that gives the board orders the same force and effect as orders of the Federal Court.

I respect my hon. friend across the way. I know he would not make comments he had not thought through carefully. He is quite right that there will be some increase in prices and that is something we have looked at and contemplated. I will share with him the information that we have been able to research after a great deal of careful consideration.

What is being projected right now is that the increase in cost of purchases by pharmacies and hospitals—I think they are the groups we are concerned about right now—of all prescription and behind the counter drugs due to the removal of compulsory licensing is predicted to be 0 per cent in the first year, gradually increasing to less than 2 per cent annually by the year 2000. It is a very small increase.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, in the previous speaker's comments about the business of extended patent protection for the pharmaceutical companies, one of the things she said was that the opposition was frightening Canadians, that she was extremely upset about that and that our task here was to frighten Canadians.

It is important for the member to know, especially after the referendum debates and all the meetings each one of us attended, that Canadians are mad as hell. They know exactly what is going on and all they want is a chance to get at that government for betraying them. Closure is no problem today because this is the way that government operates. Canadians also clearly know they are going to have to wait one year to get these guys and then they are going to get them.

British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have all taken action because of rising drug costs. They claim those rising drug costs are due to this government's patent protection and the virtual monopoly in those drug areas that this government has given. They will give an even more extended monopoly when it goes to 20 years through patent protection. We are going to get situations like deinsuring more and more drugs so that people have to pay out of their own pockets and user fees so people pay out of their pockets. We are going to find that large deductibles on pharmacare programs will nail people over 65 and young families. But they know that and they are ready for it. They know they have only one more year of it. Believe me, they are upset and concerned. They want a clear chance to deal with this government through an election.

Mrs. Dobbie: Mr. Speaker, first the Liberals did it and now the NDP is doing it. They are trying to use facts and figures that really are not factual to scare people on fixed incomes and seniors and people who are concerned about anything that has to do with health care and any increased costs.

The fact is that the retail sector which deals with patented drugs, the patented drugs being the part under the control of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, represents only 20 per cent of all of the prescription drugs sold in this country. Therefore, even if the drug prices went up considerably, it could not do the things that my hon. friend is suggesting.

However, I will repeat because I want to reassure all of the people out there who are listening that in fact they will not be saddled with huge and inordinate drug increases because of this new bill. The predictions are that there will be no increase in the coming year and that there will be a small increase up to about 2 per cent by the year 2000. That is all.

• (1750)

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to enter into this debate on Bill C-91. It proposes to extend patent rights for 20 years on pharmaceutical products developed by national or foreign multinational corporations in Canada.

It is interesting why we are being saddled with this legislation. Canada has about 2 per cent of the world's drug market. It is not a major place in which to sell items. However it certainly can be an example for other countries, especially if the Americans want to ensure there is no extensive development of national generic drug companies.

If foreign multinationals, especially American multinationals, are to have a patent protection arrangement that will last for a long period of time, George Bush has certainly had an easy task to bring this Conservative government under control, get it to pass an extension to the Patent Act and eliminate generic opportunities. Now we see an even further example of that extension.

When the previous speaker says that this is not a matter of health care concern, it surprises me. We have eight governments in Canada saying it is a major health care concern and one that frightens them, one that makes them concerned that their pharmacare programs are going to become financially unsound if they continue in their present direction because of a substantial increase in those drugs. Specific kinds of actions are going to be taken.

It is not just the concern about rising pharmaceutical costs because of irresponsible legislation by the Conservative government. It is the fact that the unilateral movement away from partnership in health care generally is a serious problem.

The activities of the Conservative government over the last few years have resulted in British Columbia losing about $1.6 billion of federal funding to health care. That started out as a partnership agreement. Then by unilateral change the federal government simply said: "We do not like the situation. We are going to change that situation". British Columbia is out $1.6 billion.

I do not have the figures offhand for Manitoba but certainly the previous speaker, the province in which she will be laying her record before the electorate, will be more than somewhat concerned by the major loss of funds that were originally in a partnership arrangement with the federal and provincial governments that has damaged the health care system, and indeed the entire economy of most provinces.

We are talking about a combined effect. On one hand we see a $1.6 billion loss to the health care system by removal of federal funds and on the other hand a response to federal legislation by removal of generic drugs and placing patent protection over brand name pharmaceuticals produced by multinational corporations.

This is not about job creation. In the final analysis we may wind up in Canada with some jobs. They may be simply jobs that were required at any rate for testing new drugs introduced. They may simply be pure science arrangements to develop new drugs that would have been spent anyway at universities of good quality with good quality results.

Certainly they are not going to offset the cost to Canadians of high priced pharmaceuticals. The minimal amount of research in this country, the minimal amount of employment, is not going to be offset by the work done by generic drug companyies. That research, that job creation, is coupled with a major saving to our pharmacare operations, to prescriptions to individuals and to prescription medication put out by hospitals which was something in the order of $100 million last year in

British Columbia, in excess of $100 million. It has an enormous impact for Canadians.

I guess what will happen in the situation is that people will be very concerned. In the short term the Conservative government has one more year to go to November 22, 1993. In that period of time people will be very concerned about what further damage can be done. There is clearly an indication with the present deficit that the Conservative government will take even further action.

In a speech in Alberta the Minister of Finance indicated that the way they were going to deal with the current deficit of the federal government and its failure to reach any of the targets it has set for Canada was by more attacks on the health care programs of Canada and more attacks on the social programs of Canada. In that speech the Minister of Finance indicated that he was laying proposals before cabinet that would lead to an even further erosion of the health care system. We are looking at, probably by the year 2000, a multi-billion dollar impact on each one of the provinces in terms of lost resources for the health care system.

There is no guarantee of what will happen during the period. The Liberal Party of Canada in 1969 certainly put the licensing procedure in place that allowed generic drugs to come on the market, but by 1983 it was certainly talking about changing that process. It is very worrisome for Canadians that the Liberals will not deliver on what they are talking about in the House today and during the debate of this bill. In fact some members are very careful to couch their presentation which allows them an opportunity, if they come to power, to maintain support for the foreign multinational drug companies to maintain those patents.

It has to be a clear, unequivocal statement in the House because waffling will not work. Too many people remember what happened with the Liberal Party in the election debate when it said: "Of course we will not have wage and price controls". A short period of time into its term after winning that election we had wage and price controls.

There is no clear statement on the trade agreement from the Liberal Party. It appears quite clearly that it supports it, but there is certainly the waffle factor. On the issue of reversing the legislation that the Conservative government has placed in the House to allow a free run of generic drugs in Canada, it is absolutely critical that the Liberal Party stands up, stops waffling and lays unequivocally before the House and the people of Canada its position on abolishing this legislation and permitting generic drugs.

There is a lot of discussion about a former Liberal cabinet minister running the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association public relations campaign to sell this pile of nonsense to the people of Canada. Judy Erola, cabinet minister and member of Parliament who sat in this House, is now the shill for those drug companies.

Some hon. members: Consumer Affairs too.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Exactly, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, an incredible conflict of interest.

The right hon. member for Vancouver Quadra sitting on the Canadian board of directors of a Swiss drug company is certainly a very questionable position when we are trying to establish a consensus in the opposition in this House and the legislation of the Conservative government to promote brand name pharmaceuticals to Canadians at a high price and to exclude generic drugs is in question.

There needs to be some assistance to provinces, to hospitals across Canada, to begin to buy pharmaceuticals in ways that permit them to make major savings and to avoid the high price regimes of patented pharmaceuticals and brand name pharmaceuticals. The same should apply to prescriptions by physicians. There needs to be an opportunity for physicians to gain information about lower priced alternatives to the brand name pharmaceuticals. This has to occur and has to occur quickly.

• (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Debate

ATLANTIC FISHERMEN

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, at the outset before I launch into my adjournment debate, I want to say that I for one am very pleased to be back in this House to take control of the situation in the country and to bring some order to the very poor economic state that exists.

I was somewhat disappointed in the two bills that were debated here today. One, if passed, would result in university students being denied the right to the interest on their loans being forgiven for the first six months of their work.

The other one involves the Patent Act, the one we were just discussing. It will increase the cost of prescription drugs somewhere beyond 11 per cent a year. I am not sure that is what Canadians had in mind when they knew the House was coming back.

The point I want to make concerns a question I asked in September of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It pertained to the discrepancies in the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program, known in Newfoundland now as NCARP. I see the hon. parliamentary secretary is here so I will refer to it as NCARP.

In my question to the minister of fisheries I used the example that three months after the announcement of the program the six lines in my office received numerous calls. In a period of six days Newfoundland Telephone recorded over 10,000 calls.

The point I was making, in using that statistic, was that a lot of people were not sure where they stood, for example truckers, fish handlers, small plant operators and even people involved in small industries that used welding systems and small engineering for their fishing boats which now of course are not operating. They were all concerned about where they stood.

As a follow-up today I want to use an example of 22 crab plant workers in the town of Bonavista. I should explain that the crab plant and the fish processing plant are one and the same. They are essentially situated in the same plant in Bonavista owned by Fishery Products International. These people lost their jobs earlier in the summer and they have been trying to get compensation. They have been trying through other means and I became involved within the last three weeks.

I am using them as an example. They applied through NCARP for compensation and were told they could not get compensation because they worked in a crab plant. The point here is that they were displaced by the fish processing plant workers who had the seniority to take their jobs, which normally would not have happened.

The point I made in a letter to the minister of fisheries and the point I am making this evening is that they did not have enough weeks to qualify. They did not have enough work because their crab plant processing operation was taken over by the fish plant operators who in turn were displaced because there was no northern cod.

This is a good case for those ladies who are sitting in the town hall this evening in Bonavista and will continue to sit until some dispensation is given to them. They feel they have been displaced by the northern cod moratorium. They believe that they, among the other examples I quoted this evening, should qualify for NCARP, and if they do not emergency jobs should be created for them.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member opposite I know he has brought this matter before the House on many occasions. He referred to his question of September 6.

I might add that the NCARP is an exceptional response to a very difficult problem and many people are being helped under this program. I can say from the government side of the House that we are doing our best to ensure that others in need of help but not qualified under the program will be helped by other government programs and that is being actively pursued right now.

As of the last benefit period ending on November 7, there were approximately 24,400 individuals eligible under NCARP. This included 9,900 fishermen, 13,600 plant workers and 900 trawlermen. A total of 142 plants have been designated under the program and to date the benefits paid have reached $84.9 million.

Under the terms and conditions of the program approved by Treasury Board, individuals other than fishermen and plant workers affected by the northern cod moratorium are ineligible for assistance under NCARP. However provisions have been made within

existing terms and conditions to include individuals called fish handlers and assemblers. These individuals are employed by firms contracted by designated fish plants to unload, weigh, grade, ice and load fish at the docks. This type of work is normally associated with a fish processing operation and therefore these individuals have been deemed to be plant workers under the existing terms and conditions.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has established two independent review committees, one each for fishermen and plant workers, to enable individuals regarded as ineligible by DFO to appeal their eligibility under NCARP. These committees consider individuals who have an acceptable historical attachment to the northern cod fishery but do not meet the program's criteria for automatic eligibility due to exceptional circumstances. A total of 468 appeals has been heard by the two committees up to November 10, and more than 300 additional appeals has been requested.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, as you may recall, the issue that was discussed following an intervention last May has to do with the question of climate change and global warming.

As you know, scientists are telling us that in every part of the world, the north and the south, the rich and the poor nations, something is likely to happen by way of climate change and by way of global warming caused by carbon dioxide which is the product of energy consumption in human society.

This is an issue that has been raised by scientists on a number of occasions in recent years. There are signs of warning because climate change as a result of global warming will lead to an elevation in sea levels in many parts of the world, and therefore to dislocation of millions of people who will have to move from areas which will be submerged as a result of sea level rise.

The Government of Canada has made the right speeches and made the right declaration over time. May I recall to you that in The Hague in 1989 the Prime Minister of Canada said that Canada would play a leading role in the question of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in an attempt to modify this trend in climate change.

Since then countries like Germany, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia and The Netherlands have committed themselves to reduce by 20 per cent their carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005. Canada has decided not to follow this example. It simply announced some time ago that it would stabilize its carbon dioxide emissions, using 1990 as the base year, by the year 2000.

Until now we have not heard any statement from the government any indicating Canada's plan with respect to how it intends to achieve this stabilization by the year 2000. We do not know which sector has been approached and which sector has agreed on stabilization of carbon dioxide emissions, be it transportation, agriculture or energy. There is total silence from the government benches.

• (1810)

We do not know whether the government has approached the provincial governments or whether Ottawa has arrived at agreements with the provincial governments so that nationally we can develop a program for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

In other words, four years after The Hague declaration by the Prime Minister of Canada in which a promise was made to the nation and to the world that we would be the leaders in the field of carbon dioxide emission reduction, there is silence from the government. There is no indication of a precise timetable and approaches as to how this target will be reached by the year 2000.

Not only that, we have also not adopted the more intelligent, I submit, approach, namely that of pursuing energy efficiency as adopted by other nations.

I am really anxious to hear the parliamentary secretary as to where we are at this stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that one of the great achievements of the earth summit held in Rio last June was the commitment made by the international community to take action against global warming through an international framework convention on climate change. The

Prime Minister signed this document on behalf of Canada, together with representatives of more than 150 countries throughout the world.

The cornerstone of this convention was restrictions on emissions of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases. Under the framework convention, a general agreement was reached at the negotiating table—the only way to solve the problem of global warming—by adopting resolutions and reaching compromises at the international level. Developed countries, including Canada and the United States, made a political commitment to limit emissions of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases agreed to bring emissions back to their 1990 levels by the year 2000.

I may also remind the hon. member that even before the framework convention became a reality, Canada was already committed to limiting its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. This measure puts us in the forefront of the fight against climate change. Our objective is not regional or sectorial but truly national in scope.

The federal, provincial and territorial governments are working together to implement this objective as part of the national strategy on global warming.

The federal government believes that more substantial reductions will be necessary, but these will be undertaken only when the international community has agreed on reduction objectives and calendars, to be worked out as part of the negotiations on the UN Convention on Climate Change.

The framework convention will provide a mechanism for countries to take a co-ordinated and co-operative approach towards achieving the ultimate objective of preventing any harmful interference with the world's climate. It remains to be seen, whether the next step will be a 20 per cent reduction in emissions or something else. Canada insisted—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the rules of this debate are very strict. I will now recognize the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast.

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek guidance from the Minister of Finance, or whoever is representing him, on his economic policies.

On April 8 I asked him to retreat on his government's commitment to cap the amount of transfer payments it pays to the three so-called have provinces. One of those provinces is not only his home province but my own as well, Alberta.

Capping the cash transfers reduces severely the ability of the government of Alberta to pay for programs to retrain men and women to assist those who are unable to work. The cap now reduces the ability of the government of Alberta by about $200 million in Alberta alone.

This corresponds with one of the greatest violations of the social contract our country has seen. At a time when the money is most needed, when Alberta residents are most anxious to retrain themselves, this unloved government has pulled the rug out from beneath many of them. On April 1 in a question I pointed out that 46,000 people were then unemployed in Edmonton. Furthermore, the number of Edmonton residents on assistance or living below the poverty line had increased by 28 per cent since the same month in 1991.

On May 1 I informed the House in Question Period that the minister's policies were wreaking havoc in his own constituency of Vegreville. Stores were closing and farm auctions were proceeding at far too great a rate. The minister replied that he did not have to be lectured on problems facing his constituents. I would suggest that he does need to be told about the problems of his constituents because it has been six months since those facts have been presented to the government and nothing has been done to try to repair the economy.

Fully 46,000 Edmontonians were out of work in April; today there are more than 50,000 unemployed persons according to Statistics Canada. What the government persists in doing is invoking myths and spreading myths about the economy. The myths are fooling nobody or very few people out there, certainly not the 1.6 million Canadians looking for work, most certainly not the 4,500

citizens and businesses forced into bankruptcy in the month of October alone.

Government myth number one is that the economy is growing. Virtually all current figures on employment, output in corporate earnings, confirm that the 1990 recession is continuing. The economy is not expanding enough to bring unemployment down virtually anywhere in the country. Moreover, small business, in which so many new jobs were created prior to 1990, is finding it more and more difficult to access capital and credit.

The second government myth is that we are in a world-wide recession. It is preposterous to argue, as the Minister of Finance and others do, that our difficulties are being shared world-wide, that Canada is suffering no worse than other nations. The U.S. recession, for example, on a peak to trough basis is only about half as bad as our own. Germany, France, and Japan have all managed to keep economic growth above 4 per cent annually over the past two years. Canada has barely managed to sustain a 1.5 per cent growth rate.

The third government myth is that "the government has got the economic fundamentals right," a direct quote from the finance minister.

A study by WEFA Canada Limited concluded that the federal cabinet and the officials simply do not understand how to deal effectively with booms and busts. Following the 1987 stock market crash the study concluded the Bank of Canada increased the money supply wildly irresponsibly. Only 12 months later did the Bank of Canada governor belatedly clamp down on the money supply growth, sending the exchange rate of our dollar skyward. Our export strength was seriously harmed in consequence, leading to the first trade deficit in a decade.

High real interest rates over the past several years have encouraged excessive foreign borrowing by both governments and the private sector in this country and have driven up the cost of servicing our debt. The government has also helped keep our dollar at a level which made many of our exports uncompetitive.

The WEFA study concluded in short that incompetent macroeconomic policy in Ottawa has been a major cause of bankruptcy and rising unemployment across the nation.

The fourth myth of the government is that the North American free trade agreement will spark new economic growth in Canada.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to just one of the myths that the hon. member opposite talked about in the House on May 1 when he was asking his question. He said:

> When will the minister get the point? What will he tell his constituents about what his fight inflation only, his high interest and his high dollar policies are doing to them?

If ever there was a situation where a person is misrepresenting the facts to the public of Canada, that member opposite was doing it that day in the House of Commons. This government does not have a high interest rate policy aimed at protecting the external value of the Canadian dollar, quite the opposite. Policy is geared to achieving stability and durably lower interest rates through controlling inflation. Nor is there a target for the Canadian dollar to be set at.

The exchange rate is determined by market forces. Over the past year, for example, the Canadian dollar has fallen approximately 10 cents U.S., yet short-term interest rates are lower now than they were a year ago.

While we do not have a target we cannot ignore the costs to Canadians of short-term volatility in the foreign exchange markets. Accordingly the policy is used to smooth fluctuations to ensure orderly conditions in the exchange market during periods of instability such as had occurred in recent weeks. Over the past few weeks there have been increases in interest rates but these are temporary.

• (1820)

Policy is clearly and publicly committed to achieving price stability along the path set out in the inflation reduction targets. Achieving and maintaining price stability is the only way to permanently lower interest rates. This is essential for strengthening the recovery and for sustained, strong economic growth through the medium term.

The proposals that we have made in reducing inflation means there is room for interest rates to fall when financial markets stabilize. This means that Canada will be able to take full advantage of the strengthening of the

world economic recovery and can look forward to a sustained period of strong, non-inflationary growth.

WESTRAY COAL MINE

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly return to a question I asked on May 20 regarding the May 9 disaster at the Westray mine, a disaster which killed 26 men.

Six of these men: Myles Daniel Gillis, Peter Francis Vickers, Roy Edward Feltmate, John P. Halloran, Benny J. Benoit and Angus Joseph MacNeil were from my riding. They and their families deserve answers. Indeed the families of these men have been pressing for months for an adequate investigation into the circumstances leading to this tragedy.

Last May I asked the government why it ignored reports about the risk of spontaneous combustion in the Westray mine and went ahead to guarantee an $85 million loan to that project. Since then the Westray loan has been called in by the Bank of Nova Scotia. Because of its guarantee, the federal government is now liable for anywhere between $75 million and $80 million.

The Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism replied to my question by saying that the federal government had ensured, through constant monitoring by independent mining consultants, that safety regulations were being followed, yet Bank of Nova Scotia officials have denied this.

The minister of state claimed as well that investments like this would continue to be made despite the tragedies. "These things happen", he said. How the Westray accident occurred will be the subject of the provincial inquiry he assured us. Yet both the federal and Nova Scotia governments have been stalling for months saying that everything would come out in the inquiry.

The province dragged its heels while Westray officials have done everything possible to put roadblocks in the path of this investigation. As we all learned last week, the inquiry is effectively dead. Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Constance Glube struck down the inquiry because its terms of reference stepped into the area of criminal jurisdiction, prejudicing, she found, the criminal proceedings being undertaken against Westray officials.

What now? How do these questions get answered? On June 9, the Liberal Party called for a federal parliamentary committee of inquiry to examine all aspects of the federal role in the Westray coal project.

That call was repeated on Friday of last week by my colleague, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond. As my colleague so rightly pointed out, nothing in Justice Glube's decision prevents the federal government from holding its own inquiry. Indeed that inquiry is now more important than ever.

A federal inquiry would examine why the economic and safety advice of civil servants was overruled. It would clarify the federal politics involved in getting the loan guarantee approved.

It would examine just what cabinet knew about the safety concerns prior to authorizing this $85 million guarantee. It would determine why, in the face of well-known considerations of safety concerning this project, this government would put $85 million of taxpayers' money at risk.

These are important questions. They are questions that any government, serious about safety in the work place and about the responsible use of public funds, ought to be deeply committed to having answered.

The time has come for this tired government to finally gather the courage to look within itself and permit a thorough examination of its role in the May 9 Westray tragedy. I hope the parliamentary secretary opposite is now rising to announce just that.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for his continued interest in this subject.

The hon. member knows that the federal government does not have jurisdiction in the area of occupational health and safety. This is the responsibility of the provincial government. However, the initial environment assessment, the Acres report, did point out the key health and safety concerns associated with coal mines and the methods that the company was putting in place to overcome these concerns. All concerns, including those associated with health and safety, were deemed to be correctable with known technology. Furthermore, the CANMET review spoke briefly of mine ventilation and spontaneous combustion risk and concluded that in spite of these technical uncertainties, the proposal had no

major technical failings. The government knew that Westray would have to comply with all appropriate coal mining regulations in Nova Scotia, including those dealing with mine ventilation and spontaneous combustion matters and that regular provincial mine inspections would be carried out.

According to the mine industry, the causes and mechanisms of coal dust explosions are well understood through past research and it is the responsibility of operators and regulators to apply that knowledge base in developing control strategies.

We put in place steps to ensure that the company was in full compliance with the provincial regulatory standards on health and safety. This was monitored on a monthly basis by independent mining consultants. All of these facts were taken into consideration before making the decision to fund the project.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to return again to a question I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare in April of this year. It concerned the measures being taken to address the very alarming findings and recommendations of the International Joint Commission on its Sixth Biennial Report on Great Lakes Water Quality. The report asks: "Are humans and our environment in danger from persistent toxic substances now? Are future generations in danger?" We believe the answer to both questions is yes.

The minister's answer at that time failed totally to respond to the concerns. He gave generalized comments about how the ministry was doing everything it could to protect the health and safety of Canadians, but nothing concrete in terms of responding to the overwhelming condemnation of the discharge of toxic substances into the largest freshwater body on the face of this earth.

We have a commitment, through international agreements, to achieve virtual elimination of the discharge of toxic substances into the Great Lakes. The IJC nonetheless concluded that persistent toxic substances are too dangerous to the biosphere and to humans to permit their release in any quantity.

Notwithstanding that and notwithstanding a report from the Minister of the Environment's own officials that the entire content of organo–chlorines going into our waterways is a toxic substance, the government has failed to act to eliminate the discharge of these substances into our waterways.

The IJC concludes zero discharge means just that, halting all inputs from all human sources and pathways to prevent any opportunity for persistent toxic substances to enter the environment. To prevent such releases completely, their manufacture, use, transport and disposal must stop. They simply must not be available.

I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare, given the damage both to parents and to children from these toxic substances, what action was being taken. The answer was totally unsatisfactory. Zero discharge means zero discharge. That is the only safe level according to these very important conclusions.

I hope that in the response this evening I will receive not a vacuous general statement of good intentions, but some reassurance that in the seven months since I asked that question some concrete actions have been taken to approach zero discharge of toxic substances which damage the health, not only of this generation, but of future generations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to what my colleague said. I would remind her that many programs have been put forward by our environment minister and our government to deal with water quality. We need only think of the very ambitious program to clean up the St. Lawrence. We need only think as well of the amendments to Canadian environmental legislation. We need only think of the new, very strict regulations on dioxins and furans from paper companies in particular. These measures are internationally recognized as courageous action taken by the Canadian government.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, and as the hon. member knows too, environmental awareness necessarily involves better management of toxic wastes. Various countries, as well as Canada, are asking for much more natural products. Of course not only the government but businesses and even the provincial governments are working hand in hand to implement new regulations and adjust to them.

It would be easy and even preferable or desirable if we could snap our fingers and all toxic waste would disappear tomorrow morning. But we have been asked as a government to talk more about the economy. We talk about the economy, but not the economy at any price. We look at everything that can be done in terms of the environment.

Look at the position taken by the Government of Canada at the Rio summit; look at the laws put forward by our government. I just spoke about the law on dioxins and furans, but I am also thinking of the Fisheries Act. The government has done a lot and it has not just been talk. It also spent very considerable amounts of money.

Once again I would simply remind my colleague of the very ambitious plan to clean up the St. Lawrence River which has produced some very concrete results so far.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is deemed adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.31 p.m.